

# LORD OF THE FLIES

by  
William Golding

Novel Study Guide  
Mrs. Parry

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# Elements of the Novel

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## The Themes of *Lord of the Flies*

Golding's characters are allegorical symbols of the various facets of humankind, and his story is a symbolic depiction of our continuing, and often fruitless, efforts to achieve civilization. Golding's message is that a society's defects stem from the defects that are inherent in human nature. Civilization is merely a gloss if people as individuals have not faced "the beast within," for as Golding says in his introduction to the twelfth Perigee edition, "the shape of a society must depend on the ethical nature of the individual and not on any political system, however apparently logical or respectable." Ralph and the boys try to model the "logical" and "respectable" system they know: they will have a leader and they will work together for the common good. As individual egos and communal fears begin to surface, however, the system rapidly malfunctions. It is replaced by a different system: a reign founded on personal gratification, intimidation, and terror.

Golding's portrayal of human defects, our isolation from others, and our barely suppressed savage

tendencies, is both uncompromising and merciless. With civilization far removed and nothing but a faded memory, the boys readily lapse into barbaric thinking and behavior. Only Simon knows that the real "beast" is man's lack of integrity, his lack of ethical/moral fiber and his lack of true self-knowledge. In the end, the rational Ralph becomes the scapegoat for the tribe. If the boys can eliminate him, not a single vestige of the old ordered, restrictive life will remain to hamper them.

The boys are saved from a total and final descent into savagery by the arrival of the naval cruiser. Golding employs a chilling irony here: the cruiser, which has prevented the culmination of the savages' manhunt, will return them to the "civilized world," after which it will continue its own manhunt, seeking and, when deemed necessary, eliminating its enemies. Though the boys have come face to face with the beast, their elders continue to act and react blindly.

## The Characters

The characters in *Lord of the Flies* are, for the most part, not presented as well-rounded, fleshed-out individuals. Rather, they serve more as allegorical symbols representing various human types. They are a microcosm of humanity, expressing the range of human reactions under extraordinary circumstances. Through these symbolic characters, Golding reveals his observations about humanity as a whole.


**Ralph**, elected chief of the assembly of boys, is, in the end, the one unconquered foe of Jack and his savage tribesmen. Ralph is the protagonist of the novel and the most developed character; he undergoes the most change by the end of the novel. He represents sense and order, rational and logical thought, assembly and debate: civilized ethical behavior. At the same time, he represents, with his participation in the dance in which Simon is killed, the thinly veiled savagery in all human beings, even those who are, in the main, ethical and good.

**Jack Merridew** resents and attempts to usurp Ralph's authority. When that fails, he breaks from the group, proclaims himself chief of those who

follow him, and begins a reign of terror. Jack is Ralph's opposite—his antithesis—and his major antagonist, representing anarchy and untempered savagery.

**Piggy**, Ralph's strongest ally, is in Ralph's final analysis a "true, wise friend." A stabilizing force for Ralph, Piggy helps him to focus his thoughts when the pressures of responsibility overwhelm him. The second victim of the boys' disintegrating "society," Piggy represents intellectual power and insight gained from observation. Piggy serves as a foil for Ralph. By contrasting Ralph with Piggy, Golding shows Ralph's strengths and weaknesses more clearly and suggests that a combination of the physical and rational are necessary for successful, sustained leadership.

**Simon** is "different" from the other boys, a loner and outsider who is subject to fainting spells which may be a type of epilepsy. Although he is one of Jack's choirboys, Simon allies himself with Ralph and lends his support. Simon is the first victim of the rising anarchy. With his early statement about the beast, "Maybe it's only us," his conversation with the Lord of the Flies, and his




belief that Ralph will be rescued, Simon represents intuitive insight and self-awareness. This spiritualism must be added to Ralph's leadership abilities and Piggy's intelligence to create a successful society. Simon's death marks the beginning of the end for the chances of civilization.

**The Biguns**, the other older boys, most of whom remain relatively undeveloped characters, represent the unthinking masses who blindly follow the current established authority. One of them, **Roger**, eventually emerges as Jack's henchman and represents cruelty and sadism. **Sam and Eric**,

## The Setting

The story takes place on an uninhabited tropical island in the twentieth century during a future nuclear war. The location of the island is never specified. This setting directly affects the development of the novel's plot. With no authority figures and no societal restraints to influence the young

## Point of View




Using the omniscient point of view, the author has unlimited flexibility and enables the reader to enter the minds of selected characters such as Ralph and Simon. This point of view adds a heightened understanding of these characters. Since he is not one of the characters, the narrator simply reports, in an objective, detached manner, what

## Irony

Golding's abundant use of irony figures significantly in the development and final outcome of the plot.

The isolated, uninhabited island is a virtual paradise, and the reader is encouraged to believe that the boys will manage quite well. After all, being stranded in a primitive island paradise is a boy's dream fostered by the reading of such books as *Swiss Family Robinson* and *Robinson Crusoe*. In the end, however, the island is anything but paradisiacal, for it has become the setting of Simon's murder, Piggy's death, and the tribe's efforts to kill Ralph. The very premise of the novel is thus predicated on situational irony.



Early in the novel, Jack states the boys are "not savages." Ironically, Jack is the first to hide behind a painted face and to declare they have no need for rules, thus exhibiting rebellious, savage tendencies. Though at first Jack's compulsion to kill centers on pigs, Simon and Piggy become human victims, killed as a result of Jack's leader-

the twins who are so indistinguishable their names are blended into one, Samneric, are tortured and forced to join Jack's tribe. They represent those not strong enough, physically or emotionally, to defend and maintain their convictions.

**The Littluns**, the younger boys, represent the innocents who are unaware of the realities of life and, consequently, are rarely affected by them. Percival Wemys Madison's concern about the beastie and his screams in the night represent that fear of the unknown, shared by both the innocent and the sophisticate.

boys, the conflict between civilized, conditioned behavior and man's suppressed savage tendencies becomes increasingly obvious and sinister. The island isolates the boys from everything they have ever known and becomes a testing ground for this small microcosm of humanity.

is occurring. Because there is no editorial intrusion, the reader is free to form his or her own conclusions based entirely upon the characters' actions and thoughts. The reader must, however, distinguish between fantasy and reality as filtered through the subjective perceptions of the main characters.

ship. Under Jack's direction, the tribe deliberately and willfully attempts to kill Ralph. Contrary to Jack's proclamation is the reality that, of those left at the novel's end, they are all savages except Ralph.

The boys determine they will have fun while they're waiting to be rescued. Ironically, before long, the fun hampers the group's need for building shelters and for keeping the fire lit. Their fun becomes tainted with foreboding, beginning with the hunters' reenactment of their first pig kill. Eventually, they progress to actually killing Simon during one of their dances. Finally, Jack's tribesmen snicker outside Ralph's hiding place and cheer uproariously when they roll huge boulders off the cliff (originally an act of boyish glee and camaraderie) in an attempt to kill Ralph. The final irony of the situation is driven home when the naval officer, looking at the boys, comments, "Fun and games."

Simon, who has engaged in dialogue with the

Lord of the Flies, confirms his earlier belief that the real beast is something within the boys themselves. When he discovers the remains of the parachutist's body, Simon understands that the "beast," though horrible, is not harmful. (Because the reader is aware of what the beast really is all along, Golding employs the use of dramatic irony here.) Simon realizes the immediate need to share his discovery with the group and thereby alleviate their most overwhelming fear. The reader hopes that Simon's news may somehow prevent a further deterioration of the society and may perhaps even help to restore the unity that once existed among the boys. However, Simon reaches the boys at the wrong time: he stumbles into the dance, becomes the beast, and is killed by the savage boys. Hoping to help the boys and end the reign of the beast, Simon ironically becomes their first human victim. Soon afterward, the wind carries the parachutist's body out to sea. This is possible only because Simon had freed the lines of the parachute from the rocks. With no evidence remaining to verify his remarks about "a dead man on a hill," Simon, seeker of truth, has unwittingly helped perpetuate the myth.

Ironically, Piggy, the strongest proponent of civilized ways, possibly because his poor physical condition makes him the most dependent, provides the means (his broken spectacles used to light the fire) by which the island is almost destroyed.

## Symbolism

Just as the characters themselves serve more as symbols than as individuals, so too, many recurring objects in the novel serve symbolic functions. The most striking symbol in the novel is the sow's head which Jack places on the sharpened stake, a sacrifice to the beast. Ironically, as it tells Simon, the sow's head is the beast itself and represents the inherent and often uncontrollable dark side of humankind. The sow's head chides Simon, and the absent others, for thinking that the beast they all feared was something they "could hunt and kill." It is the "Lord of the Flies," a translation of the Hebrew *Ba'alzevuv* and the Greek *Beelzebub*, both synonyms for the devil himself. Golding, however, uses the Lord of the Flies to represent the savagery, kept in check only by willful and deliberate ethical behavior, that exists in all people. This symbol gives the book its title and encapsulates Golding's theme as well.

The conch is a symbolic extension of Ralph, but also represents order and civilization. Very

Perhaps the most poignant irony occurs at the end of *Lord of the Flies*. Ralph, throughout the novel, has insisted that they must keep a fire going if they are to be rescued; his efforts to accomplish this are continually thwarted. And yet it is indeed billowing smoke that brings the naval cruiser to the rescue: the smoke from the fire set by Jack's tribe in their attempt to kill Ralph. The most barbed irony is the novel's final one, however. Though the boys are rescued from the island and their own savagery, they will return to a "civilized" society embroiled in a war—the very war that brought them to the island, and a face-to-face confrontation with their darkest selves, in the first place.

An explicit use of verbal irony occurs when Ralph tries to explain to the naval officer that, in the beginning, the boys had put on a "good show." The officer replies, "I know. Jolly good show. Like the Coral Island." Seeing the devastated island and knowing that two boys have been killed, the officer knows that the boys have definitely not put on a "good show." (The officer's reference to "Coral Island" is itself a form of verbal irony. *Coral Island*, by Robert Ballantyne, is an adventure story commonly read by British schoolboys. It tells about boys, shipwrecked on a tropical island populated by savages, and how the boys' adherence to virtuous behavior—the "English way"—enables them to triumph over their adversaries.)

early in the story, Jack tries to limit the rule of order to the beach area, proclaiming that the conch doesn't have any meaning on the mountaintop. It is the shattering of the conch, which Piggy is holding when the boulder strikes him, that symbolizes the end of all sense, order, and ethical behavior on the island.

Piggy's glasses are also used symbolically. As Piggy himself is a symbol of intellect and insight gained from observation, his glasses serve as a symbol of clear-sightedness, of "seeing truly." When Piggy joins the attack on Jack, Jack hits him, knocking Piggy's glasses off and onto the rocks. One lens is shattered, symbolically indicating the increasing disintegration of sense and reason among the boys. At the end of the story, Jack still possesses the glasses with one lens undamaged. The lens is then used as a burning glass to start the holocaust intended to kill Ralph and likely to destroy the whole island. The glasses, once symbols of hope, show that in the wrong hands

what once supported civilization can also destroy it, if its purposes are perverted by those ruled by their beast sides.

The fire, which is originally controlled by the

forces for civilization, at first represents hope of rescue. Later, when it is controlled by the savages, it becomes the means for destruction.



## Conflict

To create tension and illustrate his theme, Golding recounts numerous instances of conflict, both internal and external. For example, the conflict between Ralph and Jack illustrates the archetypal conflict of man vs. man, or civilization vs. savagery. Other characters who oppose Jack, like Piggy and Simon,

reinforce this external conflict. The boys' omnipresent fear of the "beast" depicts a man vs. other forces conflict—but also, as events in the novel show, a more central internal conflict of man vs. himself: the basic conflict in the novel.

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# Vocabulary from the Novel

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Words are listed by chapter in their order of appearance. Words preceded by an asterisk (\*) are general vocabulary words that may appear in *Testing on the Novel: Developing Vocabulary*.

## Chapter One

\***motif**— a single or repeated design or color

**typhoon**— a tropical cyclone occurring in the region of the Philippines or the China Sea

\***specious**— having deceptive attraction or allure

\***mirages**— optical effects appearing as a pool of water or a mirror in which distant objects are seen inverted

\***enmity**— hatred; ill will

\***strident**— characterized by harsh, insistent, and discordant sound

\***eccentric**— deviating from usual, established pattern or from accepted usage or conduct

**Gib. (Gibraltar)**— a town and port on the Rock of Gibraltar; a British colony on the south coast of Spain

**Addis (Addis Ababa)**— the largest city of Ethiopia in Africa

**precentor**— a leader of the singing or choir of a congregation

**sniggers (snickers)**— partly suppressed laughs; titters

\***furtive**— expressive of stealth; sly; secretive

\***mortification**— a sense of humiliation and shame caused by something that wounds one's pride or self-respect

\***immured**— enclosed within; imprisoned

**bastion**— a projecting part of a fortification; something considered a stronghold; a fortified area or position

## Chapter Two

\***gesticulated**— made gestures; used the motions of the body or limbs to express or emphasize an idea, sentiment, or attitude

\***officious**— volunteering one's services where they are neither asked for nor needed; meddling

\***ebullience**— the quality of lively or enthusiastic expression of thoughts or feelings; exuberance

**leeward**— the side or direction the wind is blowing toward; the side opposite the windward

**windward**— the side or direction the wind is blowing from; the side opposite the leeward

\***recrimination**— a bitter retort; a charge against an accuser

\***pall**— something that covers or conceals; especially an overspreading element that produces an effect of gloom

## Chapter Three

\***abyss**— an immeasurably deep gulf or great space

\***inscrutable**— not readily interpreted; mysterious; hard to grasp

**castanet**— a rhythm instrument that consists of two small shells of ivory, hardwood, or plastic fastened to the thumb and clicked together by the other fingers; usually used in the plural

\***vicissitudes**— fluctuations of states or conditions; natural changes or mutations visible in nature or in human affairs

\***contrite**— expressing remorse for one's sins or shortcomings

\***incredulous**— disbelieving; skeptical

\***baffled**— defeated by confusion or puzzlement; frustrated; disconcerted

\***susurration**— a whispering sound; a murmur

## Chapter Four

**opalescence**— a reflection of iridescent light, which exhibits a play of colors, producing rainbow effects

\***blatant**— completely obvious, conspicuous, or obtrusive

**\*impalpable**—incapable of being felt by touch; intangible

**incursion**—a hostile entrance into a territory; a raid

**\*myriad**—an immense number; from the Greek, ten thousand

**rugby balls**—balls, roughly the size of volleyballs or soccer balls, used in the British game of rugby, a type of football

**\*preposterous**—contrary to nature, reason, or common sense; absurd

**\*taboo**—banned on grounds of mortality or taste

**\*swarthy**—darkness of complexion

**mooning**—dreaming; spending time in idle reverie

**\*tacitly**—expressed or carried out without words; silently

**\*errant**—straying outside the proper path or bounds

**\*malevolently**—viciously; spitefully; hatefully

**\*obscurely**—indistinctly; without full understanding or expression

**\*opaque**—hard to understand or explain; unintelligible

## Chapter Five

**\*improvisation**—the art or act of making, inventing, or arranging offhand, without advance planning

**\*jeeringly**—mockingly; tauntingly

**\*lamentably**—regrettably; mournfully

**\*ludicrous**—amusing or laughable through obvious absurdity, incongruity, exaggeration, or eccentricity

**\*expansively**—with delusions of self-importance; increasingly; with enlargement

**\*effigy**—an image or representation, especially of a person

**sough** (pronounced *sau*)—a moaning or sighing sound

**\*perilous**—hazardous; dangerous

**\*tempestuously**—violently; agitatedly

**slug**—a long, wormlike animal related to land snails which have a rudimentary shell or no shell at all

**\*discursive**—digressive; moving from one topic to another

**\*inarticulate**—uttered or formed without the definite, clear, effective utterances of intelligible speech

**\*incantation**—a written or recited formula of words designed to produce a particular effect

## Chapter Six

**\*interminable**—having or seeming to have no end; wearisomely prolonged

**\*tremulously**—tremblingly; fearfully

**\*exasperation**—the state of being irritated or annoyed, especially to the point of rash action

**\*incredulity**—the state or quality of disbelief

**\*diffidently**—shyly; reservedly; unassertively

**\*constrainedly**—with an unnatural manner

**leviathan**—a sea monster represented as an adversary defeated by Yahweh [from the Hebrew, God] in various Scriptural accounts; also, a large sea animal

**plinth**—a course of stones forming a continuous foundation or base course

**guano**—a substance composed chiefly of the excrement of seafowl and used as a fertilizer

**\*exulting**—rejoicing

**\*somberly**—seriously; gravely

**\*mutinously**—rebelliously

## Chapter Seven

**\*obtuseness**—dullness; slowness to apprehend or perceive

**moors**—expanses of open rolling infertile land

**\*brandishing**—shaking or waving threateningly

**funk**—one who is afraid; a coward

**\*daunting**—dismaying; intimidating

**\*impervious**—not allowing entrance or passage; impenetrable; not capable of being affected or disturbed

## Chapter Eight

**\*contemptuously**—disrespectfully; disdainfully

**\*derisive**—expressing or causing scorn or ridicule

\* **sanctity** — the quality or state of being holy or sacred

\* **demure** — reserved; modest

\* **demented** — mad; insane

\* **iridescent** — having or exhibiting a play of colors producing rainbow effects; also, glittering

\* **parody** — a feeble or ridiculous imitation

## Chapter Nine

\* **corpulent** — having a large, bulky body; obese

\* **succulent** — full of juice; juicy

\* **abominable** — worthy of or causing disgust or hatred; quite disagreeable or unpleasant; detestable

**phosphorescence** — luminescence (an emission of light, as in the firefly) that occurs at low temperatures and is produced by physiological processes; an enduring luminescence without sensible heat

## Chapter Ten

\* **loathing** — extreme disgust; detestation

\* **theological** — of or relating to the study of God and his relation to the world, especially by analysis of the origins and teachings of an organized religious community

\* **conviction** — a strong persuasion or belief; the state of being convinced; certainty

\* **purged** — cleansed of; freed from moral or ceremonial defilement

## Chapter Eleven

\* **myopia** — a type of defective vision in which distant objects appear blurred

\* **multitudinous** — including many individuals; existing in great numbers

\* **propitiatingly** — done with the hope of creating favor or goodwill

**pinnacles** — the highest peaks; summits

\* **truculently** — belligerently; self-assertively aggressive

\* **talisman** — something producing magical or miraculous effects

## Chapter Twelve

**pax** — from the Latin, meaning *peace*

\* **inimical** — unfriendly; hostile

**antiphonal** — responsive alternation between two groups, especially singers

\* **ululation** — a howl; a wail

**diddle** — to fool; to swindle

**crepitation** — a crackling sound

**cordons** — a line of persons or objects around a person or place

\* **excruciatingly** — painfully; agonizingly

**drill** — a durable cotton fabric in twill (diagonal) weave

**epaulettes** — an ornamental fringed shoulder pad formerly worn as part of a military uniform

**gilt** — gold, or something that resembles gold, laid on a surface



# Reading Guide Questions

## Responding to the Novel

### Analyzing the Novel

#### Chapter One

##### Identifying Facts

1. Why does Piggy conclude that no one will know where they are?
2. What summons the boys to the beach?
3. Who tries to assume the authority? What happens?
4. What effort of conciliation does Ralph make toward Jack? What does Jack decide his boys will be?
5. What conclusion do Ralph, Jack, and Simon reach after their investigation?
6. What defense does Jack offer for not killing the piglet? What does he promise? What was the real reason he didn't kill the piglet?

##### Interpreting Meanings

7. The boys discover there are no adults on the island and attempt to model civilization as they know it by electing a chief. How effective do you think this effort will be without adult supervision?
8. Consider the cause of the **conflict** between Ralph and Jack. What does Ralph's effort to appease Jack tell you about his basic character? Is it likely that Jack will be content to play second fiddle to Ralph? Why or why not?
9. What does Ralph's revelation about Piggy's name suggest to you about the basic nature of young people? Are they intentionally cruel to each other or just inconsiderate? Explain.
10. Why do you think the boys chose Ralph as their leader?

#### Chapter Two

##### Identifying Facts

1. What decision is made about the conch? Why?
2. What fear does one young boy express? What is the group's reaction? What does Jack assure them of?

3. According to Ralph, what are the group's two main priorities?
4. What conflict arises between Jack and Piggy? How does Ralph settle it?
5. What does Jack say about rules and about the boys?
6. What offer does Jack make on behalf of himself and his hunters?
7. What does Piggy realize about the little boy who had talked about the beastie?

##### Interpreting Meanings

8. Consider Ralph's announcement of the group's two priorities. Are these the two priorities you would choose? What other things do you think the group might need to concern themselves with?
9. One of the young boys expresses his fear of a beastie, while the others claim there is no such thing. What does this incident suggest about people and their fears in general? What things might we fear even when we are not faced with the dramatic situation these boys face? Why?
10. Piggy thinks that the first thing the group should have done was build shelters on the beach. Is this a valid point? Why or why not?

#### Chapter Three

##### Identifying Facts

1. What does Ralph complain to Jack about? How does Jack defend the fact that he spends his days hunting instead of helping the others?
2. What does Jack admit to Ralph and Simon?
3. When Jack yells, "Got it," what does Ralph think might have caused Jack's excitement? What was the source of Jack's excitement?
4. What does Ralph say about people in general? What did he want to explain?
5. What do Ralph and Jack feel as they look at each other in the pool?
6. What effect does their time in the bathing pool have on Ralph and Jack?

## Interpreting Meanings

7. Does Jack's desire to kill a pig fit into either of the group's two main priorities established by Ralph? Is Jack concerned with the group's welfare? Explain.
8. Ralph wanted to express to Jack that people are never quite what one thinks they are. Do you agree with Ralph or not? Support your position with an example from your own experience.
9. Simon finds a secluded place in the high jungle where he can be alone. Why do you think he does this? What do you think this indicates about Simon?

## Chapter Four

### Identifying Facts

1. Why does Maurice feel guilty when he kicks sand into Percival's eyes?
2. When Roger throws rocks at Henry, why doesn't he aim to hit?
3. What effect does Jack's mask have on him? on Bill? on Sam and Eric?
4. What is Jack's response when Ralph first accuses him of letting the fire go out?
5. How does Ralph reassert his authority?
6. What is Ralph's reaction to Jack and the hunters' acting out the pig kill? What does he do?

### Interpreting Meanings

7. Both Maurice and Roger torment the littluns, but they still feel guilty and are still conditioned by the civilization they knew before. How much time do you think has passed since the boys arrived on the island? Do you think a further passage of time will have any effect on their feelings of guilt and their previous conditioning?
8. Jack masks himself with clay and charcoal. What effect does this have on his behavior? What is the purpose of any mask, either real or imagined? Do all of us wear masks from time to time? Explain.
9. Watching the hunters dance and chant, Ralph feels envy and resentment. Why do you think he is feeling these emotions? Of what is he envious? What does he resent?

## Chapter Five

### Identifying Facts

1. What conclusion does Ralph come to about being a chief? What about his own ability?
2. What do Ralph, Piggy, and Simon respectively say about beasts?
3. Why doesn't Ralph call back the boys who follow Jack?
4. Why is Ralph considering giving up leadership of the group? How do Piggy and Simon react? Why do they react that way?
5. What does Piggy say about Jack's feelings for him and for Ralph? What conclusion does Piggy come to?

### Interpreting Meanings

6. Why are Ralph's complaints about the group valid? What do you think these faults indicate about the group in general? Explain.
7. Ralph tells the group they should die before they let the fire go out. What does he mean by that comment?
8. Consider Piggy's statement about there being nothing to fear except people and Simon's remark that if there is a beast it may be the boys themselves. Do these two comments have anything in common? Do you think Piggy's and Simon's statements make sense? Explain.

## Chapter Six

### Identifying Facts

1. Why do the twins assume that the dead parachutist is the beast?
2. What is Jack's reaction to the news of the beast? Why does he react this way?
3. As the biguns, except for Piggy, set out to find the beast, what image of the beast forms in Simon's mind? What does this image mean?
4. What does Jack say the new place he and Ralph have just explored would be a good place for? How does he suggest it could be defended?
5. When Jack and the others roll a rock into the sea, what is Ralph's reaction?
6. After various protests from the boys, what does Ralph insist upon? Why?

## Interpreting Meanings

7. Ralph wishes for a message from the grown-ups. The parachutist *could* be such a message. What are some ideas the arrival of this figure might have suggested to the boys? What, then, is ironic about the twins' declaration that it was the beast?
8. None of the boys, not even Ralph or Jack, doubts for a moment that Sam and Eric have indeed seen a beast. Why are they all so ready to accept the presence of a beast?
9. Simon comments to Ralph that he doesn't believe in the beast. Recall his earlier inability to imagine the beast that the twins described and his image of a heroic and sick human. Is it likely that anyone else would agree with him? Why or why not? Is Simon's disbelief reasonable?
10. As Ralph tried to talk with the boys, "something flittered in front of his mind, like a bat's wing, obscuring his idea." What do you think is happening to Ralph? How would you explain this "short circuit"? Recall his pounding his fist against the rock. How would you describe Ralph's state of mind?
11. Recall Jack's ideas for the newly explored part of the island. Why do you think Jack is thinking in these terms? Does he seem frightened about anything? Why do you think the boys would have need of a fort? What would it defend them from?

## Chapter Seven

### Identifying Facts

1. With Jack in charge of the hunt, what does Ralph daydream about?
2. What does Ralph do when the boys start to play, putting Robert in the part of the boar? What feeling does Ralph have?
3. Why does Robert insist they need a real pig, rather than someone to pretend to be a pig?
4. What does Ralph sense about Jack after Ralph asks him about the pig-run? What does this tell him about Jack?
5. How does Jack challenge Ralph? What is Ralph's response?
6. When Jack returns to Ralph and Roger, what does he tell them?
7. Describe what the boys see and their reaction to it.

## Interpreting Meanings

8. Simon tells Ralph he isn't certain, of course, but that he thinks Ralph will get back all right. Do you agree with Simon? Do you think that any or all of the boys will be rescued? Why or why not? Does Ralph think so? Why or why not?
9. When Ralph strikes the boar on the snout with his spear, how does he feel? Afterwards, he immediately jabs at Robert with his spear. What does he feel then? Is there any connection between the two events? Explain.
10. How would you describe the relationship between Ralph and Jack at this point? What is the source of their conflict? Do you think Jack hates Ralph? If so, why?

## Chapter Eight

### Identifying Facts

1. Why does Ralph believe they are beaten?
2. Jack suggests that Ralph should no longer be chief. What does Jack do when the others don't respond to this suggestion?
3. As Ralph considers the need to reassign fire-keepers, what does he realize?
4. What does Jack do with the sow's head? Why?
5. What does the Lord of the Flies tell Simon he should do?
6. Why does Ralph take his group to the platform? What problem is Ralph having at this meeting?
7. What does the Lord of the Flies say that Simon has known all along?
8. What does Simon realize is happening to him?
9. What does the Lord of the Flies "tell" Simon they are going to do on the island? What will happen to Simon if he tries to interfere?

### Interpreting Meanings

10. Throughout the novel, there has been **conflict** between Piggy and Jack. What do you think is the cause of this conflict? Why is it significant that Piggy, for the first time, helps to gather firewood only after Jack has broken from the group? Why does Piggy feel liberated?
11. Even though Jack enumerates Ralph's faults, none of the boys is willing to oust Ralph as chief. What explanation can you offer for this?

12. Comment on your reaction to Simon's encounters with the Lord of the Flies. Do you think Simon is hallucinating because of the heat? Remember that Simon is only a young boy, about eleven or twelve. Does such a young person usually have the kind of understanding and insight that Simon seems to possess? Do you think the Lord of the Flies' assessment of the other boys' feelings about Simon is accurate? Is there any evidence to support this? Do you think the Lord of the Flies' warning that the others will "do" Simon if he tries to interfere is realistic?

## Chapter Nine

### Identifying Facts

1. After Simon regains consciousness, what does he come upon as he walks across the mountaintop?
2. As it begins to rain, Ralph reminds Jack's followers that they don't have shelters. Why does he bring this up now?
3. Immediately after Ralph's tirade, Jack tells his tribe to start dancing. Why?
4. Do the chanting, dancing boys recognize Simon? Why or why not?
5. What happens to the figure on the mountaintop?
6. What is the effect of the tide washing away Simon's body?

### Interpreting Meanings

7. Discuss the organization of Jack's tribe and his position in it. Then discuss the kind of organization Ralph tried to establish with the whole group. How would you label each leader and each system? Which would you prefer to be a member of? Explain why.
8. The Lord of the Flies' prediction that Simon would be killed by the other boys proves to be accurate. Did you expect this, or were you surprised? Was Simon interfering, something the Lord of the Flies warned against, or was he trying to save them all from the real beast, themselves?
9. What is the significance of the figure on the mountain dropping onto the beach and then washing out to sea? Remember Simon's efforts to cry out his news to the chanting, dancing tribesmen.

## Chapter Ten

### Identifying Facts

1. When Ralph admits to Piggy that they all murdered Simon, what is Piggy's reaction?
2. What does Ralph say to Piggy's remark that they were all scared?
3. Piggy suggests that they let the signal fire go out at night and relight it every morning. Why? How does Ralph react?
4. What is Jack feeling as he and the three others trot toward Castle Rock? Why?

### Interpreting Meanings

5. As Ralph and Piggy discuss the murder of Simon, Ralph admits the truth but Piggy rationalizes the situation. Which response is more typical of human beings in general? Why? What do the two boys' responses indicate about each of them?
6. When Ralph tells Piggy that he is frightened "of us" and wants to go home, he is echoing Simon's earlier statement that perhaps the boys themselves are the beast. Was Simon right? Does Ralph have reason to be frightened "of us"? Explain.
7. What does Jack's denial that they killed the beast reveal about him? What does his plan that they keep "on the right side of the beast" suggest about the way in which people frequently deal with their fears and superstitions? Do you think Jack truly believes there is a beast? Why or why not? Does his continuing to promote the existence of the beast to the others give him any advantage over them?

## Chapter Eleven

### Identifying Facts

1. After all that has happened, why does Piggy still try to reason with Jack to get his glasses back?
2. Why do the twins suggest they all paint their faces before going to see Jack?
3. Jack boasts that his tribe does whatever he wants. Why is this true? Why might the boys prefer Jack's leadership to Ralph's?
4. As Piggy and Ralph hurl questions at the savages, what is Roger doing?
5. While Ralph readies himself against a charge from Jack and his tribe, what does Roger do?
6. What happens to the conch? To Piggy?

## Interpreting Meanings

7. When Ralph insists on accompanying Piggy to see Jack, he is afraid that Piggy will get hurt. Did you share the same fear? Why? Did Ralph think Piggy would be killed? Did you?
8. Both Piggy and Ralph made the mistake of believing they could reason with Jack about Piggy's glasses and the need for a signal fire. Why was their thinking completely erroneous? What had Jack clearly already become?
9. What do Roger's releasing of the huge rock and his strong-arm tactics with Sam and Eric indicate about the type of regime Jack has? How would you classify Jack and his tribe at this point?
10. With Ralph's two allies, Simon and Piggy, both dead and Sam and Eric now tribesmen, what are the odds that Ralph will survive? Will he, as Simon believed, get back all right? Why or why not?

## Chapter Twelve

### Identifying Facts

1. What realization does Ralph come to about the savages and Jack? Why?
2. Describe the scene in which Ralph comes upon the pig's skull on the stake. Explain what he does, and why.
3. What is Ralph dreading most?
4. After Ralph reaches the beach and falls down, what does he see when he staggers to his feet?
5. What explanation does the officer give for his arrival on the island?
6. Who responds to the officer's question about who is the boss?
7. What does the little boy with the remains of a black cap on his red hair and a broken pair of spectacles at his waist do?
8. When Ralph finally begins to sob uncontrollably, what is he weeping for?

### Interpreting Meanings

9. If you had been Sam and Eric, and Ralph had appealed to you for help, what would you have done? Before you answer, consider their position and their remark to Ralph that both Jack and Roger were terrors. Do you blame them for not helping Ralph, or do you understand why they felt they couldn't? Explain.
10. What is your reaction to the fact that the officer from the naval cutter saw the smoke on the island and came to the rescue?

11. Why do you think Golding describes the savages as "little boys on the beach" and Jack in particular as a "little boy"? What point do you think he is trying to convey to the reader with this shift in wording?
12. Consider Piggy's comment about the atom-bomb having been dropped, the dead parachutist, and the arrival of the naval cruiser. Why is the cruiser in the area? What will it continue to do once the boys have been transported back home? What parallel is there between what has been going on in the adult world and what has occurred on the island? Explain.

## The Novel as a Whole

1. Discuss the **character traits** of Ralph and Jack.
2. Trace the development of the relationship between Ralph and Piggy.
3. Discuss the role of the Lord of the Flies as a "character" in the novel.
4. Discuss the **character traits** of Simon.
5. Discuss whether or not a successful society could be built if the leader possessed the combined traits of Ralph, Piggy, Jack, Simon, and even Roger.
6. Discuss the author's use of adult warfare beyond the island to develop the **plot** of the novel.
7. Discuss the cause of the **conflict** between Ralph and Jack, the results of that conflict, and how, or if, the conflict is resolved.
8. Trace the author's use of Piggy's glasses in the development of the **plot**.
9. Discuss the overall condition of the island at both the beginning and end of the novel. Explain how each portrayal of the **setting** reflects the mood of the situation.
10. Reread the author's description of the island near the end of Chapter One following Ralph's statement, "This belongs to us." Discuss the description of the overall **setting** as reflective both of the initial situation of the boys and as **foreshadowing** of the plot's outcome.
11. Discuss the **theme** of the novel. What message is Golding trying to convey to his readers?
12. Discuss the various examples of **irony** that occur in the novel, using specific examples.
13. Discuss the conch as a **symbol**.
14. Discuss the **characters** of the novel as **symbols**.