

# LORD OF THE FLIES KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER

PLOT SUMMARY BY CHAPTER		VOCABULARY	THEMES			
1	<b>The Sound of the Shell:</b> Some boys crash land on an island and elect a chief (Ralph) and he selects Jack Merridew to lead the choir, who become hunters. Piggy immediately becomes the target of the other boys who make fun of him. Piggy finds a conch shell and shows Ralph how to blow it. The sound of the shell calls the boys together for assemblies to discuss important matters. At the assembly, Jack, Simon, and Ralph decide to explore the island and find a trapped pig which gets away from them.	Allegory	<b>Loss of Innocence:</b> As the boys on the island progress from well-behaved, orderly children longing for rescue to cruel, bloodthirsty hunters who have no desire to return to civilization, they naturally lose the sense of innocence that they possessed at the beginning of the novel. The painted savages in Chapter 12 who have hunted, tortured, and killed animals and human beings are a far cry from the guileless children swimming in the lagoon in Chapter 3. But Golding does not portray this loss of innocence as something that is done to the children; rather, it results naturally from their increasing openness to the innate evil and savagery that has always existed within them. Golding implies that civilization can mitigate but never wipe out the innate evil that exists within all human beings.			
		Microcosm				
2	<b>Fire on the Mountain:</b> One of the littluns mentions a snake thing, a beastie, which sends fear throughout the group. They debate its existence and determine the littluns were having nightmares. Ralph decides they need to make a fire on the mountain as a rescue signal. They use Piggy's glasses to light the fire. The fire rages out of control. One of the littluns dies in the conflagration (a fancy word for large fire). Piggy and Jack argue.	Civilisation	<b>The Beast/good vs evil:</b> This theme almost becomes like a character as the boys take the beast for different objects and people across the novel. Golding shows us that the beast is not something separate to ourselves; rather it is the inherent darkness and capacity for evil with which we are all born. It is the beast within ourselves. Good vs evil is shown as a battle between two forces: Ralph and Jack.			
		Democracy				
3	<b>Huts on the Beach:</b> Jack is obsessed with hunting pigs although he has yet to catch one. Ralph and Simon work on the huts. Everyone else plays. Jack has started to become savage in his quest for blood. Ralph and Jack argue. Simon wanders off, helps the littluns get fruit, and continues to an isolated location on his own.	Savagery	<b>Civilisation v Savagery:</b> The central concern of <i>Lord of the Flies</i> is the conflict between two competing impulses that exist within all human beings: the instinct to live by rules, act peacefully, follow moral commands, and value the good of the group against the instinct to gratify one's immediate desires, act violently to obtain supremacy over others, and enforce one's will on others.			
		Society				
4	<b>Painted Faces and Long Hair:</b> Roger and Maurice bully the littluns on the beach. Jack paints his face for hunting. He leads the boys on a hunting expedition. As Jack and the hunters are out, a ship passes by. Ralph realises the hunters have let the fire go out. He races to the top but is unable to light it in time. Jack and the hunters return with a pig. Ralph and Jack argue. Jack punches Piggy in the gut. One of Piggy's lenses from his glasses breaks. The boys cook the pig and have a feast.	Dictatorship	<b>Struggle to build civilisation:</b> This shows us the conflict between man's desire to build and create a society that benefits us all, versus man's desire for power and for fun, which leads to the destructive elements that destroy society. What is played out on the island represents what happens in societies across the world, resulting in wars and conflict, like WW2.			
		Tyrant/tyranny				
5	<b>Beast from Water:</b> Ralph tries to set things in order. He re-establishes rules regarding the fire. The subject of the beast is brought up. Jack argues the island is too small for a beast. One of the boys claims the beast comes from the sea. The boys argue. Simon suggests that <i>they</i> are the beast. They all make fun of him. The arguing continues. Jack storms away from the meeting with his hunters, who make horrific sounds in the darkness. Piggy begs Ralph to call them back with the conch. He longs for grown-ups to make things right. The	Masculinity	<b>Order and discipline</b> —Golding was unhappy with the public school idea at the time that firm discipline was the right way to make children behave. As there are no adults on the island, Golding can explore what children would naturally do to create order of their own. Piggy's brains and Ralph's self-discipline are inherent within them—school didn't need to bring these out. However, Jack's worst crimes could have been prevented by some form of discipline. Golding explores the balance between discipline and freedom.			
		Persecute/persecution				
6	<b>Beast from Air:</b> A plane is shot down high above as the children sleep. A dead parachutist lands on the island stuck in the rocks and trees. Samneric see the dead parachutist and mistake it for the beast. The boys hunt for the beast on a new area of the island; they can't find it. Jack thinks he's found a good fort from which to throw rocks at people. After not finding the beast, Ralph notices the fire has gone out. None of the others, especially Jack, seem to care.	Naïve	<b>Mob mentality</b> —shown to be very dangerous in the novel, as this 'mob' mentality causes the death of Simon. Only Ralph takes personal responsibility for the death: "That was murder". The mob acts as a cover for others accepting their part in the death.			
		Order				
7	<b>Shadows and Tall Trees:</b> The hunt for the beast continues. The boys come across a pig run and Ralph sticks a boar in the nose with a spear. The boar escapes. The boys act out a pig hunt with Robert playing the part of the pig. Even Ralph enjoys the spectacle. The quest for the beast continues until evening. Jack, Ralph, and Roger agree to scale the mountain. The three boys see the dead parachutist who they mistake for the beast and run away as fast as they can.	Power	<b>KEY QUOTATIONS</b>			
		Latent				
8	<b>Gift for the Darkness:</b> Jack calls a meeting, insults Ralph, and asks for Ralph to no longer be chief. Nobody else agrees. Jack, embarrassed, leaves the tribe and goes into the forest. The assembly continues. Simon suggests they go up the mountain. Piggy suggests they build the fire on the beach since the beast is on the mountain. The boys gather wood. The littluns sing and dance. Roger, Bill, Maurice, and other biguns escape into the woods, following Jack. Simon has also disappeared into his secret spot. Hunters track down a pig and kill it, offering it to the beast as a sacrifice. Flies swarm. The hunters race back to the beach to steal fire. Simon arrives at the pig's head after the hunters have left. He imagines the pig's head is speaking to him. The pig's head tells Simon he can't escape. Jack's hunters raid Ralph's camp for fire and invite the others.	Symbolism	'fair hair' 'he might make a boxer'	"We'll have rules!" he cried excitedly.	'black, bat-like creature'	'boy who controlled them'
		Mob mentality	'a mildness about his eyes that proclaimed no devil'	"Lots of rules! Then when anyone breaks 'em-'"	'the creature was a party of boys'	'vaulted on...with his cloak flying'
9	<b>The View to a Death:</b> Simon passes out and wakes up. He explores, discovers the truth about the beast, and heads immediately to the beach to tell the others. Meanwhile, all the boys have left the original camp to join Jack's hunters. Even Ralph and Piggy go. There's a dispute. It rains. Jack and his hunters begin their chant. Simon appears from the forest. They kill him, mistaking him for the beast in their altered, crazed state. The dead parachutist is driven by the wind, over the boys, and out to sea. After the storm ceases, the boys gather around dead Simon as his body is washed out to sea.	Irrational/rational	'two light blue eyes...ready to turn to anger'	'Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness.'	"Maybe it's only us"	"What are we? Humans? Or Animals? Or savages?"
		Fear	'dog-like' 'on all fours' 'flared nostrils'	'a compulsion to track down and kill that was swallowing him up'	"You'll get back to where you came from"	"What's grown-ups going to think?"
10	<b>The Shell and the Glasses:</b> Ralph, Piggy, and Samneric are the only ones left in the original tribe. Ralph and Piggy express their horror over witnessing/participating in Simon's murder. Jack and his crew have taken up residence at the fort. Roger approaches and is told of one of the boys (Wilfred) being tied up and whipped. Jack and his tribe have been transformed into savages. They plot to steal fire. They raid Ralph and Piggy's camp and steal Piggy's glasses.	Inherent	"Kill the pig. Cut her throat. Spill her blood."	'painted and garlanded, sat there like an idol.'	"You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you?"	'There was a throb and a stamp of a single organism.'
		Mankind	"Bash her in"	'The water...dressed Simon's coarse hair with brightness. The line of his cheek silvered and the turn of his shoulder became sculptured marble.'	"sharpened at both ends"	'a bag of fat'
11	<b>Castle Rock:</b> Piggy declares his intention to confront Jack and demand his glasses back. Ralph blows the conch at the fort entrance on Castle Rock. Ralph and Jack fight. Ralph demands Piggy's glasses. Jack's savages tie up Samneric. Piggy tries to talk sense into the savages. Roger wedges the giant rock loose. It smashes the conch and knocks Piggy off the cliff. Jack and the others throw spears at Ralph, who runs away.	Universal	'The candle-buds opened their wide white flowers glimmering under the light that pricked down from the first stars.'	"Life...is scientific...i know there isn't no beast, but there isn't no fear either"	'Robert was screaming and struggling with the strength of the frenzy'	
		Protagonist	"Jolly good show. Like the Coral Island"	"Conch! Conch!" Jack shouted. "We don't need the conch anymore"	'a bird, a vision of red and yellow, flashed upwards with a witch-like cry'	'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'
12	<b>Cry of the Hunters:</b> Ralph flees and returns at night to speak with Samneric who are the new guards. They warn Ralph to go away. Ralph learns the tribe will hunt him the next day like a pig. Roger is sharpening a stick at both ends. Ralph hides in a thicket. One of the twins gives away Ralph's location. They eventually fill the thicket with smoke. Ralph charges out and runs for his life. The hunters pursue. Ralph notices the island has caught fire. The hunters chase Ralph down to the beach where he finds a naval officer there to rescue them.	Antagonist	"This is a good island"	'They knew very well why he hadn't: because of the enormity of the knife descending...the unbearable blood'	"A conch he called it...ever so valuable"	"Bollocks to the rules! If there's a beast, we'll hunt it down. We'll beat and beat and beat..."
		Irony/ironic	'Here was a coral island. Protected from the sun...he dreamed pleasantly'	'delicate pattern...deep cream...fading pink'		

WRITER’S METHODS
<b>Symbolism</b> —Golding uses many symbols in the novel. The conch—civilisation, democracy, order. The glasses—intelligence, insight. Civilisation (used for lighting fire). The fire—represents hope and rescue. Also symbolic of things getting out of control on the island—see death of the little’un and the end of the novel. The beast—represents the boys’ irrational fear. Clear connotations of evil—links to the “beast within” us all. When the beast is a dead parachutist, it links to the ongoing destruction adults are waging in the outside world. The island—like a Garden of Eden before it was corrupted by man. Notice how the boys interact with the island too—respect (Simon), vs destruction. It’s a microcosm of the way adults are destroying the outside world.
<b>Irony</b> —the irony is that the boys are playing out the bigger war going on in the adult world. The naval officer does not understand what has taken place “jolly good show”. Other ironies include the out of control fire at the end leading to rescue—it is Ralph who has wanted to keep a fire going all along and yet that fire is used to “smoke him out”. Irony is also created in Piggy: he has poor eyesight, but his insight and intelligence are so strong. The boys are evacuated from a war zone, only to then create one themselves.
<b>The importance of names</b> —We never find out Piggy’s real name and Ralph is introduced as the “fair boy”. This adds to the allegorical nature of the novel—the characters each represent bigger ideas. Note how Piggy’s name links him with the other ‘prey’ on the island—pigs. The boys never bother to find out his real name. Ralph and Jack are names Golding took directly from Coral Island. See how he uses these name consciously to subvert expected ideas about how boys would behave on an island. Percival Wemys Madison takes great pleasure in reciting his full name as that name links him to civilisation.
<b>Foreshadowing</b> —Golding continually hints at things to come. For example, Piggy’s death and the fire burning the island.

### KEY CHARACTERS —FUNCTION AND ANALYSIS

**Ralph** is the primary representative of order, civilisation and democracy. His insistence of the use of the conch ties him to this key democratic symbol. While initially being described as a image of masculinity and strength, like the conch, Ralph’s leadership becomes fragile. He demonstrates that everyone is susceptible to the dehumanising effects of losing civilisation.

**Piggy** represents intelligence and logic. His glasses are a symbol of this intelligence and hope - a testament to mankind’s scientific understanding. Physically he does not fit in and is of a lower class. As readers we partake in his bullying, only ever calling him ‘Piggy’. He has a naïve faith in the infallibility of adults, He is a victim throughout. And only fully appreciated at the end of the novel.

**Jack** embodies what happens without the civilising influence of society—we become savages with dictatorial rule and ritualised violence. Golding uses Jack as a foil to Ralph, highlighting their leadership differences.

**Simon** can be interpreted as a Christ-like figure. He has an affinity with nature, seeks solitude, is kind and suffers from many hallucinatory/fainting experiences. It is through Simon that we hear Golding’s message explicitly: he speaks with the Beast and thus loses his innocence, understanding that evil is within all humanity. Simon is killed by the boys, demonstrating the power of savagery and the mob mentality.

**Roger** represents the innate evil. His violence escalates quickly from throwing stones in Chapter 4 to “sharpening a stick at both ends” to the brutal, blunt murder of Piggy. Contextually, Roger represents people who take pleasure in their persecution of others when sanctioned by authority, such as Jack.

As identical twins, **Sam and Eric** merge together and gradually lose their individual identities as the novel continues. This change represents how easily it is to forget or change our social conditioning and lose our sense of identity.

**The little’uns**—remain mostly anonymous in the novel. However, the “boy with the birthmark” is memorable, therefore it’s more apparent he is missing. This is the first death on the island and highly significant. Percival Wemys Madison’s forgetting his phone number in Chapter 5 is just as significant, as it shows how social conditioning is beginning to fade. This makes the other littleuns cry in a display of existential angst as they realise their links to civilisation are fading too. Note who cares for the littleuns—Simon and Piggy—versus who finds them an annoyance/dispensable. What is this saying about different types of leaders and how they treat their citizens?

### FORM AND GENRE

**Allegorical novel**— the characters and setting in the novel represent bigger ideas. For example, the island could be considered a microcosm of the world, and characters also have allegorical meanings (Ralph as democracy, Jack as autocracy, Piggy as rational thought etc)

**Adventure novel**—popular in 19th and early 20th century, they focussed on exciting adventure, usually experience by child protagonists. However, Golding has inverted the usual ‘good defeating evil’ narrative of adventure stories in Lord of the Flies. Rather than encountering evil and overcoming it, evil is within the boys in LOTF and eventually it overcomes them.

**Structure**—the action takes place over a number of weeks, but time is not very clear. Over this time we see the deterioration of order. The climax of the novel is Piggy’s death—the first and only deliberate, conscious killing of a boy.

### CONTEXT AND WRITER’S INTENTIONS

Writing in an era following WW2 known as the ‘atomic age,’ Golding tapped into a widespread cultural panic over nuclear destruction and man’s capacity for warfare in Lord of the Flies. After the first atomic bombs were detonated over Japan at the end of the war in 1945, the Soviet Union and the United States began building their nuclear arsenals, leading many people to fear apocalyptic nuclear conflict. The Soviet Union and the United States engaged in a policy of brinkmanship that would come to be known as the Cold War.

As a member of the British Navy during the Second World War, Golding had been the captain of a ship that assisted in the invasion at Normandy, or D-Day, when the allies invaded Nazi occupied France, and this experience directly informed his view of man’s capacity for cruelty. Golding wrote “before the Second World War I believed in the perfectibility of social man.... but after the war I did not because I was unable to. I had discovered what one man could do to another...” Following the war, Golding worked as a headmaster at a boys’ school, which influenced his writing as well. By setting his story among schoolboys, rather than grown men fighting an actual war, he made his themes of brutality and the breakdown of civilization innate and inevitable. He intended his novel to be a direct warning about the specific dangers of nuclear proliferation, but his editor at Faber and Faber, Charles Monteith, edited out a lengthy beginning describing a nuclear war that sets the plot in motion, leaving the sense of global apoca-

Golding also uses LOTF to criticise the totalitarian regimes rising up in the East. In the 1950s, the Soviet Union was ascendant, and Western countries began learning about Soviet gulags for political dissenters, their violent political purges, and the breadth of the Soviet government’s domestic power. At the same time, awareness grew of the holocaust in Nazi Germany and the fascist regime that perpetrated it. Golding was particularly interested in “groupthink,” a term coined by George Orwell in 1984 to describe how essentially good people are able, through coercion and fear, to excuse or enable injustice.

Both William Golding and his fictional characters were familiar with Robinsonades, a 19th century genre that took its name from Daniel Defoe’s desert island novel, Robinson Crusoe. Written in the eighteenth century, Robinson Crusoe is an adventure tale about a shipwrecked sailor who survives by his wits for several years before finally returning home to England. Writers as influential and varied as Edgar Allen Poe, Herman Melville, and Goethe wrote novels about sea faring adventures that pitted man against the elements. For Golding, though, the most influential Robinsonade was R.M. Ballantyne’s 1858 novel, The Coral Island: A Tale of the Pacific Ocean, a novel about three British schoolboys marooned on an island who show bravery and valour in a series of adventures and conquests. Golding said in interviews that this novel was a boyhood favourite of his, and was part of the inspiration for Lord of the Flies.

The first use of atomic weapon—Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan—in 1945—is a key background to the novel. It was now quite possible that civilisation could be completely destroyed by a single conflict. In 1949 the Cold War began when the Soviet Union detonated its first A-bomb. This was an ideological battle between belief systems. Many people were accused on being Communists and a climate of fear prevailed.

### EXAMPLE EXAM QUESTION

You will get a choice of TWO questions and you must answer ONE. One question is usually character-based and the other question is theme-based.

Example:

*How does Golding present Ralph as a leader?*

Example:

*“Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man’s heart...”*

*What does Golding have to say about human nature in Lord of the Flies?*

Example:

How far does Golding present Jack as responsible for what happens to the boys on the island?

### EXAM TIPS

1. Read the exam question carefully and highlight the focus of the question / other key words.
2. Quickly plan out the focus of 3/4 paragraphs. i.e what 4 separate main points would you want to make about Ralph in the above question?
3. Can you now roughly plan out 2/3 points to make within your planned paragraphs? What quotes would be effective to use here?
4. Write your thesis. What’s your big point/idea related to the question? Remember the reason why Golding wrote this novel and his message to his readers. What role does your character, or the theme play in helping him convey this message. Try to write your intro using phrases like: Golding uses Ralph to show..... OR Through his exploration of human nature / savagery etc, Golding is able to show that.... What are you trying to argue?
5. Write your essay. You are aiming for 3/4 body paragraphs and a conclusion, in addition to your intro. Structure of your body paragraphs: overall point, point, evidence, zoom in, additional point, evidence, zoom in, zoom out + evaluate. If you can, use short, integrated quotations and range around the novel confidently, drawing on the best possible bits of evidence to illustrate your ideas.