

# Lord of the flies essay sample



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Lord of the Flies is an allegorical novel written by William Golding. An allegorical novel is where characters and objects within the text can have real life representations or meanings. For example, Golding uses the conch to represent the backbone of civilisation and order on the island. In the first assembly, the boys participate in an election for leader; “ the toy of voting was almost as pleasing as the conch”, a democratic and civilised act in itself. After being elected Ralph sets a few rules, “ we can’t have everyone speaking at once.

“We’ll have to have hands up like at school” - therefore in assemblies in order to speak you must be in possession of the conch. This quote suggests that the schoolboys have to refer back to the civilised world for their discipline. From the phrase “ hands up like at school” we get the impression the boys are incapable of maintaining order and society themselves so they have to relate back to methods enforced and applied back in Britain. The conch, being found early on in the novel, is very important to keep order and power over the boys; order, because it is used to call the assemblies.

Early in the novel, after the first assembly, we are introduced to the idea of the signal fire. But in order to start the fire the boys use Piggy’s glasses to reflect and concentrate the sun’s rays. Piggy’s glasses, allowing the boys to create fire, the first and most basic necessity of civilisation, symbolize science and technology. It represents the advancement in science. While stuck on how to light the signal fire, the boys focus on trying to resort to natural ways to start a fire; “ You rub two sticks”.

However after debating, the boys notice Piggy's glasses, " His specs - use them as burning glasses! . Therefore we can infer Piggy's " specs" represent technology because they are the only manmade piece of equipment on the island, obviously apart from the plane wreck. In addition to this, the signal fire represents the boys connection to the outside, civilised world - a measurement of the schoolboys' link to the outside world. For example, when the fire is large and being maintained, the boys' determination to return back to the civilised world is strong, whereas when the fire is out or small they have lost the longing to return.

We get the impression the Golding is trying to show us that we are very linked to savagery although we may not think it. We see the first loss in control and the descent into civilisation after Ralph wins the election for leader. Jack is mortified after failing to become " chief" and starts to become angry - Ralph notices this and allows Jack to have authority of his choir. Jack want them to become hunters; this can be seen as becoming more primitive or savage, but also by the fact that Jack orders them to remove their choir robes, " Alright choir.

Take off your togs". This is a deliberate indication from Golding that they want to become disconnected from the outside world. It also could indicate to us that they want to become more individual and leave behind the order and uniform that the civilised world enforces. Essentially the robes represent integrity and pureness. We are also told that the robes have crosses on them to suggest Catholicism - however, later in the text, they murder other schoolboys implying irony and contrast to their normal lives.

This implies that although we struggle to believe it civilisation and savagery among humans is very close. Savagery is always very alert in the back of our minds. Golding also presents the lack of civilisation through the use of the boys not following orders and requests. Such as when Ralph and Piggy instruct the boys to keep a steady supply of fresh water-filled coconut shells in the shade, “ stood there among skull-like coconuts” however soon the boys disobey this order and drink straight from the river.

We can interpret this as being very animalistic due to the fact only animals drink out of rivers and lakes. There is also this presentation of primitive and animalistic behaviour, when the rule of going to the toilet behind a rock - on the beach so the tide washes away the mess - is broken. Furthermore we see this theme of animalistic behaviour developing in Chapter Three and Four. At the start of Chapter Three Jack, the leader of “ savagery” on the island, Golding describes him as “ dog-like” and also “ ape-like”.

His “ nose only a few inches from the humid earth” and he was “ on all fours”. Also, he carried “ a sharpened stick” and “ trailed” it behind him suggesting his intention was to kill. He was also naked apart from his “ tattered shorts held up by his knife belt”. We get the impression that Jack is focused on hunting and is also presented in a primitive way. He resembles a creature on his “ all fours” and “ nose a few inches” off the ground. In addition to all this, Golding describes him in Chapter Five as having a “ bloodthirsty snarl” while painting his face in mud and camouflaging materials.

Jack makes a mask after not being fully satisfied by his painting. The mask that Jack wears is a symbol - it symbolises Jack's tribal and primitive instincts. It is also an object Jack can hide behind and remove his identity; "the mask was a thing of its own, behind which Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness". It also gives Jack the power to act in more savage and hideous ways than he already has - we witness this later in the novel when Jack orders his "tribe" to hunt down Ralph, Piggy and Simon, which eventually results in Piggy's death.

The mask also breaks any link to the civilised world he had, similar to the choir robes and the signal fire, and also allows him to conceal his civilised principles. The main way Golding presents savagery on the island is through the use of the imaginary "beast". The beast stands for the primal instinct within all humans. There is a feel of increasing fear from the boys as the threat of the imaginary "beast" increases - as they become more savage they almost idolise the beast as if it were a god-like figure by giving the physical form of the beast (the pig's head) sacrifices to ensure their protection.

Simon, a religious and biblical parallel, is the only character in the story to realise that the beast is actually a symbol of evil and savagery inside the boys. Golding is trying to give us the impression that savagery and civilisation is very linked and not as far apart as we might have previously thought. He is trying to plant the idea that every one of us has savagery within our minds we just choose to fight it.