



## Studying

# LORD OF THE FLIES

### TOP TIP

1

#### Read the book!

The starting point is, obviously, to read the book. Sacrificing a few hours of your time to **read the novel for yourself** is the first step in familiarising yourself with the text.

Whilst reading, **highlight** your **favourite moments, any lines that you particularly like** or anything that really stands out.

Doing this means that you are interacting critically with the text, which will serve you well when you come to study the text more closely.



### TOP TIP

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#### Good and evil

**Good and evil is a central theme** in the book. One way of getting to grips with this theme is to make a note of precise moments in the novel that illustrate the **collision** of good and evil. For example:

- ✓ Roger destroying the littluns' game
- ✓ Ralph's gang versus Jack's gang: how do they differ?
- ✓ Piggy's death; Simon's death
- ✓ Jack's gang hunting Ralph

Also think about how the two groups that form represent the battle between good and evil: Jack's barbaric group versus the democratic and ordered group of Ralph, Piggy, the twins and Simon.

### TOP TIP

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#### Context – Know your history

Think of the context like the **backdrop to the novel**: without understanding it, the novel will **not make complete sense**. Make sure you are familiar with:

- ✓ the Cold War
- ✓ the aftermath of the Second World War

How do these events seem to have affected William Golding and his pessimism about mankind? Understanding these contexts will help you to understand the theme of **Good and evil**. Where are there references to the war? What other wars and conflicts take place in the novel as a whole? Does this make the plot's action **symbolic**?

### TOP TIP

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#### Quotations

Get some **key quotations** under your belt for **themes, language and characters** – sometimes you can find quotations that touch on all three. Check out our **Key quotations** feature in the **Revise** section of our **Online guide** to start you off!

REMEMBER: **embed your quotations** into a paragraph in your essay for a more sophisticated answer.

### TOP TIP

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#### Literary terms

Nothing is more **impressive** than being able to **identify literary techniques** used by an author and **commenting on how they are effective**. Understanding the techniques used by **Golding** and using the proper terms is a sure way to **boost your grade!**

For example, do you know what **foreshadowing** is? How about **onomatopoeia** and **symbolism**? Does Golding use **imagery**?

REMEMBER: always comment on the **effect** of Golding's techniques.

### TOP TIP

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#### Get to know the characters

There are moments where the characters' actions can **alienate** the reader. Do you think that the evil in the book is **heightened** or **lessened** by the fact that the characters are only **children**? Does this differ from traditional portrayals of children in literature? **Comparing and contrasting** the characters, such as

Ralph and Jack, will **unlock** the novel for you, and may even lead to you **identify key points** about **language**.

Why not choose a character from the text and write an **analysis** of how he has been **characterised** through his **actions, speech and opinions**. How is your impression of this character created by Golding and how does your response to him change throughout the novel?

### TOP TIP

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#### Linking key themes with characters/events

Try linking the **key themes with characters and events**.

For example, ask yourself which characters/events could be closely associated with the following themes:

- ✓ Crowd mentality
- ✓ Law and order
- ✓ Good versus evil
- ✓ War and conflict

The more you 'map' your ideas, the more likely you are to remember key points about the text as well as developing your own **interpretations**.



### TOP TIP

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#### Language

Considering the language used by the boys is **key** when commenting on **characterisation** and the **period of time** in which the novel is set. Think about:

- ✓ The boys' language compared with the language used today – what words can you pick out that we no longer use? Does this help to **place** the novel in a particular moment in time? Is the boys' language **colloquial**?
- ✓ Piggy's language compared to others – what does this tell us about **class and status**? How does this clear difference **affect Piggy's position within the group of boys**?
- ✓ Golding's authorial voice – how does this differ from the language used by the boys? Is his language **colloquial**? What **literary techniques** does he use, and what effect do these have?

REMEMBER: it is not enough to say that Golding uses, for instance, **onomatopoeia**; you **need to comment on the effect it has on the reader**.

### TOP TIP

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#### Progress check

How much do you really know about the novel? Try and answer these questions – if you don't know the answers, maybe a bit more revision is needed!

- ✓ What is happening in the outside world while the boys are stranded on the island?
- ✓ What does the death of the airman signify?
- ✓ What does Ralph think about Jack at the beginning of the novel and how do his feelings change towards Jack?
- ✓ Why is Piggy probably the most intelligent boy on the island?
- ✓ Why does Jack try to overthrow Ralph as leader?
- ✓ What is the significance of the conch?
- ✓ Why and how does Piggy's speech differ from the speech of the other boys?
- ✓ What is **irony**? Give an example of irony in **Lord of the Flies**.

### TOP TIP

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#### Further questions

Nothing prepares you as well as **practising** some **exam questions**. Here are a few to get you started. For more exam- or controlled assessment-style questions, see our **Grade Booster** section in the **print and online study guide**:

- ✓ How does Golding present the relationship between Ralph and Jack?
- ✓ Discuss the use of imagery in **Lord of the Flies**.
- ✓ What does the conch symbolise in the novel and how effective is it? Think about:
  - i) law and order;
  - ii) free speech;
  - iii) Ralph's style of government.
- ✓ Is Simon an important character or not? Write about:
  - i) his contribution to the novel;
  - ii) the methods Golding uses to show what Simon is like.
- ✓ How has Golding created a voice that is both distinctive and individual in **Lord of the Flies**? Write about:
  - i) the ideas, language and themes of the novel;
  - ii) the reasons why Golding wrote the novel.