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## 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 some idea far greater than itself. Here are some of the symbols in this section:

Over the island the build-up of clouds continued. A steady current of heated air rose all day from the mountain and was thrust to ten thousand feet; revolving masses of gas piled up the static until the air was ready to explode.



The weather symbolizes the growing threat of violence on the island.

“Evening was come, not with calm beauty but with the threat of violence.”

This is another weather symbol for what is about to happen in the story.

Simon’s murder symbolizes the murder of Jesus, both of whom had come down from the mountain with good news about how the people have no reason to fear the “beast.” Both of them were murdered because the crowd believed that they were something they were not. The dark irony of this story is that Simon was going to tell the boys that there was no beast, but his sudden appearance frightened them while in their frenzied state, and they mistook him for the beast, killing him with their bare hands.

The Lord of the Flies warned Simon what would happen to him if he tried to inform the boys about his nature.

“I’m warning you. I’m going to get angry. D’you see? You’re not wanted. Understand? We are going to have fun on this island. Understand? We are going to have fun on this island! So don’t try it on, my poor misguided boy, or else—”

Simon found he was looking into a vast mouth. There was blackness within, a blackness that spread.

“—Or else,” said the Lord of the Flies, “*we shall do you?* See? Jack and Roger and Maurice and Robert and Bill and Piggy and Ralph. Do you. See?”

The emphasis on the word “see” represents both Simon’s ability to prophesize (telling Ralph “You’ll get back to where you came from,”) and his ability to see the Lord of the Flies in a hallucination, *and* to understand its true nature. These words suggest that Simon knows he is going to his death, but as Simon would say, “What else is there to do?”

On a large scale, the murder of Simon represents humanity’s resistance to learning the truth about itself.

### *Setting, Characters & Plot*

The **setting** is the place where the story takes place. In this section the setting is Jack’s camp. A rainstorm hits the island. The **characters** are the people in the story. In this case, everyone is involved. The **plot** is the storyline. Simon discovers the “beast” is a dead parachutist. Ralph and Piggy go to Jack’s feast. Jack forms his own tribe. While Jack’s tribe does its mock pig kill dance, Simon bursts forth from the mountain and the frenzied boys mistake him for the “beast” and kill him. Ironically, Simon was going to tell the boys the good news that there was no beast.

### *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, natural force, an animal, a group, or society. External conflict can also be a verbal confrontation between two characters. Here are a few examples from this section.

Instead, Piggy beat the water with his hands. “Stop it!” he shouted. “D’you hear?”

Furiously he drove the water into Ralph’s face.

Though harmless, this still represents an external conflict between Ralph and Piggy.

“Who will join my tribe?” Jack asked

“I’m chief,” said Ralph, “because you chose me. And we were going to keep the fire going. Now you run after food—”

“You ran yourself!” shouted Jack. “Look at that bone in your hands!”

Ralph went crimson. “I said you were hunters. That was your job.”

Jack ignored him again. “Who’ll join my tribe and have fun?”

“I’m chief,” said Ralph tremulously. “And what about the fire? And I’ve got the conch.”

“You haven’t got it with you,” said Jack, sneering. “You left it behind. See, clever? And the conch doesn’t count at this end of the island—”

All at once the thunder struck. Instead of the dull boom there was a point of impact in the explosion.

There is external conflict in this scene between Ralph and Jack, but there is also a great deal of internal conflict present, as well. When the thunder crashes, that is a symbol of great change.

**Internal conflict** is when a character struggles within over a decision. This is the scene when Ralph and Piggy show up at Jack’s feast.

Ralph looked away; and Sam, thinking that Ralph had turned to him accusingly, put down his gnawed bone with a nervous giggle. Ralph took an uncertain step, pointed to a palm tree, and whispered something inaudible to Piggy; and they both giggled like Sam. Lifting his feet high out of the sand, Ralph started to stroll past. Piggy tried to whistle.

The uncomfortable feelings and awkward movements indicate that everybody in this scene is experiencing some type of internal conflict.

### *Vocabulary:*

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

**Intersperse** – verb – To distribute among other things at intervals

I will *intersperse* the flowers among the shrubs when I plant my garden.

**Corpulent** – adjective – Large or bulky of body; portly; stout; fat

The obese man’s *corpulent* body would not fit in the seat at the movie theater.

**Indignity** – noun – A state of humiliation, degradation, or abusive treatment

The Black Knight’s prisoners had to suffer *indignity* after *indignity* at his cruel hands.

**Derision** – noun – Mocking scorn and jeers; insulting behavior

After the Black Knight was defeated, his former prisoners insulted him with their *derision*.

**Inquisitive** – adjective – Curious; inquiring

After his capture, some Spanish priests were *inquisitive* about why the Black Knight had done the evil things he’d done.

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## Growth & Assessment:

1. What **symbolizes** humanity's resistance to learning the truth about itself?
  - a. The weather
  - b. The signal fire
  - c. The ocean
  - d. Simon's murder
2. What is the **setting** for this section?
  - a. The far end of the island
  - b. The platform
  - c. Jack's camp
  - d. The lagoon
3. What does the "beast" end up actually being?
  - a. Creeper vines
  - b. A dead parachutist
  - c. A sea monster
  - d. A burnt tree stump
4. What is an "indignity"?
5. What does it mean to be "inquisitive"?