
Objectives

- Students will be able to identify symbolism in a work of fiction.
- Students will be able to understand the relationship between plot, setting, and character in a work of fiction.
- Students will be able to identify examples of internal and external conflict in a work of fiction.
- Students will be able to correctly use vocabulary words.

Symbolism

Lord of the Flies is constructed almost entirely of symbols. A **symbol** is something that represents not only itself, but also some idea far greater than itself. Here are some of the symbols in this section.

Maurice says the forbidden word “ass” after the hunters of Jack’s camp kill a sow. The boys laughing and repeating the word symbolizes freedom and the hunters’ throwing away rules of civility.

When Jack’s group raids the platform for fire, the fire symbolizes war and its destructiveness.

The pig’s head on a stick is the “Lord of the Flies.” However, what is it really? After the boys kill the pig, Jack beheads it and places the head on a stick as an offering to the “beast.” Almost immediately the boys run away from it screaming in terror.

There were no shadows under the palms on the platform; only this strange light that seemed to come from everywhere at once. High up among the bulging clouds thunder went off like a gun.



This is another weather symbol for what is about to happen on the island. Jack is leading a raid on the platform to steal fire. Fire and war are synonymous in this section. This is why the weather symbol sounds like a gun.

When Ralph thinks “the island is getting worse,” it symbolizes their peaceful island of plenty, peace, and cooperation changing to one of blood and war.

Simon’s hallucination of the Lord of the Flies is a reference to Lucifer tempting Christ during his forty days in the desert.

Setting, Characters & Plot

The **setting** is the place where the story takes place. In this section the setting takes place at both camps. The **characters** are the people in the story. In this case everyone is involved. The **plot** is the storyline. Hunters kill a pig and put its head on a stick as an offering to the beast. They immediately become terrified of it. Jack wants to have a feast to tempt the other boys to leave Ralph's group and to join him. However, they cannot make fire, so they have to get it from Ralph's group. Instead of simply asking, they raid the platform for fire. Jack, Roger, and Maurice wear their war masks to scare the other boys. When at the platform, Jack invites everyone to join them in a feast and join his tribe. He promises them fun and feasting. Simon hallucinates about the pig's head and passes out.

Internal & External Conflict

External conflict occurs when a character is struggling against some sort of external, or outside, force. The force can be another character, a natural force, an animal, a group, or society. External conflict can also be a verbal confrontation between two characters.

The forest near them burst into uproar. Demoniac figures with faces of white and red and green rushed out howling, so that the littluns fled screaming. Out of the corner of his eye, Ralph saw Piggy running. Two figures rushed at the fire and he prepared to defend himself but they grabbed half-burnt branches and raced away along the beach. The three others stood still, watching Ralph; and he saw that the tallest of them, stark naked save for paint and a belt, was Jack.

Jack's group raiding Ralph's group for the fire is obvious external conflict, but notice that Jack has shed all of his clothes, except for his knife belt, proving that he has gone completely savage.

Internal conflict is when a character struggles within over a decision.

Ralph, having begun the business of unburdening himself, continued. "Piggy, what's wrong?"

Piggy looked at him in astonishment. "Do you mean the—?"

"No, not it. . . I mean. . . what makes things break up like they do?"

Jack struggles with the central question of the book: "What makes things break up the way they do?" Is it an external evil, a "beast," or is it human nature itself? "Maybe the beast is us." His internal struggle is one for all of us to consider.

Simon's head was tilted slightly up. His eyes could not break away and the Lord of the Flies hung in space before him.

"What are you doing out here all alone? Aren't you afraid of me?"

Simon shook.

“There isn’t anyone to help you. Only me. And I’m the Beast.”

Simon’s mouth labored, brought forth audible words.

“Pig’s head on a stick.”

It would be easier to dismiss this scene as a mere hallucination preceding a fainting episode, except for the fact that the hunters who mounted the head and proclaimed it a gift for the “beast” became terrified of it and ran away. Nevertheless, Simon experiences an internal struggle as he tries to avert his eyes from the pig’s head and then tries to speak.

Vocabulary

Being able to understand the vocabulary in *Lord of the Flies* will help you better understand and appreciate the story. The following is a list of words from this section that you can use to help you expand your vocabulary.

Demented – adjective – Crazy, insane, mad

The axe murderer advanced slowly with a *demented* gleam in her eyes.

Iridescent – adjective – Producing a display of lustrous, rainbow like colors

The water created an *iridescent*, blue-green glow.

Fluent – adjective – Fully conversant in some form language of language

Because her parents speak to her in Spanish and she was born in America, she is fluent in both English and Spanish.

Parody – noun – A humorous or satirical imitation of a serious event or piece of literature

The audience laughed as they watched the students perform a parody of *Romeo and Juliet*.

Audible – adjective – Capable of being heard; loud enough to be heard; actually heard

Although she tried to come into the house unnoticed, her shoes made an *audible* sound on the ceramic tiles.

Growth & Assessment:

1. What **symbolizes** war and its destructiveness in this section?
 - a. Fire
 - b. The conch
 - c. Rain
 - d. Piggy's specs
2. Which line **symbolizes** how the island changed from peace and plenty to blood and war?
 - a. "Isn't there anyone to help you?"
 - b. "What are you doing out here all alone?"
 - c. "Only me."
 - d. "This island is getting worse."
3. What presents the **external conflict** in this section?
 - a. The weather
 - b. Simon's hallucination
 - c. Jack's raid
 - d. The feast
4. Who experiences **internal conflict** when he sees the pig's head?
5. What does it mean to be "demented"?