

Teacher Guide

Grades 9–12

Lord of the Flies

William Golding

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LORD OF THE FLIES

by
William Golding

Teacher Guide

Written by
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Note

The 2006 Perigee paperback edition of the novel, © 1954 by William Golding, was used to prepare this guide. The page references may differ in other editions. Novel ISBN: 978-0-399-50148-7

Please note: This novel deals with sensitive, mature issues. Parts may contain profanity and/or descriptions of violence. Please assess the appropriateness of this novel for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading and discussing it with them.

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Table of Contents

Summary.....	3
About the Author	3
Background Information	4
Characters	5
Initiating Activities	6
Six Sections	7
Each section contains: Summary, Vocabulary, Discussion Questions, and Supplementary Activities	
Post-reading Discussion Questions	23
Post-reading Extension Activities	26
Assessment	27
Scoring Rubric	39
Glossary.....	40

Skills and Strategies

Comprehension

Identifying attributes, inferences, cause/effect, summarizing, decision-making, plot development

Literary Elements

Character analysis, setting, story mapping, conflict, theme, author's purpose, point of view, figurative language

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, presentation, dramatization

Writing

Personal narrative, dialogue, journalism, poetry, essay, report, pamphlet

Critical Thinking

Predicting, brainstorming, compare/contrast, analysis, evaluation, research

Across the Curriculum

Literature—*The Coral Island*;
Social Studies—history, government, indigenous masks and dances, Dartmoor, philosophy;
Health—children's fears, denial, post-traumatic stress disorder;
Music—analysis, composition;
Art/Media—illustration, map, collage, documentary

Chapters Eleven–Twelve

Ralph, Piggy, Sam, and Eric travel to the Castle Rock to retrieve Piggy’s glasses. Ralph and Jack fight, and the tribe restrains Sam and Eric. Roger releases a leveraged rock, shattering the conch and killing Piggy. Jack and his tribe attack Ralph, and he flees into the jungle. Ralph discovers that Sam and Eric were forced to join Jack’s tribe. Sam and Eric warn Ralph about Jack’s plan to hunt and kill him the next day. The tribe sets fire to the jungle and forces Ralph out onto the open beach, where he finds a British naval officer. The officer assumes the boys are playing war games and having adventures. After learning of the two deaths and seeing the boys’ condition, he criticizes them for not acting like proper British boys. Ralph surrenders to grief and weeps for the end of innocence, the darkness inside man, and his friend Piggy, causing the other boys to cry also. The officer, embarrassed by the boys’ show of emotion, looks away toward his ship.

Vocabulary
luminous
myopia
propaganda
salinity
questioned
truculently
anonymity
cessation
parried
tall man
inimical
ululation
ensconce
cordon
crepitation
excruciatingly
epaulettes
distended

Discussion Questions

1. Explain the significance of Ralph wanting himself, Piggy, Sam, and Eric to look well-groomed when they approach Jack for Piggy’s glasses. (*Ralph believes “looking like proper British boys will influence Jack to get Piggy’s glasses. Ralph is trying to remain mature and calm because “after all [he and the other three boys] aren’t savages really and being rescued isn’t a game” [p. 170]. He believes the best reason with Jack by showing that he is civil and non-threatening.”*)

Why do the twins look at Ralph strangely when Piggy implies that Ralph has forgotten the purpose of a fire? (*Answers will vary. Ralph is having a moment of focusing his thoughts and remaining collected. Most likely Sam and Eric are just noticing Ralph’s weakness. They may be comparing Ralph’s leadership abilities to Jack’s strength.*)

3. How much influence does the conch have over Jack and his tribe? (*The tribe no longer respects the conch as a symbol of authority and civilization. However, they still respond to the conch call, perhaps out of habit or the vague hope of rescue. The boys assemble along the beach when Ralph blows the conch and hesitate when Jack orders them to grab Sam and Eric, almost as if remembering. Ralph is in grief when holding the conch. The boys do*

fall silent when Piggy holds up the conch and demands the right to speak. As the conch shatters, Jack screams wildly that Ralph has gone to a tribe and that he [Jack] is now chief. Despite his previous claims, Jack still believes the conch represents authority. Jack does not truly feel in charge until the conch is destroyed.)

4. Moments before his death, Piggy asks Jack’s tribe, “The choice is either—to be a pack of painted Indians like you are, or to be sensible like Ralph is—to have the rules and agree, or to hunt and kill...law and rescue, or hunting and breaking things up” (p. 180)? Why do you think Piggy believes he can reason with Jack’s tribe despite all that has happened? (*Answers will vary. Piggy relies on society’s rules and hopes to speak as lightly as he does the conch. He expects others to live by the same standards. Piggy assumes even he thinks as he does and refuses to believe that the other boys have completely surrendered to their savage instincts.*)

5. How is Piggy's death significant? *(Answers will vary. Piggy's death symbolizes the loss of intelligence and reason on the island. By holding on to the conch, Piggy was holding on to the structured rules of civilization that he valued. The destruction of the conch symbolizes the loss of law and order. Ralph loses Piggy's intellectual advice and will now have to fight Jack alone. Students may also note that, while Simon's death could be viewed as an accident, Piggy's death was premeditated by Roger. Jack's tribe has finally sunk so low as to commit murder. It is now uncertain if the boys will ever be able to return from their descent into savagery.)*
6. Explain the meaning of "The hangman's horror" [Roger] and [Roger]" (p. 182). How does Roger's savagery differ from Jack's? *(Roger is being compared to a public executioner, and the "hangman's horror" is guilt that person might feel after an execution. Roger's savagery differs from Jack's because Roger actually enjoys hurting others. Jack is a tyrant and acts violently when he feels it is necessary—not just because he thinks it is fun.)*
7. Analyze Ralph's encounter with the Lord of the Flies. What can you infer from the scene? *(Answers will vary. Ralph does not know the story behind the dead pig's skull, but he senses its evilness and the message it sends to Simon: the beast is with the boys. His "sick fear and rage" [p. 185] indicates that Ralph feels humanity's struggle between good and evil. The "skull that gleamed as white as ever the conch had done" [p. 185] indicates the skull is Jack's symbol and, as Roger destroyed Piggy's symbol [the conch], Ralph destroys the staked skull.)*
8. What do you think Sam and Eric mean when they say Roger has "sharpened a stick at both ends" (p. 190)? What are Jack and Roger planning to do to Ralph? What do they want to do with him? *(Answers will vary, but students can assume that Roger and Jack plan to kill Ralph and leave his head as a signal to the beast—just as they did with the mother sow. Jack most likely wants to kill Ralph because he views him as a threat to his [Jack's] total control of the island. Ralph is the last symbol of humanity, and Jack wants to rob it of its ability to rule.)*
9. Analyze Ralph's thoughts preceding and during the hunt. How does he use both the civilized and savage sides of human nature during the hunt? *(Ralph determines that Jack will never stop hunting him. Despite the danger, Ralph stays close to the tribe because he still needs to be close to people to ward off his fears of the beast. During the hunt, Ralph wishes he could more fully strategize. He misses Piggy's advice, and he solemnly debates during a lull about the dignity of the conch. Although Ralph is sensible and rational, his survival instincts dominate as he flees the tribe and he becomes more animalistic—hiding, panting, snarling, and "running with the swiftness of fear" [p. 190].)*
10. What is ironic about Jack's wildfire? *(Jack intends to kill Ralph by creating the wildfire, but instead the fire brings rescue. Also, it is the boys who save the boys despite Ralph's danger of not keeping the signal fire lit.)*
11. A *deus ex machina* is the unexpected arrival of someone or something that provides a quick resolution in extreme difficulty. The British naval officer is a *deus ex machina*. Why do you think the author chose to end the story with this literary device? *(Answers will vary. Seeing the boys from the officer's point of view reminds readers that the main characters are young boys. No longer is Jack a savage tribal chief but "a little boy who wears the remains of an extraordinary black cap..." [p. 201]. The author also contrasts the officer with Ralph and Jack, perhaps asking readers to consider the fine line between civilization and savagery. The officer, like Ralph and Piggy, expects proper behavior from the boys. The comment that "...a pack of British boys...would have been able to put up a better show than that..." [pp. 201–202] reminds readers of Jack's earlier statement, "We're English, and the English are best at everything. So we've got to do the right things" [p. 42]. Ironically, the officer berates the boys for warring, yet the adult civilization is also at war. This irony is highlighted by the novel's last sentence where the officer turns away to look at his warship. The *deus ex machina* provides hope at the end of the story and leaves readers thinking about the novel's messages.)*

12. What is significant about Percival's inability to remember his name? (*Percival demonstrates how far removed the boys are from civilization. Earlier in the novel, Percival is able to introduce himself with his full name and home address but cannot remember his telephone number. This was a sign that he was already slipping away from society, but his inability to even remember his name shows just how far he has slipped. Disorder has replaced all knowledge of the boys' former lives in society.*)
13. Why does Ralph weep at the end of the novel when the officer saves them? (*Ralph weeps "for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart" [p. 220], and the loss of Piggy. Ralph's experiences on the island change him from being a "just" boy who is happy to be free from adult supervision to a much more mature boy who has witnessed death and now knows about the inherent evil within humans. Ralph's life, as well as those of the other boys, will never be the same.*)

Supplementary Activities

1. Write a dialogue that takes place between Ralph and Jack on the flight back to England.
2. Choose a character from the novel. Using a computer program, design a before and after illustration showing how your character looked when he arrived on the island and how he looked when the boys are rescued.
3. Rewrite Chapter Twelve, "Cry of the Hunters," from Jack's point of view.
Complete the "Think About It" chart on page 33 of this guide.

I Predict...

Directions: Spend a few minutes looking at the cover of the novel and flipping through its pages. What can you predict about the characters, the setting, and the problem in the novel? Write your predictions in the spaces below.

The Characters	The Setting	The Problem

From the information you gathered above, do you think you will enjoy reading this novel? Circle your response on the scale below.

0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

I will not like this novel.

I will really like this novel.

Explain your prediction on the lines below.

Character Web

Directions: Complete the attribute web below by filling in information specific to Ralph. Then, complete another web for Jack.

A character web diagram for Ralph. It consists of a central circle labeled "Name" with a horizontal line for writing. Five other circles are connected to the central one by lines. Each of these outer circles contains a label and three horizontal lines for writing. The labels are: "His thoughts" (top-left), "His statements" (top), "His behavior" (top-right), "Others' behavior toward him" (bottom-right), and "Others' statements to him" (bottom-left).

His thoughts

His statements

His behavior

Name

Others' behavior toward him

Others' statements to him

Conflict

The **conflict** of a story is the struggle between two people or two forces. There are four main types of conflict: person vs. person, person vs. nature, person vs. society, and person vs. self.

Directions: In the space provided, list four conflicts a character experiences and justify why you identify it with that particular type of conflict. Then, explain how each conflict is resolved in the story.

person vs. person

Conflict	Resolution

person vs. nature

Conflict	Resolution

person vs. society

Conflict	Resolution

person vs. self

Conflict	Resolution