Lord of the Flies

Lord of the Flies

South Pasadena High School

Senior English

A Guide to Study

***Chapter One***

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| **William Golding** |
| ***Lord of the Flies*** |

BEFORE READING

Focus Question

What kind of person is Ralph? Piggy? Jack? How can you tell?

Vocabulary

motif 12

mirage 14

strident 17

furtive 22

mortification 23

AFTER READING

Comprehension Questions

How is the conch important to the story?

How does Ralph become leader?

Describe the relationship between Ralph and Jack.

§ *For Greater Insight*

**School Traditions**

The first chapter relates traditions and activities particular to English schoolboys. For example, the choir appears in uniform, typical of schoolchildren in England. Jack also reveals the school tradition of calling younger children by their given names, while older children with more status are called by their family names. The precentor is the leader of the choir.

BEFORE READING

***Chapter Two***

Focus Question

What is the first task the boys undertake as a group? what becomes of their work?

Vocabulary

gesticulate

induce

tumult

pall

tirade

AFTER READING

Comprehension Questions

What is the first rule established on the island?

What role does Piggy play in the starting of the fire?

§ *For Greater Insight*

**Adventure Stories**

The boys mention other adventure stories that might typify their experience on the island. One is *Treasure Island*, a novel by Robert Louis Stevenson, in which the proprietor of an inn and her son find a treasure map among the possessions of a deceased guest. The map leads them to a pirate's fortune. Another story the boys mention is *The Coral Island: A Tale of the Pacific Ocean*, a novel by Robert Michael Ballantyne in which three boys are stranded on a coral island. They remain moral and resourceful, according to the rules of their society.

BEFORE READING

***Chapter Three***

Focus Question

What do the others on the island think of Simon?

Vocabulary

inscrutable

contrite

antagonism

incredulous

tacit

AFTER READING

Comprehension Questions

Contrast Simon's view of the island with Jack's

Describe the relationship between Ralph and Jack. About what do they disagree?

BEFORE READING

***Chapter Four***

Focus Question

What messages does this chapter convey about power?

Vocabulary

dubious

belligerence

charitable

malevolent

AFTER READING

Comprehension Questions

Why does Roger purposefully miss when he throws stones at Henry?

How does Jacks mask allow him to behave differently?

Why does the fire go out? What is the result?

§ *For Greater Insight*

**An Outsider**

The narrator comments that Piggy is an outsider for several reasons, including his language. This refers to the stereotyping by accent, or local inflection, in Britain. Piggy is obviously less well off and of a lower class (and thus possessing a different accent) than many of the other boys. Remember who raised him and what she does for a living.

BEFORE READING

***Chapter Five***

Focus Question

What different ideas are offered to explain the beast?

Vocabulary

perpetual

lamentable

reverence

expansive

derisive

AFTER READING

Comprehension Questions

How has Ralph changed since the beginning of the novel?

What does Ralph admire about Piggy?

Explain how and why the unity between Ralph and Jack has dissolved.

BEFORE READING

***Chapter Six***

Focus Question

What "beast" appears in chapter6?

Vocabulary

interminable

relentless

oppressive

diffident

mutinous

AFTER READING

Comprehension Questions

How does the parachutist come to the island?

What could the parachutist symbolize?

BEFORE READING

***Chapter Seven***

Focus Question

How are the two sides of the island different from each other?

Vocabulary

decorum

crestfallen

impervious

AFTER READING

Comprehension Questions

Describe how and why Ralph's view of hunting changes during the course of chapter7.

What does Golding reveal about Ralph's past in the flashbacks in chapter7?

How do the boys react when they see the "beast"?

BEFORE READING

***Chapter Eight***

Focus Question

Describe how and why the organization of the boys changes in chapter8.

Vocabulary

contemptuous

rebuke

sanctity

fervor

AFTER READING

Comprehension Questions

Why does Jack leave the group?

What message does the Lord of the Flies convey to Simon? And why Simon?

Characterize Jack as a leader.

§ *For Greater Insight*

**The Lord of the Flies**

The "Lord of the Flies" is a translation of *Ba'alzevuv* (Hebrew: *baal* meaning lord or deity) or *Beelzebub* (Greek)—names for the devil.

§ *For Greater Insight*

**Rugger**

Ralph refers to rugger, another name for rugby, a form of football played with two teams of thirteen players. Rugby differs from soccer in that players can carry the ball, block with their hands and arms, and tackle opposing players. Rugby is characterized by its continuous action and its limited substitution of players.

The name comes from the game's origins at Rugby, a boy's school in the town of Rugby in central England.

BEFORE READING

***Chapter Nine***

Focus Question

Explain what happens to Simon and what Golding could mean to symbolize by what happens.

Vocabulary

corpulent

derision

abominable

phosphorescence

AFTER READING

Comprehension Questions

Describe how and why Ralph's view of hunting changes during the course of chapter7.

What does Golding reveal about Ralph's past in the flashbacks in chapter7?

How do the boys react when they see the "beast"?

BEFORE READING

***Chapter Ten***

Focus Question

How do Ralph, Piggy, and Samneric deal with Simon's fate?

Vocabulary

loathing

assimilate

daunted

composite

AFTER READING

Comprehension Questions

Why does Jack punish Wilfred?

How effective is Ralph's group in fighting against Jack and the others who steal the glasses?

Why is Ralph pleased when he discovers he still has the conch?

§ *For Greater Insight*

**Reds**

When Ralph mentions that the boys might be taken prisoner by the Reds, he is referring to Communists. The term "red" derives from the color of the Communist flag. This derogatory term for communists was common until the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s.

BEFORE READING

***Chapter Eleven***

Focus Question

"Power tends to corrupt," Lord Acton said, "and absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely." How is Jack's corrupting power displayed in chapter11?.

Vocabulary

myopia

detain

propitiate

incantation

AFTER READING

Comprehension Questions

What is the significance of painted faces?

How has Roger changed since the beginning of the novel?

What does Golding mean the destruction of the conch to symbolize?

BEFORE READING

***Chapter Twelve***

Focus Question

Why does Ralph believe Jack will never leave him alone?

Vocabulary

acrid

ululation

ensconce

cordon

obscurity

AFTER READING

Comprehension Questions

Describe how Jack goes about trapping Ralph.

What is ironic about the boys' rescue?

AFTER READING

***Reviewing the Novel***

§ **Shaping Your Response**

Which boy do you think would have made the most effective leader on the island from the beginning? Explain your choice in detail.

Did Golding sacrifice artistic excellence for the sake of a "happy ending"? Support your response with rich illustration from the text of the novel.

Could this story really happen? Why or why not?

§ Analyzing the Novel

Explain how knowing that William Golding was a naval officer during World War helps a reader understand why things happen as they do in *Lord of the Flies*.

Choose a description from the novel, one you find especially clear and vivid. How does Golding use description to reflect the mood, to reveal characters' personalities, or to foreshadow events in the novel?

What elements of fables appear in this novel? How does their appearance affect a reader's understanding of the events?

§ Extending the Ideas

The novel takes place on a deserted island in an undetermined time. How are the novel and its messages important to people in other places today?

The Lord of the Flies tells Simon, "Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill! You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you?" Challenge or support this view based on what you see in the world.

**General Themes to Consider**

*§ Good and Evil*  
What is the nature of good? of evil? What makes an action good? What makes an action evil? Who should decide what makes an action good or evil? What is the source of each?

*§ The Social Order*  
What is the nature of our social contract with one another? What basic agreements do we need to share? Who should make that decision? What should we do with or for those who will not agree to the contract? Who should decide? What major theories of social contract underlie the American system? Who developed and who expressed them? When, and in what works? Which are still valid today?

*§ The Individual*  
What is the nature of the individual: basically good or evil? If good, why do some go "bad"? If evil, why do some end up "good"? Do we have obligations to each other? If so, what are they? And who should decide?