Fire on the Mountain

Lord of the Flies: Chapter 2 Analysis



Rule of the Conch

KEY CONCEPT

Can civilisation survive on an isolated island without adult discipline?

Ralph establishes a parliamentary system: **only the boy holding the conch may speak.** It promises democracy, order, and equal participation.

Challenge: Notice how quickly Jack interrupts Ralph, exposing the frailty of their agreed rules.



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Order vs Savagery

Chapter 2 establishes the core conflict of the novel: the struggle between disciplined cooperation and reckless instinct.

- **Civilised instinct:** Ralph and Piggy urge shelter, signal fires, and systematic meetings.
- **Savage impulse:** Jack and the boys abandon the meeting in excitement, letting the fire rage out of control.

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Order the Events: Chapter 2

Arrange these critical plot events from Chapter 2 in chronological order:

- The boy with the mulberry-coloured birthmark mentions the beastie
- Ralph establishes the conch rule for speaking at assembly
- The uncontrolled fire spreads across the mountain slope
- Jack snatches Piggy's spectacles to light the signal fire

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Fear and the Beastie

A frightened six-year-old boy with *a* **mulberry-coloured birthmark** introduces the terror of *a* 'snake-thing' or 'beastie'.

> *"He wants to know what you're going to do about the snake-thing."*
>
> Piggy translating for the littlun, Chapter 2

Ralph denies its existence rationally, whilst Jack promises to hunt and kill it, exploiting their fear.



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Quotation Scavenger

KEY CONCEPT

Piggy's Spectacles

'His specs—use them as burning glasses!'

Bronze Task: Name who shouts this and how they take them.

English Civilisation

'We're English, and the English are best at everything.'

Silver Task: Explain the dramatic irony in Jack's boast.

The Untamed Fire

'The fire thrust out a savage arm of heat...'

Gold Task: Analyse Golding's predator metaphor.

The Missing Boy

'That little 'un that had a mark on his face—where is he?'

Extension: Explore the significance of this loss.

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Key Themes in Chapter 2



Law & Democracy

The conch represents parliamentary free speech. Yet without voluntary respect, political rules instantly collapse.



Science & Intellect

Piggy's glasses symbolise rational thought and scientific discovery. They are forcibly taken by violent impulse.



Cost of Chaos

Unchecked boyish enthusiasm leads to ecological ruin and the horrifying, unacknowledged death of a littlun.

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Listen: Analysis of Fire on the Mountain

Listen to the audio and answer the questions

Critical Discussion of Chapter 2

▶ Play audio

1. Why does the fire spread so quickly across the mountain?
2. Which object is used to ignite the signal fire?
3. How does Jack treat Piggy during this episode?
4. What tragic consequence occurs at the end of the chapter?

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Listen: Analysis of Fire on the Mountain

Check your answers below

Critical Discussion of Chapter 2

▶ Play audio

1. The boys act impulsively and gather too much dry timber without planning.
2. Piggy's spectacles, which Jack seizes to focus the sunlight.
3. Jack dismisses Piggy's protests and forcibly snatches his glasses.
4. The littlun with the mulberry birthmark goes missing in the blaze.

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Differentiated Task Menu

1. **Support (Bronze):** Write three sentences explaining what the conch shell does and why Piggy needs his glasses.

2. **Core (Silver):** Contrast how Ralph and Jack react to the boy who reports the 'beastie'. Use evidence for both leaders.

3. **Extension (Gold):** Analyse how Golding uses the spreading fire as a foreshadowing device for the breakdown of civilisation.

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Review: Chapter 2 Mastery

What does the out-of-control fire on the mountain primarily symbolise in Chapter 2?

1. The boys' inability to control their savage impulses and maintain order
2. The deliberate trap built by the hunters to catch wild pigs
3. A successful method for signalling passing ships for rescue
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