chichester festival theatre

A resource pack for GCSE teachers and students to accompany the production of

William Golding's

Lord of the Flies

Adapted for the stage by **Nigel Williams**

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Foreword

We are delighted to share this teacher's guide to accompany Chichester Festival Theatre's production of ***Lord of the Flies***, adapted by Nigel Williams. This resource has been created to support classroom learning and is designed to help young people connect with William Golding's powerful and enduring story through practical exploration.

At its core, ***Lord of the Flies*** raises questions about power, identity, belonging and morality- questions that continue to resonate with students today. Seeing the story brought to life on stage offers a unique opportunity to experience its energy, conflict and raw humanity in ways that extend far beyond the page.

The activities in this guide are intended to give students tools to step inside the world of the text. Through drama exercises, discussion prompts and creative tasks, they are encouraged to explore not only the story's characters and themes, but also its wider social and moral questions. We hope these approaches will open up fresh perspectives on the text, enabling students to engage both intellectually and emotionally.

At Chichester Festival Theatre, we believe in the power of live performance to provoke thought, ignite curiosity and inspire dialogue. We hope you find the ideas in this guide useful in supporting learning, deepening understanding and encouraging debate. ***Lord of the Flies*** is a story about young people and the choices they face; it asks difficult questions but also creates space for imagination, creativity and empathy.

We are excited to share this resource with you and your students, and we look forward to welcoming you to the theatre.

Sue Webb

Contents

Warm-up tasks

The below tasks are intended as warm-up activities for practical approaches to studying ***Lord of the Flies***, relevant to both **William Golding's** novel and **Nigel Williams'** adaptation. They are intended for GCSE students but can be adapted to students of other ages studying other texts. Teachers may wish to use these activities in isolation or as part of more developed practical lessons on the novel/play.

1. Welcome to the Island

This is an activity designed to be energetic and fun, introducing students to some of the key elements of character, setting and atmosphere in the story

a. Beginning in a circle, discuss how life on the island is presented at the start of the play/novel. If the students have read or watched the story they can lead the discussion. The teacher may wish to guide the discussion to cover these aspects:

Chaotic

Order quickly breaks down into disorder.

Primal

The children are reduced to basic survival instincts.

Isolated

Cut off from society and adult guidance.

Violent

Conflict and brutality dominate as the story progresses.

Unforgiving

The environment and human nature both prove harsh and relentless

b. Introduce some significant phrases from the play text. The students or teacher may have their own suggestions but those provided below may be helpful (all from Act One of Williams' adapted text). Each phrase, when called by the teacher, has an action to complete in response.

'Stamp it out!'

4 rhythmic stamps: left-right-left-right

'[Name] for leader!' *(naming one member of the group)*

All other members of the group bow/point/gesture in reverence to the named group member

'Blow the conch!'

A loud, open-mouthed sound: 'Oooooh!

'Keep a watch!'

Slow, arcing movement of an outstretched arm in a searching gesture

'Midnight feasts!'

Respond with animalistic violence: 'Murder unlimited!'

'Kill de pig!'

Throat-cutting gesture with vocal sound

c. Rehearse these actions in a circle to develop ensemble

d. Group members move around the space, with the teacher calling instructions. Encourage dynamic movement, full-body gesture, and varied vocalisation. Encourage the group to reflect the aspects of the island discussed at the start (e.g. chaotic, primal, isolated, violent, unforgiving).

e. Practice the responses to each instruction so they can be done in unison.

Extension

1. Offer group members the option to follow the rules or ignore them.
2. Cast two members of your group as rival leaders: Jack and Ralph. They can both give instructions to the group, which may be contradictory. What techniques can they use to build their following amongst the group?
3. Change the rules so that anyone can call an instruction at any time.

Observe and reflect

- What does this allow us to understand about life on the island in the story?
- How does it feel to follow the rules or break them? What role did fear play in your choices?
- In extension option 2, what persuasive methods are there to encourage obedience in the group?
- In extension option 3, how does the lack of a clear leader affect the behaviour of the group?
- The characters in the story range in ages from roughly 6-13. How might an age range like this affect the group dynamics?

Adaptations

Possible adaptations for inclusive practice:

1. Flexible responses to calls – Each phrase/action pairing can be expressed physically, vocally, or gesturally depending on access needs. For example, “Stamp it out!” could be done through clapping or drumming on a surface instead of stomping, and “Kill de pig!” might be expressed with a vocal sound alone.

2. Accessible ensemble circle – When rehearsing in a circle, ensure spacing allows all participants (including wheelchair users or those with mobility aids) to see and join in. Gestures can be adapted to seated versions while maintaining ensemble synchronisation.

3. Leadership variety – In Extension Option 2 (Ralph vs Jack), allow leaders to use different communication modes: clear gestures, eye contact, rhythm, or vocal sounds, rather than only loud verbal commands or physical dominance.

4. Shared authority – In Extension Option 3 (anyone can call instructions), permit participants to signal their calls in diverse ways: raising a hand, using a sound, or displaying a pre-agreed card or symbol.

5. Evolving roles, not exclusion – Rather than focusing on mistakes or “rule-breaking,” allow these moments to create new roles (e.g., observers, whisperers, mood-shifters) so all remain engaged and the activity continues to reflect the shifting power dynamics of the island.a

2. Island Status Walk

Objective:

a. To physically explore status, leadership, and group dynamics—key themes in ***Lord of the Flies***.

b. Begin with a neutral walk around the space.

c. Call out status levels from 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest). Students must adjust posture, pace, and eye contact accordingly.

   1 = invisible, fearful, submissive (e.g., Piggy at the start)
   10 = confident, dominant, in control (e.g., Jack later in the novel)

d. Call out specific characters ("You are Ralph at the first meeting"; "You are Roger hunting") and invite group members to adapt their body language to match.

e. Finish by splitting the class into small groups and assigning each a brief scenario (e.g., "deciding who gets the conch," "dividing food," "arguing over leadership"). Give each member of each small group a numbered status level. They improvise in character, maintaining their assigned status.

Adaptations

Possible adaptations for inclusive practice:

1. Offer multiple modes of participation: Allow students to express status through voice, facial expression, gesture, or posture, rather than walking alone. For example, someone seated or using a wheelchair might adjust head position, tone of voice, or eye contact to show status instead of pace or stride.

2. Use visual and sensory cues: Support verbal instructions with status number cards, emotion icons, or photos of characters showing different status levels. This helps students with processing differences or language needs follow along.

3. Model and scaffold: Demonstrate what a 1 vs. 10 status looks and sounds like using multiple examples, and invite students to co-create interpretations. This supports those with neurodivergence or anxiety in understanding expectations.

4. Flexible improvisation options: In the group scenarios, allow students to write or draw their character's thoughts, use assistive tech for communication, or narrate their scene if physical improvisation isn't accessible.

3. Group Survival

Objective:

To build ensemble trust and explore survival instincts, fear, and decision-making under pressure — central to ***Lord of the Flies***.

a. Students begin in a line at one end of the room. Present a series of quick "island survival dilemmas". For each dilemma students step forward if they would answer 'yes' or remain where they are if they would answer 'no'. As the questions are asked students will begin to travel across the room at different paces. You may wish to use these questions to begin the activity.

   "Would you steal food to survive?"
   "Would you follow the loudest voice in a crisis?"
   "Would you punish someone to maintain order?"

b. After each, choose a few students to justify their choice and persuade others of their decision. This can be done for themselves or – for challenge - in character (e.g., as Simon, Jack, or Sam 'n' Eric). After hearing the justification each time, students have the chance to change their decision and move.

c. Add tension by assigning roles secretly (e.g., "You're secretly injured"; "You don't trust Jack") and asking them to influence the group during each round of justification.

d. Play until there has been a good degree of discussion on the moral dilemmas in the novel or until the first player reaches the other side of the room!

Adaptations

Possible adaptations for inclusive practice:

1. Offer alternative forms of movement: Instead of stepping forward, students can raise a hand, hold up a coloured card, or use communication devices or symbols to indicate agreement or disagreement—ensuring all can participate regardless of mobility.

2. Ensure visual and sensory clarity: Present dilemmas both verbally and visually (e.g., on slides or cue cards) and use clear, simple language. Consider visual timers or repeated phrasing to support students with processing delays or neurodivergence.

3. Flexible participation in justification: Allow students to write, draw, or record their justifications, or to whisper to a partner to speak on their behalf. Offer the option to speak in character or as themselves, depending on comfort and ability.

4. Adjust roles and influence subtly: For secret roleplay elements, consider using private cue cards, emojis, or tactile tokens to assign hidden identities, and let students choose how to influence—through speech, gesture, or collaboration with others.

5. Redefine “progress”: Rather than a physical finish line, use a collective goal (e.g., uncovering shared values or contrasting survival tactics) so everyone’s contributions—verbal, nonverbal, or written—advance the group’s exploration equally.

Practical activities

1. Kill the pig!

A good activity to develop the sense of characters and relationships through pair work. Using lines adapted from Act Two of Williams' adapted text.

a. Introduce the setting: the children are hungry! They're setting off to catch a beast to eat.

b. Instruct the group to move around the space neutrally at first and then slowly increasing the levels of hunger they each feel:

- **i.** Fancy a snack / feeling peckish
- **ii.** Late for lunch
- **iii.** Haven't eaten all day
- **iv.** Haven't eaten for 2 days
- **v.** Famished and weak

Encourage the group members to experiment with conveying their hunger physically: how does their posture change, how do they adapt the pace and gait of their walk, how does their breathing differ?

c. Return to a circle and introduce the group to this adaptation of Williams' text. Read it through a few times (use printed scripts if available).

Text:

A I daren't look.

B It mustn't hear us.

A We'll have to crawl.

B In the dark?

A What else can we do?

B I'm scared.

A Don't be stupid.

B I think I heard it.

A There's something there.

B It's the beast!

A It's the beast!

B Wake up – it's the beast!

A Kill it! Kill it!

B Spill its blood!

d. Pair students and assign them roles A and B. Give rehearsal time for the students to become familiar with the text.

e. Invite the students to move around the room, maintaining close proximity with their partner. Their objective is to speak this dialogue while hunting the beast.

f. Reintroduce the different states of hunger and encourage the students to experiment with their physical and vocal expression to suit their hunger level and to reflect the changing emotions in the text. The partners do not need to have the same level of hunger.

g. Allow the students to move apart from their partner and then reconnect, all the while maintaining the dialogue and intention to kill the beast.

Discussion

How did it feel to embody these differing levels of hunger? How did it affect your energy and emotion, and your feelings towards your partner? Were you always working together or were you also competing in this hunt?

Extend and develop

1. Students can rehearse their text and perform for each other. Encourage peer feedback and reflection.
2. Introduce some basic obstacles in the space for performers to use: chairs and tables to hide behind, climb over, crawl under, etc. How does this add to the performer's experience of the hunt?
3. Introduce atmospheric lighting and sound if available.
4. Encourage students to give up the script and rehearse/perform from memory or improvise.

Adaptations

Possible adaptations for inclusive practice:

- Expressing hunger in multiple ways – Students can show hunger vocally (breath, tone, pitch), through facial expression, or hand/arm gesture rather than relying on large movements around the space. Levels of hunger could also be represented with still images or repeated vocal patterns.
- Accessible text work – Provide scripts in large print, colour-coded roles, or digital formats for those who benefit from visual clarity. The dialogue can also be simplified or chunked into shorter call-and-response lines to support memory and focus.
- Flexible partner proximity – If close physical tracking is challenging, partners can instead use strong eye contact, mirrored gestures, or vocal "echoing" to maintain connection while stationary or at a comfortable distance.
- Adapted obstacles – For the extension task, replace physical barriers with symbolic or sensory ones (e.g. a sound cue that signals "crouch," a piece of fabric to gesture "hide behind"), ensuring everyone can encounter the 'hunt' without mobility being a barrier.
- Varied ways to perform intensity – Students can choose to heighten their performance through changes in volume, rhythm, repetition, or breath rather than purely through physical exertion, making the "famished and weak" state accessible across abilities.
- Supported collaboration – Pair or group students intentionally so that modelling, prompting, or co-creation supports participation. Offer options for leading or responding through voice, gesture, or AAC devices, ensuring everyone can contribute to the shared sense of urgency and conflict.

2. Soundscaping

This is great to build the atmosphere of the island and to bring the menacing side of the island to life.

a. Start by gathering in a circle and taking it in turns to make a sound they associate with the island (e.g. a pig snorting, animal screeches, waves on the shore, a boy shouting orders). Each time a student offers a sound to the group, the rest of the group repeat it back. Optional inclusion of a gesture to accompany the sound.

b. Take a few turns around the circle, giving the students the permission to adjust and adapt their sound each time to find one they like, encouraging them to play with volume, pitch, rhythm, repetition. Allow some of the sounds to overlap to build a textured, layered sound.

c. If you've been going one-by-one around the circle, relax the order in which students can make their sound. They can make it as frequently as they like. Some sounds may be rhythmic, and others will be intermittent. If this becomes too disorderly then you can nominate a member of the group as the 'conductor' who stands in the middle of the circle to orchestrate the sound.

d. Pause the soundscape. Ask the students to find a place in the room where they will be based for the next activity. They may wish to put themselves near someone with a complementary sound or be totally isolated. If appropriate, a small number of students might even have roaming sounds (birds cawing, for example).

e. Invite volunteers to take a blindfolded, sonic tour of the island one by one. Each volunteer chooses someone they trust to guide them through the soundscape with their eyes shut. The rest of the group creates the soundscape of the island to bring it to life. There should be a rich, textured, layered soundscape for participants to enjoy.

Discussion

- How did the group's soundscape fit your expectations of the island?
- Were there any sounds that were especially effective or evocative?
- What was the experience of the blindfolded visitor to the island?
- Did the activity give you any new understanding or appreciation for the children on the island?

Extend and challenge

Adapt the soundscape collaboratively to reflect the changing tone or mood of the novel. Uncertainty and optimism to begin with, becoming darker as the story progresses. The teacher may wish to narrate some key events from the novel to give the soundscape some structure. Encourage the students to carefully consider their sound so it reflects the tone of the novel.

Adaptations

Possible adaptations for inclusive practice:

- Allow students to make sounds using voice, gesture, body, or assistive technology. Students with limited speech or movement can contribute using simple instruments, switches, pre-recorded sounds, or repeated vocal patterns within their ability.
- Use visual aids or symbol cards to represent different island sounds (e.g. wave, pig, storm, shouting). This helps students with language or processing needs participate and make choices more easily.
- Model a variety of accessible gestures and sound types, and allow plenty of time and repetition so students can experiment with pitch, volume, and rhythm in a way that suits their communication style.
- For students with sensory sensitivities or complex needs, offer ear defenders, allow quiet zones, and give them the option to participate at a lower volume or in a more contained way. Encourage them to contribute in their own time or with support from a peer or adult.
- During the blindfolded tour, offer alternatives like closing eyes briefly, guiding with a buddy without full blindfolding, or listening from a seated position if moving isn't appropriate. The focus should remain on the layered sound experience, not the movement.

3. The Trial – In-role Improvisation & Hot-Seating

Objective:

Explore character motivations and moral responsibility by holding a fictional “trial” of one or more characters (e.g., Jack, Roger, or the group as a whole).

- Preparation: Role Assignment
  - Assign roles: Jack, Ralph, Piggy (as a ghost), Sam ‘n’ Eric, Roger, the Naval Officer, Prosecutors, Defence, and Jury.
  - Give those playing characters from the novel time to prepare their version of events.
- Hot-Seating
  - In role, characters are questioned about their actions and choices. Others take notes to prepare arguments.
- Improvised Trial
  - Run a dramatic trial scene with improvised questioning and responses. Explore key issues like guilt, leadership, and societal failure.
- Reflection & Debrief
  - Discuss what this process revealed about character psychology and Golding’s central question: Are humans naturally good, or inherently savage?

Adaptations

- Offer multiple ways to take part in role-play: students can speak, use communication devices, gesture, or work with a partner to co-create a role. For those with physical needs, ensure that all action remains accessible (e.g., seated hot-seating, non-verbal expression options).
- Provide visual supports such as character cards, simple summaries of events, and emotion icons to help with understanding roles and recalling key actions. Allow additional prep time and offer sentence starters or cue cards for those with language or processing needs.
- Allow flexible role options: students with complex needs might take part by contributing a sound or repeated phrase as a character, supporting another student's performance, or being part of the jury with clear visual choices (e.g., "guilty"/"not guilty" paddles).
- For those who find improvisation challenging, offer scripts or frameworks with suggested questions and answers, and give the option to pre-record responses if needed.
- During reflection, provide structured formats for contribution: think-pair-share, drawing, choosing from prepared responses, or using visuals to express opinions about guilt, leadership, or human nature.

Writing activities

1. Creative response: A missing chapter

Task:

Write a missing chapter set the night before the naval officer arrives. Focus on one or two boys (e.g. Ralph hiding in the undergrowth, Jack celebrating his power, or Sam 'n' Eric torn by fear). Think about their emotional state — are they afraid, regretful, proud, confused? Show their thoughts and actions using narrative detail and internal monologue.

Challenge yourself to:

- Echo Golding's descriptive style (use rich sensory detail)
- Include symbolism (e.g. fire, the sea, the jungle)
- Create a sense of rising tension or reflection before rescue

2. Writing in role: A character's private diary

Task:

Choose one of the characters (Ralph, Piggy, Jack, Simon, or Roger) and write a diary entry they could have written at a turning point in the novel (e.g. just after Simon's death, after the fire on the mountain, or before the election of leader).

Your diary entry should:

- Reflect the character's voice and personality
- Reveal thoughts or feelings they might not say out loud
- Show awareness of events in both the novel and the play adaptation — feel free to blend them if useful

For example: Piggy might reflect on being silenced; Roger might reflect coldly (or chillingly casually) on the violence he's caused.

3. Adapt a scene into a playtext

Task:

Choose a key moment from the novel that is not fully shown in the stage version (e.g. the arrival on the island, the first discovery of the "beast," Simon's death, or the fire that leads to the rescue). Adapt this moment into a short scene for performance in the style of the Nigel Williams adaptation.

Your playtext should include:

- Stage directions that show action, tone, and mood
- Dialogue that reflects the characters' emotions and intentions
- A focus on symbolism or tension to make the scene theatrically powerful

Extension idea: Think about how staging, lighting, and movement could enhance your scene. Would it be naturalistic or stylised? Would you use sound or silence for effect?

Adaptations

Possible adaptations for inclusive practice:

- Offer multimodal expression: Allow students to create their responses using speech-to-text tools, scribing, audio recordings, drawings, or comic-strip formats, in addition to written text. This supports students with physical, literacy, or processing difficulties.
- Use visual and scaffolded prompts: Provide storyboards, emotion cards, visual scene maps, or character wheels to help students generate ideas and structure their writing. Offer simplified templates for diary entries or playtexts with sentence starters or cue boxes.
- Model and co-create examples: Build confidence and understanding by working together on a shared example of a diary entry, missing chapter, or script scene. Encourage group brainstorming or small peer-supported drafting for students who benefit from guided collaboration.
- Flex character choice and focus: Let students choose any character they connect with, even secondary ones, and vary the emotional depth or style required depending on individual needs. Offer clear emotional prompts (e.g. “afraid,” “angry,” “lonely”) with visual aids or real-world analogies to support emotional literacy.
- Support reflection and creativity: Use drama warm-ups, still images, or role-on-the-wall activities beforehand to help students explore character and scene before writing. Allow time to revisit and revise ideas through conversation, art, or recorded reflection before putting ideas into writing.

Critical essay

“A Paradise Lost: The Island Setting in Lord of the Flies”

In ***Lord of the Flies***, William Golding uses the island setting not simply as a backdrop for the boys’ descent into savagery, but as a rich and evolving symbol that mirrors the central concerns of the novel. At first, the island appears to be an untouched paradise — full of sunlight, fruit, and freedom — but it soon transforms into a place of fear, destruction, and moral collapse. Golding, writing in the aftermath of World War II, uses this setting to raise disturbing questions about civilisation, the nature of evil, and the fragility of human order.

From the beginning, the island is introduced with language that suggests beauty and potential. Its bright skies, fresh water, and lack of adult control seem to offer a perfect setting for the boys to build a new society. For characters like Ralph, the island represents opportunity — a chance to create something better than the world they’ve left behind. In this early stage, Golding evokes something close to the biblical Garden of Eden: a place of innocence, harmony, and promise.

But as the boys’ behaviour shifts, so too does the island’s mood and appearance. The heat becomes oppressive, the forest begins to feel claustrophobic, and the mountain — once a place of perspective and light — becomes associated with terror and the imagined “beast.” Even the fruit that once nourished the boys now makes them sick. This gradual shift in the island’s atmosphere is not due to nature itself, but to the boys’ growing savagery. Golding carefully shows that the destruction of the island is the result of human action — the forest is set on fire, the rocks are weaponised, and the landscape becomes scarred and broken. In this way, the island reflects the psychological and moral decay of the group.

This symbolic transformation aligns closely with ideas from psychoanalytic literary theory, particularly the Freudian model of the mind. The island can be read as a metaphor for the human psyche: the open beach representing the conscious, ordered mind, and the dense jungle and dark mountain standing in for the unconscious — a place where fear, desire, and violence lurk. As the boys descend further into savagery, they move away from the structured, open spaces and deeper into the hidden, chaotic parts of the island — and of themselves. Golding seems to suggest that when civilisation is stripped away, what remains is not purity, but something far more dangerous.

Golding was clear about his intention. Reflecting on the novel, he said:

"The theme is an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature."

This is crucial for understanding the role of setting. The island does not corrupt the boys — rather, it reveals what was always within them. The absence of adult control and societal rules allows the boys' darker instincts to surface, and the island becomes a kind of mirror that reflects those instincts back at them. In this sense, the island is not just a physical location, but a psychological and moral space in which Golding tests the limits of human behaviour.

A similar use of setting can be seen in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, another mid-20th-century allegorical novel shaped by war and political disillusionment. Like Golding, Orwell creates a self-contained environment — in his case, a farm — where ideals are gradually corrupted and where the setting reflects the rise and fall of order. Both writers use place not just to house the action, but to symbolise the broader human condition, showing how easily civilisation can crumble when power, fear, and instinct are left unchecked.

The island's final transformation — from paradise to hellish battleground — is completed with the arrival of the naval officer, whose presence reminds us of the war-torn world beyond the island. Ironically, the adult world is no less violent than the one the boys have created. Golding leaves us with the haunting suggestion that the island is not an exception to human behaviour, but a concentrated example of it.

In conclusion, the setting of ***Lord of the Flies*** is not merely decorative — it is central to the novel's meaning. Golding uses the island to symbolise both the possibilities and the dangers within human nature. As the boys lose their grip on order and morality, the island itself becomes increasingly distorted and hostile, echoing Golding's deep concern that civilisation is a thin and fragile layer over something far more chaotic. Through this setting, he explores the disturbing idea that the real beast is not something lurking in the shadows, but something already inside us.

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Exemplar GCSE-style essay with examiner's commentary

Explore the relationship between Ralph and Jack in *Lord of the Flies*

With the hostile and changing relationship of Ralph and Jack at its centre, William Golding's ***Lord of the Flies*** explores the breakdown of civilisation through the chaos that ultimately rules over the stranded children. From reluctant allies to bitter enemies, the rivalry of these two characters becomes a symbolic struggle between order and savagery, showing how quickly human behaviour can deteriorate when rules and authority disappear. Through their deteriorating interactions, Golding critiques human nature and the fragility of leadership, presenting a bleak view of society without moral restraint.

At the beginning of the novel, Ralph and Jack are both positioned as natural leaders, but they represent very different approaches to leadership. The election of Ralph as chief reflects his calm demeanour and fairness: "There was a stillness… the kind of voice you might expect from a school prefect." Beyond this, his close association with the conch establishes a symbolic connection to order. Jack, in contrast, believes he deserves power because of his status: "I ought to be chief… because I'm chapter chorister and head boy." The modal verb "ought to" suggests that Jack attempts to lead by asserting his authority over others and by demanding their respect. This early contrast highlights the conflict between democratic leadership and authoritarian control. Ralph wants to prioritise shelter, the signal fire, and order, while Jack is drawn to hunting and power. Their relationship, though polite at first, is already marked by tension and competition and in moments like Jack's dismissive outburst "Bollocks to the rules!" Golding foreshadows the decline of their relationship.

As the boys spend more time on the island, the cracks in their relationship deepen. Ralph clings to civilisation ("The rules are the only thing we've got") while Jack begins to reject rules altogether. When Jack paints his face, Golding describes how "the mask… liberated him from shame and self-consciousness," where the positive associations of the verb "liberated" are juxtaposed with the description of Jack "hiding" behind the metaphorical mask, concealing his humanity and abandoning the constraints of society. Furthermore, Jack's focus on hunting gives him popularity among the boys, and his assertive, authoritative and arrogant manner begins to undermine Ralph's authority. Their opposing priorities lead to the collapse of cooperation, and Jack forms his own tribe. Perhaps reflecting on his time serving in the Royal Navy during World War II, Golding uses this moment to show how individuals are drawn to power and violence when it offers freedom and immediate rewards. The breakdown of Ralph and Jack's relationship mirrors the breakdown of civilisation on the island and stands as a metaphor for the fragility of social order in general.

By the final chapters of the novel, Ralph and Jack are no longer just rivals; they are enemies. Jack becomes increasingly violent, and Ralph is left completely isolated. Ralph's alienated words, "Things are breaking up. I don't understand why" show how his sensible and democratic leadership style is overpowered by Jack's raw charisma and primal power. When Piggy is killed and the conch is smashed, the last symbols of order are destroyed. Samneric warn Ralph: "They hate you, Ralph. They're going to do you," showing that Jack no longer just disagrees with Ralph — he wants him dead. In spite of the euphemistic phrase "do you", there is no mistaking Jack's direct and confrontational tone here, demonstrating how far Jack has descended into savagery. His corrupting influence does, of course, deeply affect the group who manically chant: "Kill the beast! Cut his throat" Spill his blood!" In this respect, the novel seems to suggest that deep within human nature is the capacity for evil: even within those who are in established and respected roles within society (chapter chorister and head boy, for example).

In conclusion, the relationship between Ralph and Jack evolves from awkward rivalry to deadly conflict. Golding uses this change to explore themes of power, civilisation, and savagery. Golding's allegorical story goes far beyond children stranded on an island, being a chilling reflection on what can happen when human beings are left without laws, consequences, or compassion. He takes a view that humans are not innately moral and rational, opting for a more sceptical perspective that the structures of civilisation are perilously thin and that mankind has a terrifying potential for self-destruction.

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Assessment objective commentary

Assessment Objective 1 (AO1)

Read, understand and respond to texts. Maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response. Use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations

Evaluation:

- This essay fully meets AO1.
- It maintains a clear, confident, and sustained critical style, combining analysis with insightful personal engagement throughout.
- The response offers a well-structured argument that tracks the relationship between Ralph and Jack chronologically and thematically.
- Quotations are precisely chosen, integrated smoothly, and used to support sophisticated interpretations.

Example:

"The modal verb 'ought to' suggests that Jack attempts to lead by asserting his authority..."

This shows personal engagement with language and a confident, critical voice.

Assessment Objective 2 (AO2)

Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.

Evaluation:

- AO2 is addressed consistently and convincingly throughout the essay.
- The student analyses Golding's language choices (e.g. "liberated," "ought to"), symbolism (e.g. the conch, the mask), and contrasts between characters.
- Subject terminology is used appropriately and naturally ("modal verb," "juxtaposed," "metaphorical mask," "euphemistic phrase"), enhancing the depth of analysis.
- The essay also considers form and structure — for example, noting the development of the relationship through different stages of the novel.

Example:

"...juxtaposed with the description of Jack 'hiding' behind the metaphorical mask..."

This insight shows nuanced understanding of how Golding's choices construct character and theme.

Assessment Objective 3 (AO3)

Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.

Evaluation:

- The essay shows secure and relevant understanding of context.
- References to Golding's naval experience, his post-war pessimism, and societal breakdown are well-integrated and support interpretation rather than standing as bolt-on facts.
- There's also understanding of allegory and Golding's philosophical outlook — notably in the conclusion, where the essay reflects on Golding's scepticism about innate human goodness.

Example:

"Perhaps reflecting on his time serving in the Royal Navy during World War II…"

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Examiner's tips

Carl Cerny is a teacher, examiner and founder of The Cambridge Tutor Company.

Examiner's tips

The tips below will help you to understand how to present your knowledge of the text in the most effective way in an exam – securing you the credit you deserve from the examiner!

1. Know your Assessment Objectives (AOs)

You are assessed on specific skills, not just how much you know. Different questions target different AOs, so it helps to know what's being marked and how your specific exam board rewards each AO. Most common in GCSE English Literature are:

- AO1: Clear argument + textual references
- AO2: Language, structure, form
- AO3: Context and ideas (how the world around the text influences or is reflected in it)

Ask yourself while writing:

- Have I made an argument (AO1)?
- Have I analysed the writer's choices (AO2)?
- Have I linked it to relevant context or ideas (AO3)?

2. Plan your essay

Trying to plan, write, and think all at once is exhausting and inefficient — even for professionals. A quick, bullet-point plan helps you:

- Structure your response clearly
- Keep your argument on track
- Avoid repeating yourself

Try this structure:

- Introduction: What's your main idea?
- Paragraph 1: First big idea + evidence
- Paragraph 2: Second big idea + evidence
- Paragraph 3: Contrast, development, or wider theme discussion + evidence
- Conclusion: What overall message or theme emerges?

Even a 2-minute plan will improve the quality and clarity of your writing.

3. Proofread your work

In the pressure of the exam, small errors or clumsy phrasing are normal — but you stand a good chance of catching them if you leave 3–5 minutes at the end.

Check for:

- Clarity: Does each sentence make sense?
- Precision: Have you chosen the best words in the right places?
- Accuracy: Have you spelled key vocabulary correctly?

4. Think about the author's purpose

Strong responses go beyond describing what happens in a text — they explore why the writer has chosen to present it that way.

Ask:

- What is the writer interrogating or exposing about human behaviour?
- What questions do they raise about society, identity, power, or morality?

Useful verbs:

Golding exposes, Golding criticises, Golding explores, Golding warns...

These verbs help move your answer into higher-level thinking.

5. Show appropriate knowledge of context

Context is more than just dates and facts — it's about how the world shapes and is reflected in the text.

Two ways to use context effectively:

- Concrete context (if required): "Written in the early 1950s, shortly after World War II, ***Lord of the Flies*** reflects Golding's post-war concerns about the fragility of civilisation and the inherent violence within human nature."
- Conceptual context: "Golding draws on ideas about human nature and civilisation, influenced by his experiences in World War II."

Check what your exam board expects, but aim to weave context in, not bolt it on.

6. Engage with big ideas and concepts

Top-level answers move beyond characters and plot to explore the underlying concepts of the text.

For example:

- Don't just say: "Piggy is bullied."
- Say: "Piggy's treatment reflects Golding's broader concern with how societies marginalise intelligence and compassion in favour of brute power."

Ask yourself:

- What is this text really about?
- What is the writer inviting me to question or reflect on?

Use your knowledge of the story as a lens to explore the big ideas.

7. Use complex sentences

Writing in complex sentences allows you to express more than one idea at a time — which is exactly what strong literary analysis requires.

For example:

Although Jack initially appears to be a natural leader, Golding's portrayal of his increasing reliance on violence and fear suggests that his authority is built on dominance rather than genuine respect.

Why this works:

- Dependent clause: Although Jack initially appears to be a natural leader
- Independent clause: Golding's portrayal... suggests that his authority is built on dominance...
- It combines character insight, authorial method, and a nuanced interpretation — all in one sentence.

Chichester Festival Theatre's production of the Lord of the Flies

Director Anthony Lau discussing directing *Lord of the Flies*.

How have we approached the themes to the story?

I suppose this is connected to both the enduring brilliance of the ***Lords of Flies*** as a novel and also its characters, and then in turn the stripped back design of this particular production.

We've really wanted the themes of the play to shine for themselves and we want the characters' onstage behaviour to be assessed, viewed and felt by the audience. For the audience to try and better understand why these characters do what they do and, in doing so, for the play's themes around people and humanity, and how we relate with each other, to be really at the heart of the audience experience.

Then there are wider themes around colonialism and class that I think are really present in ***Lord of the Flies***. I feel like this production is more focused on this notion of class and why we might not allow some people a voice, or why some people might feel as if they might be allowed to be more forthright. There is this idea of entitlement and where entitlement comes from, and a question around whether there are certain environments like independent schools that breed a sense of entitlement, consciously or otherwise. That give their students a sense of, 'What I say is always correct and I am allowed to do what I like, in the way that I want to.' This isn't a direct criticism, since it might also be translated as being confidence or empowerment – but it is an observation that there is a disparity in our education system that enables some, and doesn't provide for others.

We were also really interested in the idea of masculinity and, in particular, adolescent masculinity - how it takes root and what kind of masculinity is often allowed to dominate in a social setting, and what the repercussions this particular kind of masculinity might lead to.

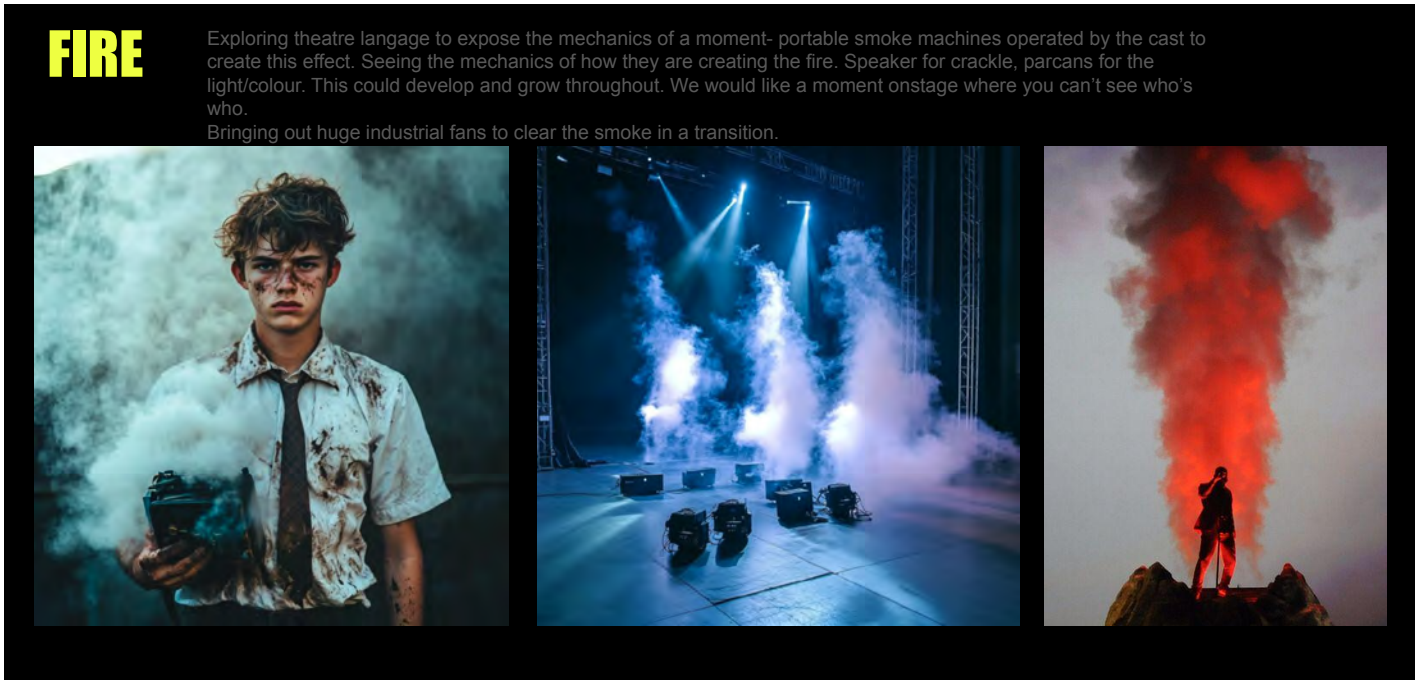
Georgia (the Designer) and I, are really interested in who gets to tell these big, classic stories, and how these stories get told. And by that, I mean who is in the cast or the creative team; who gets to have a voice and who gets to make these kinds of stories. That's always been a part of the impetus behind a lot of our work. We're interested in how work gets made and how you make work that is continually surprising. How do you make work that challenges the audience, whilst looking after them and making sure they have a good time at the theatre?

It's important that the audience engages in the material and that they are able to be active in their watching. We're less interested in making a piece of theatre where you can just sit back and let it wash over you; we'd much rather people lean forward in their seats and have to interrogate what they are watching. We're really interested in the conversations that take place in the interval and after the show has finished, we want the show to linger and stay in their imaginations for days, weeks, months or even years after they've left the theatre.

Hear from director Anthony Lau all about his production of *Lord of the Flies.*

Delve deeper into the CFT's 2025 production of *Lord of the Flies.*

Interview with Georgia Lowe, Set & Costume Designer of *Lord of the Flies* at CFT.



How you have approached the themes to the story?

Anthony and I began by talking about experiences of being the age of the boys and more specifically of school experiences, discussing schoolyard games, public school initiations and the behaviour of kids left alone without adults. We used exercises to explore the themes in relation to the space - for instance making lists of possible staging ideas for the main events, lists of tools that could be useful and exciting to use to tell the story and trying to imagine multiple different ways of presenting specific moments in the play.

What has been your inspiration when designing for this production?

The theatre space - Chichester Festival Theatre, horror tropes, kids party and schools games, wanting to create a version of this story that feels fresh and vivid. Something that feels that it exists both in 1950 and now. Creating a playground from the theatre - a space of play, risk and surprise.

Anything else you'd like to share about the piece?

Both Anthony and I love working in a way that allows and encourages ideas and collaboration in the rehearsal room. We are clear with our intentions for the design and production before this, but we enjoy the process of developing further and discovery that comes from being in the rehearsal room with a collection of new and diverse voices. Creating a tool kit to go into rehearsals with is always crucial to our process and allows us to really interrogate objects and space.

Pippa Blake, Artist in Residence for *Lord of the Flies* at CFT

An explanation of the role and how it came to be

The idea of a theatre 'residency' originally came to me while watching Howard Barker's *Scenes from an Execution* at the National Theatre in 2012 (I was making war paintings at the time and the play is about a 16th Century female war artist struggling in a male dominated world and wanting to tell the truth.) My head whirred at the prospect of making work based on a production, not just the visual aspect but also the atmosphere and psychology behind a play. It seemed that an involvement could unravel layers of process and investigation as an intrinsic world is created.

I was lucky enough that in 2014 and 2015 I was an artist in residence at CFT on productions of first *Pitcairn* (*Mutiny of the Bounty*) by Richard Bean and then Someone Who'll Watch Over Me (about the hostages in Lebanon) by Irish playwright Frank McGuinness. Both these productions were in the Minerva Theatre and it's exciting that ***Lord of the Flies*** is on the much larger main Festival stage.

As soon as I heard that *LOTF* was scheduled I was excited and asked if I could be artist in...

residence again. Firstly it was a book that I had studied at 'O' Levels back in 1968 (now GCSE) and its issues have resonated with me ever since. It's interesting that the two previous plays I chose also had issues around a group of people forming a society on an island and a smaller group of people in a confined prison space - both plays also dealing with relationships, hostility, violence and the breakdown of society.

My intention is to go to rehearsals in Chichester and a couple in London. I see myself as an observer along with making quick sketches and drawings. Once the production is taking shape and into tech rehearsal then I'll take as many photos as I can with my phone. My painting process is mostly working from photos or film stills - I snap away and then wait to see what evolves once on the computer screen and then I edit and crop the photos to suit - looking at atmosphere, colour and composition. Once I have all the information I need then I will head to my studio and begin working on paintings. I work with oil paint on canvas and love to work large scale. It's hard to say right now what will happen on the canvas surface as even though I have information I never know how it will translate once I start working .I listened to an interview with William Golding saying that being a writer for him was rather like being a painter where once you had the idea you knew already how to construct it. I work very differently to that.

Lord of the Flies will be a big challenge but exciting as there is nothing better than challenging yourself to pushing your work forward.

Wider reading recommendations for fans of Lord of the Flies

(Suitable for 14–16-year-olds)

Exploring Human Nature, Power, and Morality

Animal Farm by George Orwell
A short political allegory where farm animals overthrow their human owner — only to create a new tyranny. Raises questions about leadership, manipulation, and collective behaviour.

Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck
Set during the Great Depression, this novella explores loneliness, power, and dreams — and how social structures shape human relationships.

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury
In a dystopian future where books are banned, one man questions society's obsession with conformity and entertainment. Raises questions about censorship, thought control, and rebellion.

Isolation, Survival, and Symbolic Settings

The Giver by Lois Lowry
A boy in a "perfect" society begins to discover the hidden darkness beneath the surface. Themes of conformity, memory, and moral choice.

Coraline by Neil Gaiman
A surreal and unsettling story where a young girl must survive in a world that mirrors her own — but with sinister differences. Great for exploring the theme of duality and inner fear.

The Call of the Wild by Jack London
Follows a domestic dog thrown into the brutal world of the Yukon wilderness. A powerful exploration of instinct, adaptation, and the wild.

Psychological & Social Commentary

I'm the King of the Castle by Susan Hill
A tense psychological novel about two boys locked in a cruel power struggle in a gloomy English country house. Like ***Lord of the Flies***, it explores bullying, isolation, and the darkness in childhood relationships — but in a domestic setting.

The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger
A coming-of-age novel exploring teenage alienation, cynicism, and moral questioning. Though very different in tone from ***Lord of the Flies***, it similarly interrogates the failings of adult society.

Brighton Rock by Graham Greene
A dark, morally ambiguous novel that follows a violent teenage gang leader in 1930s Brighton. Explores guilt, violence, and whether evil is a choice or a condition.

A High Wind in Jamaica by Richard Hughes
Often considered an influence on ***Lord of the Flies***, this novel follows a group of children taken by pirates — and reveals their surprising lack of innocence. Mysterious, unsettling, and rich in psychological insight.

chichester festival theatre

Teaching and Learning Materials
to accompany the production of

William Golding's

Lord of the Flies

Adapted for the stage by **Nigel Williams**

Produced by the Learning, Education and Participation Department for Chichester Festival Theatre

Educational content produced by Carl Cerny, The Cambridge Tutor Company

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