

1. Talk about the differences between the two main characters, Ralph and Jack. How are they different from one another, and what broad "types" of individuals do they represent?

2. In what way can Piggy with his "specs" be seen as representing the rational, scientific aspects of society?

3. What role does the conch play? How does it represent a civilizing force? How is the power of the conch challenged?

4. What does the beast represent? How is it used by Jack to control the others? Are there parallels for "the beast" in the real world, past or present?

5. What does Simon mean when he suggests that the beast is only the boys themselves? What do you think Simon's character is meant to represent? How is his death symbolic?

6. Why do most of the boys choose to follow Jack and the hunters rather than Ralph?

7. What do you feel Golding's vision of humanity is? What do you think he believes is at the heart of an individual...an instinct for peace and cooperation or for dominance and savagery? How does his vision of humanity compare with your own? Has reading this novel changed your view of humanity in any way?

8. What do you think about the rules of civilization? Do they free us and enable us to rise to our best selves? Or do the rules constrain our bad nature that lies at the heart of ourselves?

9. What does hunting mean to Jack...at the beginning, and then later? What happens to his mental state after he kills his first pig?

10. What is ironic about the naval officer who arrives to "rescue" the boys? How does Ralph feel about returning to the safety of civilization? Why does he weep—is it relief, or something else?

11. Who is the more dangerous character, Jack or Roger? Why? What do you think might have happened (not only concerning Ralph, but also the future leadership of the tribe) if the naval officer did not appear in the final scene?

12. Golding wrote his novel 10 years after the close of World War II and during the era of Communist containment. In what way does his book reflect the particular world politics of his time? Does the book have relevance today?

11. Describe the major characters: Ralph, Piggy, and Jack.

12. What instances of foreshadowing occur in this chapter? What predictions can you make about what sorts of things might happen later in the novel?

13. What do the boys' attitudes and actions (e.g. Ralph's joy at being free of "grownups," the vote for leader, Ralph's telling the other boys about Piggy's nickname) reveal about human nature?

14. What is the significance (the meaning and importance) of the boys' encounter with the wild piglet?

15. What do you think the "sound of the shell" and the conch itself might symbolize?

16. In Chapter 5, Golding writes, "In a moment the platform was full of arguing, gesticulating shadows. To Ralph, seated, this seemed the breaking up of sanity." How is

sanity defined? How does this novel contribute to an understanding of sanity and of madness? What are some other instances of madness in the novel?

17. Explain Piggy's point of view when he responds, "Course there aren't [ghosts] . . . 'Cos things wouldn't make sense. Houses an' streets, an' — TV — they wouldn't work" (Chapter 5). What does Piggy mean when he says that technology couldn't function if a supernatural beings existed?

18. Ralph says in Chapter 12 "there was that indefinable connection between himself and Jack; who therefore would never let him alone; never." What is that connection? How does it develop and what does it signify?

19. When Simon sees the Lord of the Flies, Golding writes that his "gaze was held by that ancient inescapable recognition" (Chapter 8). What recognition is Golding referring to?

20. Why does Simon's role as a visionary make him an outcast in the group? What other visionaries have been outcasts in their societies?

21. How does Golding use color to link Jack with the Lord of the Flies? Are there other instances of Golding using color to link characters or provide symbolism?

22. In Chapter 11, when Ralph announces that he's calling an assembly, he is greeted with silence. How do silence and speech function in this novel, and why is silence so threatening to the boys?

23. In Chapter 3, Piggy asks the boys "How can you expect to be rescued if you don't put first things first and act proper?" What does Piggy mean by "act proper?" Why does he feel acting properly will bring them success in being rescued? Contrast this sentiment to the actual reason a rescue ship spots their smoke signal.

24. Who or what is being described with this phrase: "There was the brilliant world of hunting, tactics, fierce exhilaration, skill, and there was the world of longing and baffled common-sense" (Chapter 4)? How do the two worlds represent facets of humanity?

25. Describe some of the ways the vision of a human "at once heroic and sick" (Chapter 6) is represented in the novel and within the larger context of history as well. Does Golding prescribe a remedy for the "sickness"?