

Summer Reading Assignment for Incoming Junior English Students

1. Please purchase *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding and *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster. Please bring both books and this packet on the first day of class, and be prepared to use Foster's book throughout the year.
2. Read *Lord of the Flies* and reference the attached study guide as you read. You do not have to answer any of the study guide questions for your assignment, but do keep them in mind, as we will be addressing them when school begins. Also, these questions are all fair game for a potential quiz or test.
3. Read the following chapters from *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*:
 - Chapter 2- Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion
 - Chapter 10- It's More than Just Rain or Snow
 - Chapter 11-...More than it's Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Violence
 - Chapter 12- Is that a Symbol?
 - Chapter 13- It's All Political
 - Chapter 14- Yes, She's a Christ Figure, Too
 - Chapter 19- Geography Matters...
 - Chapter 20- ...So Does Season
 - Chapter 21- Marked for Greatness

You do not have any written assignments from this book, but each chapter relates to significant elements of *Lord of the Flies* and other readings we will undertake this year. You are expected to be prepared to discuss Foster's assertions critically in the context of *Lord of the Flies* and other novels, and these chapters could apply to any quiz or test in class.

Most importantly, have fun with these readings as they open your eyes to the creative choices writers make and the psychology of the human experience. Happy reading!

Lord of the Flies Study Guide

As you read, underline similes and metaphors as well as Golding's use of animal imagery. Additionally, pay attention to Golding's use of light and dark. We'll be discussing all of these elements heavily. Finally, use textual support in your answers!

Chapter 1

- How does Golding begin to establish the story's mood on the opening page?
- Why does the narrator refer to the plane crash as a "scar"? What is the denotation vs. connotation of that word?
- What is the significance of the "green shadows" mentioned four times in Chapter 1? (Note: green light and shadows will appear again several times throughout the novel.)
- Considering the first chapter only thus far, comment on Golding's use of lightness and darkness. How do they work to establish mood and tone, and how do they contribute to the characterization of our main characters? Give specific examples.
- What does page 22 (the discussion of whether Ralph or Jack should be chief and the eventual decision that Ralph is the better choice) tell us about what society values in terms of power? Is Golding right? Give an example from real life to support your opinion.
- On page 23, why is it significant that Piggy "grudgingly" raises his hand when voting for Ralph as chief?
- On page 31, Jack fails in his first effort at killing a pig. What does his reaction to it tell us about him?

Chapter 2

- Does society *need* rules to operate? What kinds of rules do we need or should we do away with?
- In this chapter, Golding introduces the boy with the mulberry birthmark, who first brings up the idea of the "the beastie." What do this boy's testimony and the reaction of the others say about the human mind as far as fear vs. rationality is concerned?
- What is ironic about Ralph's faith in adults mentioned on page 37?
- How does Piggy's rant at the end of Chapter 2 help shed light on the main characters—himself, Jack, and Ralph?

Chapter 3

- Jack is alone at the beginning of Chapter 3. What does this tell us about him?
- What does Jack's appearance at the beginning of this chapter suggest about the passage of time and life on the island?
- How could you characterize Simon based on his actions?
- Ralph and Jack bicker during Chapter 3. What kind of relationship does this resemble, and why is it important?
- What do you think of Simon's secret place? What does it remind you of?

Chapter 4

- What is the significance of the interplay between light and dark at the beginning of Chapter 4?
- How does Maurice symbolize the struggle between good and evil occurring on the island? What about Roger? Based on the subtleties of the text, which boy do you think will fall to the “dark side”? How do you know?
- When Jack proposes that everyone paint himself, why do the other boys subtly object to it?
- How does Golding display the duality between civilized and savage most clearly in this chapter?
- Why is it important that Ralph repeats “There was a ship” when confronting Jack about the fire going out? What does this do to the characters *and* the reader?
- On page 73, Ralph and Jack begin to rebuild the fire after having a huge argument. The narrator notes, “By the time the pile was built, they were on different sides of a high barrier.” Literally, of course, the boys are on opposite sides of a tall stack of wood (the barrier). What is the more important metaphorical meaning of this line?

Chapter 5

- What does it take to be a leader? What skills must one possess to be a successful leader?
- In what ways has fear finally infiltrated?
- The boys continue to talk about “the beast” despite having not seen a beast or any evidence of one. So what is the seed/root of the beast to the boys? What does Simon think it is? Is he right?
- What is “mankind’s essential illness” (89)?

Chapter 6

- What is the “sign” sent down from the world of grownups? Why is this ironic?
- Why do you think Golding calls the parachutist a “figure” rather than a “man” or “person”?
- Samneric see the figure. How does their account of “the beast” serve to fan the flames of fear among the boys? Do you think what Samneric do is common? What does this whole account tell us about the human capacity for coping with fear?
- At the end of Chapter 6, the narrator notes following Ralph’s admonition about restarting the fire, “Mutinously, the boys fell silent or muttering.” How does the single adverb in this sentence serve as foreshadowing?

Chapter 7

- Why do you think Golding spends time detailing the surf and water in the opening two pages of this chapter?
- Ralph has flashbacks to his previous life in this chapter. What is the significance of this juxtaposition between his previous life and his current life? (Pay particular attention to the end of Ralph’s daydream at the end of page 112 and the immediate shift occurring in the same scene at the top of page 113.)
- The boys reenact a failed pig hunt, eventually putting Robert in the center and mock-stabbing him. The narrator notes, “Robert squealed in mock terror, then in real pain.” Later, the boys justify their actions as “[just] a game.” Why do the boys rationalize their actions like this? Do they do this just because they are children, or is this a typical human reaction?
- Looking back at the title of this chapter, why is it particularly apt considering what’s going on on the island?

Chapter 8 (Super important chapter!)

- Jack becomes a mutineer from the main group, telling Ralph, "I'm not going to play any longer. Not with you." What does this exchange with Ralph tell us about Jack's character? Why is it important that Jack uses the word "play" to describe what's going on?
- What makes the killing of the sow more emotionally challenging for the reader? Why would Golding choose to do this?
- Much of this chapter is characterized by shifts in perspective—from Simon's hiding within his secret place to Jack's tribe killing the sow and leaving their "offering" in it; both are a use of third person limited perspective. Why does Golding utilize this shift in perspective when he could have just maintained a third person omniscient perspective over the whole scene?
- Why is the sow's head called the Lord of the Flies?
- How do we see a further descent into savagery in this chapter?
- Dehydrated and weak, Simon hallucinates a conversation with the Lord of the Flies. How does this conversation serve to represent the events on the island and foreshadow the trials to come?

Chapter 9 (Another super important chapter!)

- Why is the first sentence of Chapter 9 important in the evolution of the story's setting and mood?
- What does Simon's interaction with the "beast" say about him as a character?
- On page 149, the narrator says, "...Jack, painted and garlanded, sat there like an idol." Why is this important in witnessing Jack's progression as a character? Also, looking at this through a Christian lens, what makes this line particularly troubling?
- Comment on Simon's death. What do you think about it? The kids call Simon the beast and kill him, then the "real" beast (the parachutist) finally floats away. Has "the beast" really died? How can Simon be viewed as a Christ figure upon his death?

Chapter 10

- Given what you know about the characters thus far, why does it seem curious/strange that Ralph (rather than Piggy) is the one to note it was Simon they killed?
- Why do the boys attempt to rationalize what happened and make excuses rather than confront the horrors that they all know are very real by now?
- What name does Jack go by now? How do we know his transition to savagery (and the transition of his "tribe") is complete?
- How does Jack retain/assert his power? Is he a good leader?
- "Ralph tried indignantly to remember. There was something good about a fire. Something overwhelmingly good" (163). What is particularly troubling about this line and the discussion that follows?
- What do Piggy's glasses symbolize, and why is it significant that they break violently?

Chapter 11

- Ralph remembers something Simon had said to him once: "Ralph scowled at Sam. Dimly he remembered something Simon had once told him, by the rocks." Go back to Chapter 7 (p. 111) and find what Simon had said to him. Did Simon know he would not leave the island alive?

-Once again, we see Roger using rocks to intimidate or harm. How does his behavior escalate since we first saw him on the beach throwing rocks at the littluns?

-What does the conch symbolize, and why is it significant that it breaks violently?

-How is the reaction to Piggy's death different from the reaction to Simon's death? Why is the difference important?

Chapter 12

-Discuss the duality between the two sides of the island, Ralph's beach side and Jack's castle rock side? How do these two physical settings represent the physical and emotional differences in the two sides?

-Samneric tell Ralph, "Roger sharpened a stick on both ends" (190). Ralph at first doesn't understand what that means. What does Jack's gang intend to do to Ralph?

-How does Golding convey the more rapid pace of the final chapter as the fire advances across the island?

-What is the irony of the rescue? (There are a couple of levels to this.)

-Look up this term: *deus ex machina*. What does it mean? Critics often assert that a *deus ex machina* ending is cheap, a cop-out that allows an author to end a story quickly but in an unlikely and unsatisfying way that disrupts a reader's ability to believe the story. Golding certainly uses this kind of ending here, but do you think it's a "cheap" ending for him to use? Defend or challenge Golding's choice of ending. If you agree with it, why must it be this way? If you disagree with it, what would have been a better way to end the story?