Lord of the Flies

Study Guide Questions

Directions: Write in complete sentences. One word answers will not receive credit.

Chapter One: The Sound of the Shell

1. What is the meaning of the chapter’s title, “The Sound of the Shell”?

2. Describe Ralph. How old is he?

3. Describe Piggy.

4. What is Ralph’s attitude toward Piggy in the first chapter?

5. What gives the conch value?

6. Why did the boys gather when Ralph blew the conch?
7. Describe Sam and Eric.

8. What about Jack Merridew indicates that he is used to commanding?

9. Why is Ralph chosen to be leader over Jack?

10. What is the “scar” that is repeatedly mentioned?

11. Why is Jack unable to kill the pig?

12. What do Piggy, Simon, and the littlun with the birthmark have in common?

13. How is Piggy revealed as most closely tied to the world of the adults?

14. How is Piggy indirectly responsible for the blowing of the conch?

15. Describe the island and explain the significance of its shape.
16. What is the most notable symbol from this chapter and what does it represent?

Chapter Two: Fire on the Mountain
1. What decisions are made at the meeting held the first evening?

2. The little boy with the mulberry-colored birthmark comes forward to speak of what? What element does he introduce?

3. How do Ralph and Jack answer the question about the beast?

4. How do the boys start the fire?

5. What happens as a result of the fire? What is the significance?

Chapter Three: Huts on the Beach
1. How does the author let you know that some time has passed?

2. What was Jack trying to do? How successful was he?
3. What was Ralph doing at the same time?

4. Describe the situation of the building of the shelters.

5. How are Jack and Ralph alike? How are they different?

6. When Jack is hunting or talking about hunting, what kind of look does he have? What does this signify?

7. How had many attitudes, especially the littluns, changed by this time?

8. What effect does Simon’s comment, “As if this wasn’t a good island” have on Ralph? On the reader?

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

10. Explain the following passage, “They walked along two continents of experience, unable to communicate…They looked at each other, baffled, in love and hate.”
11. Identify how Simon is set apart from Jack and Ralph.

12. What societal archetypes do Ralph, Jack, and Simon seem to represent?

13. In what ways does the author create a Christ-likeness about Simon?

14. In Chapter Three, the personal conflict between Jack and Ralph mirrors the thematic conflict of the novel. What is the thematic conflict?

15. What is the significance of “Painted Faces and Long Hair”?

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**Chapter 4: Painted Faces and Long Hair**

1. Describe the rhythm of life on the island.

2. What effects did the different parts of the day have on the island?
3. Describe the new characters found in chapter four:
   
   A. The littluns—
   
   B. Henry—
   
   C. Roger—

4. What incident shows that Roger is still affected and still held by the learned rules of society?

5. Why does Jack paint his face? How does the paint transform him? What does this symbolize?

6. What symbolic meaning does the fire have?

7. What was Piggy’s idea? How was it received?

8. Identify the problem that arose between Ralph and Jack.

9. What two worlds does the narrator say that Jack and Ralph depict?

10. Explain Jack’s change toward Piggy.
11. Explain the importance of the following statements;
   a. P.58 “The first rhythm…perhaps even sleeping.”
   b. P.62 “Here, invisible, yet strong, was the taboo of the old life.”
   c. P.68 “Kill the pig. Cut her throat. Spill her blood.”
   d. P. 74 “Jack looked round for understanding, but only found respect.”

Chapter Five: Beast from the Water
1. Identify the major conflict of the novel.

2. What theme is Golding developing in the opening paragraph of Chapter Five?

3. Summarize Ralph’s thoughts as he prepared for the assembly.

4. What was different about this particular meeting? Why (or how) would that later be a factor?

5. Analyze Ralph’s speech to the group.
6. What were the various reactions?

7. What was Phil’s dream?

8. What theme does the discussion of fear introduce?

9. Since *Lord of the Flies* is allegorical in nature, interpret what the beast may signify in a religious reading, and in a Freudian reading.

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

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

12. What are Piggy and Simon adamant about Ralph’s not giving up leadership?
13. Describe the settings and importance of the following lines from chapter five:
   a. P. 78 “Ralph was a specialist in thought now, and could recognize thought in another.”

   b. P. 86 “Tormented by the silence and the refusal the assembly broke into a chant. What’s your name? What’s your name?”

   c. P. 89 “Simon became inarticulate in his effort to express man’s essential illness. Inspiration came to him.”

   e. P. 92 “If I blow the conch…never be rescued.”

   f. P. 94 “A thin wail…to help him.”
Chapter Six—Beast from Air

1. What was the “world of the grownups”?

2. Describe the “sign” that came from there.

3. How are the twins shown to be so alike throughout this chapter?

4. How much time passes from page 95 – 100? How does the author let you know that?

5. Contrast the various emotions upon the news of the “Beast”.

6. What would Piggy’s job be? Why?

7. Identify those who go on the hunt.

8. What more do we learn of the island from pages 104 –108?

9. How do Ralph and Jack act toward each other at various stages of chapter six?
10. Give details of the new area of the island the boys found.

11. What did some of the boys want to do at this point?

12. Contrast the good and bad points about this part of the island.

Chapter Seven—Shadows and Tall Trees

1. What thoughts were going through Ralph’s mind?

2. Describe the conversation between Ralph and Simon.

3. As Ralph is thinking about home, what suddenly gets him out of those thoughts?

4. What is significant about Ralph’s response to his encounter with the boar?

5. Why is it especially horrific and savage when Robert says, “You want a real pig…because you’ve got to kill him,” and Jack replies, “Use a littlun?”

6. How does the boys’ playfulness turn violent? What does this say?
7. What did Ralph ask Jack, “Why do you hate me?”

8. Comment on: “I’m going up the mountain to look for the beast now. Then the supreme sting, the casual, bitter word, “Coming?”

9. What is meant by the phrase, “A stain in the darkness, a stain that was Jack, detached itself and began to draw away”?

10. What was on the top of the mountain, moving sideways?

11. What had caused its varied movements?

Chapter Eight—Gift for the Darkness

1. What effect did the weather have throughout this chapter?

2. Give examples to show how Jack and Ralph are falling farther apart.

3. How do Piggy and Simon each change in this chapter?
4. Describe the different details of building a new fire.

5. What changes did Jack suggest to his followers?

6. Point out the details of their hunt.

7. What is the “Gift for the Darkness”?

8. Why is Ralph’s conversation with Piggy so important?

9. What is the result of Jack’s speech to Ralph’s group?

10. The pig’s head, being surrounded by flies, has become the Lord of the Flies. “Lord of the Flies” is an English translation of the name Beelzebub, a common name for either Satan or one of his chief demons. What is the connection between the beast and the skewered sow’s head?

11. What truth has Simon realized that no one else seems to comprehend?
12. Simon is the only character who does not feel morality as an artificial imposition of society. For whom might he be a foil?

13. The act of placing the sow’s head near the forest glade filled with butterflies and flowers highlights what theme?

14. How is the decline of Jack and his followers to savagery physically displayed?

15. When Jack and the savages surprise Ralph, Piggy, and the others, Ralph run to the fire, and Piggy runs to the conch. Interpret the symbolism.

16. Give interpretations of Simon’s encounter with the Lord of the Flies from an archetypal standpoint.

17. What has physically happened to Simon? How can you tell—provide textual evidence.

Chapter Nine: A View to a Death

1. Describe the atmosphere in this chapter.
2. What does Simon see on the mountain?

3. What Biblical parallels may be drawn from Simon’s walk?

4. Contrast the moods of the two groups of boys.

5. Why does Jack allow Ralph and Piggy to have meat?

6. What does the dance signify?

7. What reaction does the coming of the storm cause?

8. Tell what happens as Simon makes it down to the beach. What does it symbolize?

9. Why do you think the dead parachutist would be released just as Simon dies?

10. Comment on the author’s effective style as he closes out the chapter on page 154.
Chapter Ten: The Shell and the Glasses

1. Contrast the seats of authority. How do the seats support the theme?

2. What is the significance of the title of this chapter?

3. How does Golding highlight the transition from civilization to savagery?

4. Why did Ralph and Piggy try to encourage each other’s innocence?

5. Comment on the words from page 158, “The air was heavy with unspoken knowledge. Sam twisted and the obscene word shot out of him ‘dance?’ Memory of the dance that none of them had attended shook all four boys convulsively.”

6. What in this chapter signifies the end of hope?

7. What news does Roger have? What more does this show of Jack?

8. How are the hunters now referred? What does this say about them?

9. What two things does the fire now provide?
10. What do Simon’s words mean to Ralph?

11. Why does Ralph start sniggering uncontrollably?

12. Who comes to the shelters that evening?

13. Are the boys able to protect themselves? Five details.

14. What is the purpose of this raid? What is the significance of what is taken?

**Chapter Eleven: Castle Rock**

1. What are the results of the savages’ last attack?

2. How does Piggy continue to show he is different?

3. What is his plan to retrieve his glasses?
4. Why do Samneric want to be painted?

5. 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?

6. Cite some examples of foreshadowing in this chapter.

7. For what reason are Jack and Ralph fighting now? What are the results?

8. How is Jack able to show his superiority?

9. What role does Roger seems to be taking? Trace the progression of his savagery throughout this chapter.

10. The death of Piggy and the destruction of the conch signify what?
11. How is Piggy portrayed at the moment of his death?

12. What follows this event?

13. Why does Roger shove his way past Jack, only just managing not to edge him aside?

Chapter Twelve: Cry of the Hunters

1. Explain the following observation: “But really, thought Ralph, this was not Bill. This was a savage whose image refused to blend with that ancient picture of a boy in shorts and shirt.” What does Ralph mean?

2. What is the significance of the simile comparing the skull of the Lord of the Flies with the conch shell?

3. How does Ralph learn of Jack’s plans for him?

4. What does Ralph say to the twins when they refuse to help him?
5. Does Ralph understand why he must be killed? Explain.

6. What is the irony of Samneric’s behavior?

7. How does the author describe Ralph’s flight across the island?

8. What is the irony of the fire on the island?

9. In Chapter Twelve, what plot event serves as essentially a deus ex machine?

10. Why is Percival unable to remember his name and address?

11. Why is Piggy’s fall emphasized? What does it symbolize?
12. In the microcosm on the island, what does each of these boys represent: Ralph, Piggy, Jack, Roger, and Simon?

13. Why does Ralph say that he is in charge on the island?

14. Why does Ralph weep?

15. What comparison then is implied at the end of the novel?