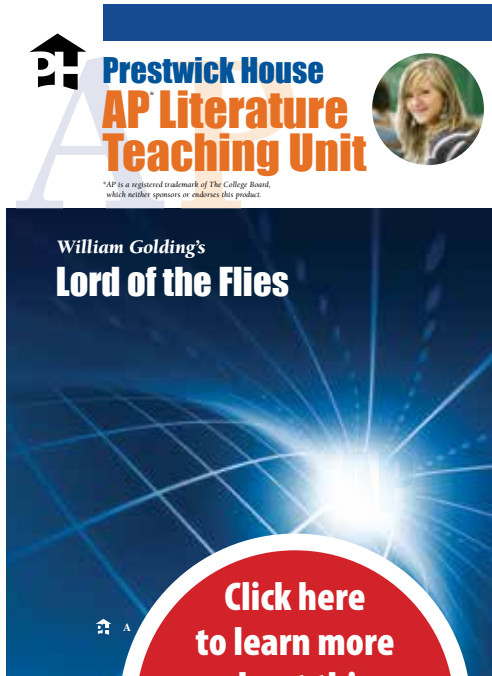




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Teaching Unit

Lord of the Flies

by William Golding

written by Kay Hampson



Prestwick House

Item No. 302039

Lord of the Flies

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. point out and discuss how this story operates on three levels:
 - as an action/adventure story;
 - as a psychological novel about people under stress;
 - as a symbolic novel about the nature of humankind and the role of civilization.
2. cite examples of biblical motifs.
3. identify to what extent Simon is a Christ-figure.
4. construct an interpretation of the following symbols:
 - the conch shell;
 - the fire;
 - the island;
 - the pig's head;
 - the glasses.
5. state Golding's view of the essential nature of humanity and comment on civilization's function in regard to humankind.
6. classify each of the major characters into an archetype:
 - Ralph as the orderly forces of civilization;
 - Jack as the primal, instinctual mind or militaristic mind;
 - Simon as a representative of goodness and kindness;
 - Piggy as scapegoat.
7. follow the nature of the Beast from external to internal as the novel progresses.
8. discuss the structural development of the novel in terms of exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution; relate them to this story.
9. identify significant incidents and comments that signal the author's theme.
10. compare and contrast Ralph, Jack, and Roger.
11. support major themes with evidence from the text:
 - civilization vs. savagery;
 - loss of innocence;
 - innate evil in all humans.

Lord of the Flies

Introductory Lecture

WILLIAM GOLDING

William Golding was born in Cornwall, England, in 1911 and attended Marlborough Grammar School and Brasenose College, Oxford. In addition to writing *Lord of the Flies* and other literary works, he was a schoolmaster, lecturer, actor, sailor, and musician.

Golding originally planned to be a scientist, but switched to English literature in his third year at the University of Oxford. He spent five years at Oxford and published a volume of poems in 1934. Golding also taught at Bishop Wordsworth's School in Salisbury.

In 1940, Golding joined the Royal Navy and served for six years. He saw action against submarines, aircraft, and battleships, including the sinking of the *Bismarck*, one of the most famous German warships of the Second World War. Without a doubt, Golding's experience in the Navy influenced *Lord of the Flies*.

Golding completed his naval service as a Lieutenant in command of a rocket ship, and he was near the French coast during the D-Day invasion in World War II. After the war, he returned to teaching and began to write *Lord of the Flies*, his first novel. *Lord of the Flies* was published in 1954 and filmed by Peter Brook in 1963.

While literary analysts have attempted to tie Golding's work to the influences of Sigmund Freud, the "father of psychotherapy"; Franz Kafka, a German fiction writer, whose work greatly influenced Western literature; or Jean-Paul Sartre, a French existentialist philosopher, Golding has stated that he was influenced little by contemporary literature. Golding did, however, study classical authors, including Homer, Herodotus, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Some analysts find strong similarities between Golding's work and the Greek tragedies.

Golding won the Booker Prize for his novel *Rites of Passage* in 1980, and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1983. He then moved to Cornwall from the Wiltshire village where he had lived for fifty years. Golding was knighted in 1988. He died at his home in the summer of 1993, leaving behind the draft of a novel, *The Double Tongue*, which was published posthumously.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: WORLD WAR II AND THE COLD WAR

Lord of the Flies was first published in 1954, at the height of the Cold War, a period of extreme distrust between the Western Powers of the United States and Europe and the Eastern Bloc of the Soviet Union. Following the United States' use of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, in 1945, the Soviet Union detonated its own bomb in 1949, thus proving that it possessed the same destructive power as the United States. Both nations would amass more and increasingly powerful nuclear weapons for the next twenty-five years.

Lord of the Flies

Chapter One: The Sound of the Shell

1. How do the boys end up on the island?

2. Who is “the voice” referred to? What does the voice represent?

3. How does the reaction of the fair-haired boy differ from the fat boy’s at the realization that there are no adults around?

4. The language in the description of Ralph may foreshadow what?

5. How old is Ralph?

6. Piggy says, “It wasn’t half dangerous....” Later, he says twice, “You can’t half swim.” What does Piggy mean by “half”?

7. What effect does Simon's comment "As if it wasn't a good island" have on Ralph? On the reader?

8. What is Jack's response to Simon's statement?

9. What has Ralph come to realize about society on the island?

10. What is Golding's purpose in introducing the scene of the little ones playing in the sand and in the pool?

11. What literary device is used in the statement "They walked along, two continents of experience and feeling, unable to communicate"?

12. How does the narrator describe the relationship between Ralph and Jack? What does he mean?

13. How does Golding convey to the reader that Simon is not unfamiliar with the terrain?

14. Interpret the statement “Simon became inarticulate in his effort to express mankind’s essential illness.”

15. What is the final straw in Ralph and Jack’s relationship?

16. What prevents Ralph from blowing the conch to bring the meeting back to order?

17. Why are Piggy and Simon adamant about Ralph’s not giving up leadership?

18. In the midst of the final conversation in Chapter Five, someone says, “Keep the fire going.” Interpret the remark.

19. Find an example of irony dealing with adults.

18. Why do you suppose the author lets the reader know at the outset that it is a pilot and his parachute, not a beast that the boys find? Would there not have been greater suspense if the reader knew no more than the boys?

Chapter Eight: Gift for the Darkness

1. Describe how the meeting ends.

2. What reminds the reader that the story is about young boys?

3. “The circle shivered with dread” is an example of what rhetorical device?

4. What does Piggy’s suggestion to move the fire to the beach accomplish in the boys? How does Piggy feel?

5. How is Piggy’s participation in the group different than in the past?

Chapter Eleven: Castle Rock

1. Contrast Jack's and Ralph's attitudes toward their appearance.

2. What is the significance of Piggy's holding the conch when the boys go to claim back the glasses?

3. Sam says that Jack will be painted. What is Sam implying?

4. Ralph insists his tribe wash so they can be like they used to be, but is reminded by the others that they bathe every day. What theme is supported?

5. The twins see Ralph "as though they were seeing him for the first time." What does the statement imply?

6. Interpret the statement "Freed by the paint, they had tied their hair back."

5. Ralph decides to go back to Jack's camp and finds that it is Samneric's turn to guard the entrance. What does he find out from them?

6. What is the significance of the stick sharpened at both ends that Roger has planned for Ralph?

7. How does the tribe find Ralph in the thicket? What do they do to flush him out?

8. What is ironic about the fire the tribe creates to flush out Ralph?

9. What effect does the alliteration contribute to the metaphor in the sentence "He...became fear: hopeless fear on flying feet rushing through the forest"?

10. In Chapter Twelve, what plot event serves as essentially a *deus ex machina*?

11. What is significant about the fact that Percival cannot even remember his name?
