

Civilization vs. savagery

Government



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the novel, *Lord of the Flies*, the boys ended up stranded on the island. In order to get out of the predicament they are in, they have had to adapt to the situation. They used things around them to maintain civilization, which also had symbolic meanings related to them. By analyzing the evolution of symbols such as the conch, fire, and Piggy's glasses. In the novel, one can map out the boys' gradual descent into savagery.

The conch represents power because it once was able to control the boys with it. The conch symbolizes democracy, structure, and respect. In the beginning, Ralph and Piggy discover the conch shell on the beach, and Ralph uses it to call the other boys on the island. "By the time Ralph finished blowing the conch the platform was crowded" (Golding 32).

The conch gave them order, it was used to summon the other boys and call the group together. It gave them power because it was able to control the boys. When anyone had ideas, they used it to speak their minds. The conch shell becomes a powerful symbol of civilization and order in the novel.

Fire is a technology that threatens destruction if it gets out of control. Fire symbolizes the boys' connection to human civilization. Their signal fire gives them hope to get rescued. "You got your small fire all right" (Golding 21). By keeping the signal fire going they hope to attract the attention of a passing boat or aircraft who could possibly rescue them. The fire at the end of the novel, is the direct result of the conflict between Ralph and Jack's tribe, which ultimately results in the destruction of the island.

They got rescued because of the fire so it plays an important role throughout the novel but their friends got killed due to the fire too which shows the destructive and savage side of fire.

Piggy's glasses represent the creativeness in society. The symbolism of his glasses is clear from the start when the boys use them to focus the sunlight and start a fire. "His specs, use them as burning glasses!" (Golding 55). Piggy is probably the most intelligent in the group. His rational thinking and ability to see solutions to the boys' problems, helps them accomplish their situations. The glasses represent the boys' only means of obtaining fire to help. Once the glasses are stolen, and Piggy cannot see, he is unable to help Ralph maintain civilization.

The symbols in the novel, *Lord of the Flies*, kept them in civilization for a while. The supplies they used, helped them achieve longevity in their environment and supported their up-keeping. The evolution of the symbols, such as the conch, fire, and Piggy's glasses, maintained their civilization, and introduced their descent into savagery.