

## OLYMPIADS SCHOOL/GRADE 9 ENGLISH/HANDOUT 14

### Next week's final-term assessment:

You will be asked to write a three-paragraph essay in response to one of the following questions.

1. Simon says: "Maybe there is a beast."  
Ralph says: "But there isn't a beast."  
Jack says: "We'll make sure when we go hunting."

How does William Golding use the "beast" in the novel as a whole? You should write about what the "beast" may symbolize.

2. Ralph is changed by his experiences on the island. How does Golding show this?
3. Although the reader's sympathies are usually with Ralph, many of the boys decide to follow Jack. Explain what you think are the differences in what Jack and Ralph stand for and in how they behave in the novel.
4. Explain what goes wrong on the island and why, in order to bring out what you think Golding has to say about how societies operate.
5. Why do you think Golding called his novel *Lord of the Flies*?
6. What do you think Golding has to say about civilization and civilized behaviour in the novel?
7. What do you think Golding has to say about human nature in the novel, and how does he convey these ideas to you?
8. Choose one of the following items and write about its importance in *Lord of the Flies*.
  - conch
  - masks
  - piggy's glasses
  - the fire
  - the parachutist
  - the pig's head
9. Compare and contrast any one aspect of *The Maze Runner* and *Lord of the Flies*.

Jack is now dressed and painted like a savage and gives orders without expecting to be questioned. He is behaving exactly as any all-powerful tribal leader might. He enjoys exercising authority and uses violence quite casually in order to ensure loyalty. He is also keen for the boys to believe in the beast, because he is the only one who can lead them in their fight against it as he says earlier: ‘if there was a snake we’d hunt and kill it...’ (p. 35).

Jack says that the beast cannot be killed and he resists attempts to link Simon’s death to the defeat of the beast. Jack plans to steal fire from Ralph as he has no means to start a fire himself. Meanwhile, Ralph, Piggy, Sam and Eric are struggling to keep the fire alight. They are now prepared to admit that the fire has a dual purpose, both as a beacon for passing ships and as a comfort in the dark.

#### *Key quotation*

**This was the first time he had admitted the double function of the fire. Certainly one was to send up a beckoning column of smoke; but the other was to be a hearth now and a comfort until they slept.**

(p. 179)

This second purpose has become increasingly important and Piggy has to remind Ralph that the fire means rescue.

While Ralph is dreaming of home, Jack leads an attack on the shelter, which collapses. After a confused fight in the darkness, Jack and his hunters make off with Piggy’s glasses.

## Chapter 11 Castle Rock

- Ralph and the three boys visit Jack.

- Ralph challenges Jack.
- Roger sends down a rock that kills Piggy.
- Sam and Eric are captured.
- The tribe attacks Ralph.

Ralph says he would have given Jack fire but now it has been stolen from them. Piggy is practically blind without his glasses.

### *Key quotation*

**‘They blinded me. See?’**(p. 187)

Piggy still thinks that appealing to Jack’s sense of ‘what’s right’s right’ will work, so the four boys decide to go to see Jack.

### *Grade booster*

The following comment is likely from an A\* candidate: ‘Roger is typical of a weak person who is given great power. By hiding behind Jack he can exercise the kind of power that would never have been possible for him before. Roger also seems to enjoy violence: he shows no remorse over the fact that he has just killed Piggy. In many respects Roger resembles some of Hitler’s henchmen, who were able to commit atrocities in the name of the Führer and Nazism.’

There are now two very different forms of leadership on the island: Ralph wants to make life better for everyone and be rescued. Jack is turning more savage by the day, enjoying the power and freedom from civilised restraint that the absence of adults has given him.

*Key quotation*

**‘I’m going to that Jack Merridew an’ tell him. I am.’**

**‘You’ll get hurt.’**

**‘What can he do more than he has?’**

(p. 189)

Ralph, Piggy, Sam and Eric approach Castle Rock, hoping to reason with Jack. Jack appears from the forest and Ralph tells him he is a thief. The two fight and Sam and Eric are taken prisoner. In the excitement, Roger uses the lever to send the large rock crashing down on Piggy, knocking him off the causeway to the rocks far below. Piggy’s body is swept out to sea.

*Key quotation*

**The rock struck Piggy a glancing blow from chin to knee; the conch exploded into a thousand white fragments and ceased to exist.**

(p. 200)

The tribe attacks Ralph, who is wounded by a spear but manages to escape. Jack is furious that Sam and Eric came to him carrying spears and that they did not join his tribe.

The twins try to reason with him, but the chapter closes with Roger moving menacingly towards them.

*Key quotation*

**Roger advanced upon them as one wielding a nameless authority.**

(p. 202)

## Chapter 12 Cry of the hunters

- Ralph is alone in the forest.
- Jack hunts Ralph.
- The forest is set on fire.
- Ralph is chased to the beach.
- A naval officer appears on the beach.
- The boys are rescued.

Ralph sees the pig's head, now reduced to a white skull still on its stick, and lashes out at it. His action can be seen as symbolic. In destroying the pig's head he has smashed the idea of giving offerings to the beast. Ralph still retains his sense of right and wrong.

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### *Key quotation*

**The skull regarded Ralph like one who knows all the answers and won't tell.**

(p. 205)

Ralph sees Sam and Eric on top of the hill and approaches them. The twins tell Ralph that the tribe is going to hunt him in the morning, walking in a line across the island. It becomes apparent that the twins are even more afraid of Roger than of Jack. Although Jack is still the tribe's leader, Roger takes a sadistic pleasure in torture. In anticipation of catching Ralph, he has sharpened a stick at both ends, like the one used for the pig's head — a clear indication that he does not expect Ralph to live.

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*Key quotation*

**‘You don’t know Roger. He’s a terror.’**

(p. 210)

Ralph’s hideout is discovered the next morning and Jack orders boulders to be pushed down on him.

*Pause for thought*

It is ironic that the fire that is used to force Ralph into the open is also the reason that the boys are rescued. At their most savage moment, the boys bring about an encounter with civilisation. Do you think this is just a good twist to the plot or does Golding intend to convey a message here? If so, what?

Jack has the undergrowth set alight in order to burn Ralph out. Ralph realises time is running out.

At the last point of the island that is not ablaze Ralph collapses on the beach where they had first set up camp. He looks up to find a naval officer who has come because of the smoke from the fire. The officer assumes that the boys are playing games and jokingly says, ‘What have you been doing? Having a war or something?’ (p. 223).

The officer is surprised that a group of British boys has not been more organised and responsible.

*Key quotation*

**‘I should have thought that a pack of British boys...would have been able to put up a better show than that’**

(p. 224)

Ralph tries to explain that it started out like that, and the officer encouragingly refers to 'Coral Island'. This mention of Ballantyne's story, which shows ideal rather than realistic behaviour, takes us back to the seemingly innocent beginning of Golding's novel. It also reveals the limitations of the officer's thinking. Ralph breaks down in tears and the novel ends with the officer looking in embarrassment at the Navy ship lying offshore, unable to cope with this very un-British display of emotion.

*Key quotation*

**Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy.**

(p. 225)

## The passage of time

Golding is deliberately vague about the timescale of the novel. Some events happen close together in time but days or even weeks might pass between other events.

Take the example of the dead parachutist. When he lands on the island he has obviously come from a plane that is shot up over the island. Although we are not told anything about how long he is there before Sam and Eric find him, by the time Ralph discovers the body it has 'the ruin of a face'. Of course this could be due to the body's being burnt as the plane exploded but it could equally be the result of its having rotted in the tropical heat. We do not know.

Think about how quickly the boys' clothes become torn and fall apart and how their hair grows long. How long does your hair take to grow? There are several examples of time passing quickly in the novel.