

Chapter notes and activities

Chapter 1

- Ralph and Piggy call the other boys together.
- Ralph is made leader but Jack keeps the choir.
- Ralph, Jack and Simon learn that they are on an island.

In this opening chapter, Golding sets the scene (a tropical island), introduces some of the themes (for example, authority), and gradually introduces the characters.

1 The island

- a Select five clear descriptions of the island from the first few pages of the novel (before the other boys join Ralph and Piggy). Add the main features of each description to the table below.

Page number	Feature of the island	Positive (+)/Negative (-)

- b Now use these five features to sum up what aspects of the island Golding has emphasised. Begin by completing the sentence below. **Hint:** if you find five positive features about the beauty of the island this is not a coincidence.

The first time the island is described the main features Golding picks out seem to make it...

- 2 After a brief moment of seriousness about their situation, Ralph shows he is pleased that there are no adults on the island — by standing on his head. He behaves as a typical child might do when given the opportunity to enjoy himself.

Ralph shrieked with laughter. (p. 6)

What other evidence can you find to show the childishness of the boys in this chapter?

3 Symbols

Two very important symbols are introduced in Chapter 1: the boys' manner of dress and the conch.

- a Make a list of the things the reader is told about the boys' appearance in Chapter 1. Pay particular attention to how the boys in the choir, led by Jack, are already dressed differently from the others.

Uniform and appearance		
Page number	Feature of the island	Positive (+)/Negative (-)

- b Use the table below to make notes on how the conch is used in Chapter 1. (Be prepared to make observations on the importance of the conch in later chapter exercises too.)

What does the conch look like?	How is it used?	What does it bring about and represent?

4 Quote quest

For each of the following quotations from Chapter 1 find out and write down:

- who says it, and about whom or what
- what it means or what you learn from it

- a The fair boy stopped and jerked his stockings with an automatic gesture that made the jungle seem for a moment like the Home Counties.

- b 'Where's the man with the megaphone?'

c 'He's always throwing a faint...He did in Gib.; and Addis; and at matins over the precentor.'

d 'Listen, everybody. I've got to have time to think things out. I can't decide what to do straight off. If this isn't an island we might be rescued straight away.'

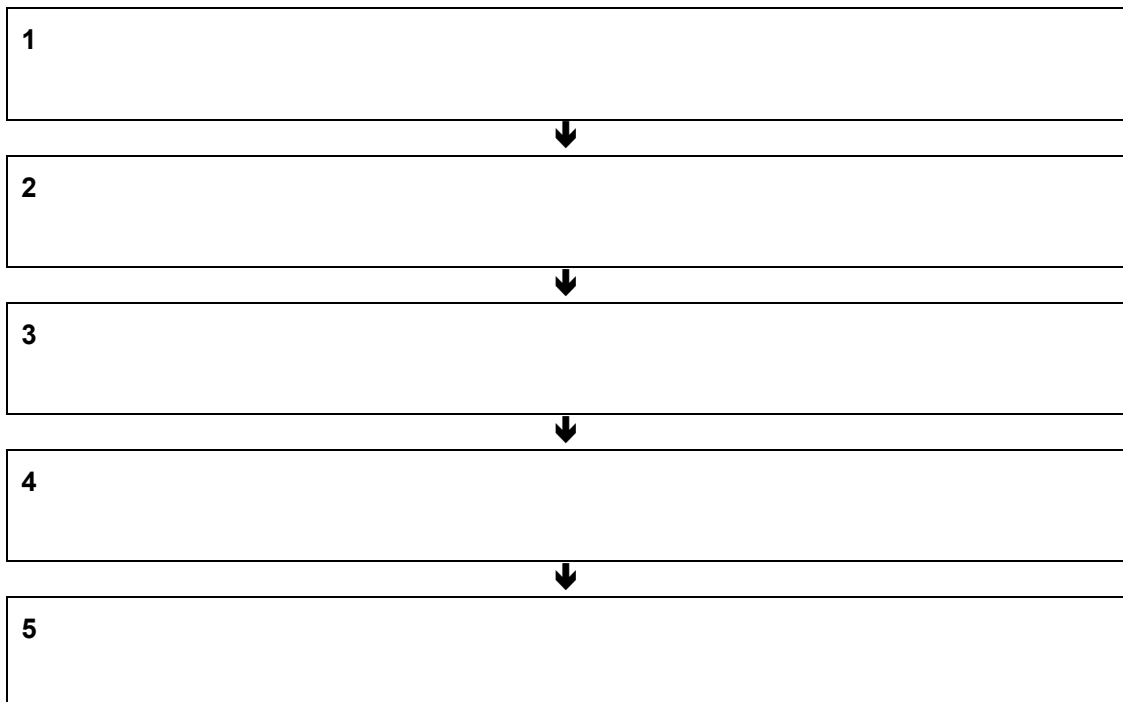
e He snatched the knife out of the sheath and slammed it into a tree trunk. Next time there would be no mercy. He looked round fiercely, daring them to contradict.

5 Follow the plot

Make a list of what you consider to be the five most important parts of the plot of Chapter 1. Keep your notes short but try to see what connections an event here might have with later events in the novel.

Here is one example done for you. Put this in its place in the order of events as you work through the chapter.

The conch gives Ralph power and he is elected leader — Ralph makes the mistake of putting too much faith in the conch as a symbol of power and this is costly later.



6 Questions

a What aspects of Ralph’s appearance are stressed in Chapter 1?

b Who reveals Piggy’s nickname to the group?

c Who tells Ralph how to blow the conch?

d What does Piggy say that makes immediate rescue seem impossible?

e What role does Jack choose for the choir?

f Which boys explore and find out that they are on an island?

7 Wider implications

Consider what Golding is saying through the characters and events in the novel. For each of the following points say what the wider issues might be.

a The first thing the boys do is to try to recreate the society they knew in their ordinary lives.

Hint: Consider what makes children behave as they do, and the role of order in society.

b The conch becomes an important symbol of power, yet it was used by tribal societies, not by the adults in England. **Hint:** Consider why symbols of power work in our society — for example, a school prefect’s badge.

- c The boys have been placed on an island. Golding has chosen to do this. **Hint:** Consider the advantages for Golding of this setting.

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Chapter 2

- The small boys begin to worry about a beast.
- A signal fire is lit, with the choir responsible for keeping it going.
- The forest catches fire and at least one boy is killed.

In this chapter, fire is important both in terms of plot development and as a symbol. As a symbol it represents several different things in this novel.

1 Fire

Jot down all the things that you personally associate with fire in all its forms.

2 The importance of fire

Find five statements about fire made in Chapter 2. Write these in the table below and add the information about who makes each statement and how it is relevant to the plot.

What is said about the fire?	Who says it?	How might it be important?

3 Symbols

The three main symbols found in Chapter 2 are the conch, the beast and fire.

a Explain how the conch becomes an important symbol in Chapter 2.

b Say what the conch symbolises.

c How might some of the younger boys have come to think that there was a beast on the island?

d What part of human nature does the beast represent?

e What is the importance of fire as a symbol?

f How is the fire in Chapter 2 a warning of later events?

4 Quote quest

For each of the following quotations from Chapter 2 find out:

- who says it, and about whom or what
- what it means or what you learn from it

a 'We're on an uninhabited island with no other people on it.'

b 'You're hindering Ralph. You're not letting him get to the most important thing.'

c 'This is our island. It's a good island. Until the grown-ups come to fetch us we'll have fun.'

d 'We've got to have rules and obey them. After all, we're not savages. We're English; and the English are best at everything.'

e Beneath them, on the unfriendly side of the mountain, the drum-roll continued.

5 Questions

a Why might the boys be happy to have lots of rules?

b Why do the boys realise they might not be rescued quickly?

c Which boy first brings up the idea of the beast?

d What happens to this boy?

e How is the first fire lit?

f Who turns out to be right about the size of the fire?

6 Wider implications

Consider what Golding is saying through the characters and events in the novel. For each of the following points say what the wider issues might be:

a The boys experience the strong natural force of fire in Chapter 2.

b The two strongest boys already have different ideas about what is the most important thing to do.

c The boys damage the paradise island they have been given.

Extension activity

Golding said he had wanted to write a realistic version of *The Coral Island*. How realistic do you think the boys' behaviour is in the first two chapters of *Lord of the Flies*? Give three clear examples.

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Chapter 3

- Jack becomes more interested in hunting.
- Ralph tries to get the boys to build shelters.

This chapter begins with a long account of Jack hunting in the forest. When he returns to the beach, we see the beginnings of a conflict of needs and priorities. The boys need food, but they also need shelter. Jack seems to think that hunting is more important than anything else. Ralph does not agree. We see from Golding's detailed description of Jack hunting how he has taken to this new activity.

1 Jack's appearance, movement and actions

- a Use the table below to make notes on Jack's appearance, movements and actions in the opening part of Chapter 3. Select the four clearest examples.

Page no.	Appearance	Movements and actions

- b Now use the information from the table above to summarise what parts of Jack's nature Golding is stressing here. Begin by completing the statement below.

Jack seems to be

2 The shelters

Now look at how the different groups of boys react to the building of the shelters.

Ralph, Simon and Piggy	Jack and the hunters	The littluns

3 Quote quest

For each of the following quotations from Chapter 3 find out:

- who says it, and about whom or what
- what it means or what you learn from it

a He passed like a shadow under the darkness of the tree and crouched...

b ‘As if it wasn’t a good island.’

c ‘I was talking about smoke! Don’t you want to be rescued?’

d His feet left prints in the soft soil and the creepers shivered throughout their lengths when he bumped them.

4 The forest

Sometimes this is forest; other times it seems like jungle. Explain how Golding uses the forest setting differently for Jack’s hunting trip and Simon’s journey into the forest.

5 Leadership

Compare the leadership styles of Ralph and Jack. Make a list of the points that each boy thinks are important and say how these show the type of leader that each boy represents.

6 Questions

a Why does Jack not manage to kill the pig even though he hits it with his spear?

b How do the older boys come to realise that the littluns are afraid?

c Which major character barely makes an appearance in Chapter 3?

d What is odd about Simon's behaviour in the forest?

e How does Golding describe nightfall on the island, and what does this suggest?

7 Wider implications

Consider what Golding is saying through the characters and events in the novel. For each of the following points say what the wider issues might be.

a How does the conversation between Ralph and Jack about the huts and hunting hint at the conflict that is to come?

b Say what effect the last line of the chapter ('Their scent spilled out into the air and took possession of the island.') has on the reader's understanding of night-time on the island.

Extension activities

a Read the first two or three chapters of *The Coral Island* (available online courtesy of the Gutenberg Project at www.gutenberg.org).

How do the opening chapters of *Lord of the Flies* reflect:

- the story of *The Coral Island*?
- the world in which the later novel was written?

- b** Examine the different aspects of human nature which Golding begins to explore in Chapter 3.

Consider:

- Ralph as a leader
- Jack the hunter
- Piggy as a thinker
- Simon as a mystic
- the boys as followers

How far do you see these qualities in people around you?