

Lord of the Flies — Chapter 6: Beasts from Air

A guided lesson exploring the opening of Chapter Six: how Golding introduces the beast, how the boys respond to fear, and what the collapse of order reveals about human nature.

CHAPTER 6 YEAR 10 ENGLISH

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to meet all three of the following objectives. Consider which level you are currently working at as we move through the activities.

1

DESCRIBE

Recall the key events

Describe what happens at the opening of Chapter Six, including the arrival of the dead parachutist and the boys' initial reactions.

2

EXPLAIN

Analyse the boys' reactions

Explain how different characters respond to the news of 'the beast', and what this tells us about their personalities and values.

3

EVALUATE

Evaluate Golding's technique

Evaluate why Golding chooses to reveal the true nature of 'the beast' to the reader before the boys discover it — and what effect this dramatic irony creates.

Starter: The Meeting Descends into Chaos

At the end of Chapter Five, Ralph calls a meeting to restore order — but it rapidly spirals out of control. The boys argue fiercely over whether beasts and ghosts truly exist, and Ralph's authority is openly challenged. Consider these discussion questions before we begin reading.

🏛️ Rules in Society

Why are rules important in a community? What happens when people stop agreeing on them?

⚠️ Without Ralph's Leadership

If the boys stop listening to Ralph entirely, what do you predict will happen next? What evidence supports your view?

👻 Beasts and Ghosts

Do you think the boys genuinely believe in the beast, or is fear driving their behaviour? Are the two things different?

Chapter 5 Recap: Order Begins to Break Down

Before diving into Chapter Six, it is worth recalling what has already gone wrong. Ralph's meeting was meant to reassert the rules — the fire, the shelters, the conch. Instead, it exposed a fundamental split between two visions of life on the island.

Ralph's Vision

Civilisation, rescue, responsibility. He believes in the power of rules and communal effort to keep the boys safe.

Jack's Vision

Hunting, excitement, power. He dismisses the beast as unimportant and ridicules those who cling to order and reason.

The Other Boys

Increasingly drawn to Jack's confidence and the thrill of the hunt, the younger boys especially are consumed by fear of the unknown.



Activity 2: Close Reading — Fear and Order

Read the provided extract carefully, then respond to the following tasks in your exercise books. Use the PEE structure (Point, Evidence, Explanation) where possible.(from p.108"Piggy took the conch...to p.113""But he's, he's, Jack Merridew!"

1 Piggy's Fear of Jack

Find a quotation from the extract that clearly shows Piggy is frightened of Jack. What does Piggy's language or behaviour reveal about the power Jack now holds over the group? Consider word choice and body language.

2 Ralph and the Loss of Order

Find a quotation that shows Ralph yearning for rules and civilised behaviour to be restored. Explain why you chose this particular quotation — what does it suggest about Ralph's state of mind and his understanding of what is happening to the group?

Remember: the best quotations are short and precise. You do not need a full sentence — a powerful phrase is often more effective.

"He hates me. I dunno why. If he could do what he wanted—you're all right, he respects you. Besides—you'd hit him." "You were having a nice fight with him just now." "I had the conch," said Piggy simply. "I had a right to speak." Simon stirred in the dark. "Go on being chief." "You shut up, young Simon! Why couldn't you say there wasn't a beast?" "I'm scared of him," said Piggy, "and that's why I know him. If you're scared of someone you hate him but you can't stop thinking about him. You kid yourself he's all right really, an' then when you see him again; it's like asthma an' you can't breathe. I tell you what. He hates you too, Ralph—" "Me? Why me?" "I dunno. You got him over the fire; an' you're chief an' he isn't." "But he's, he's, Jack Merridew!"



Activity 3: Reading — "Neither of the boys screamed..."

We will read together from **"Neither of the boys screamed"** (p.119 first paragraph)to **"We'd better take spears."(p.125)** As you follow the text, keep these two focus questions in mind.

What the Boys Say About the Beast

How do Sam and Eric describe what they have seen? Is their account clear and reliable, or does fear shape the way they tell the story? Look carefully at their exact words.

How the Other Boys React

How does the wider group respond to Sam and Eric's news? Who leads the reaction? What does the response reveal about the state of the group and the fragility of their remaining order?

The Dead Parachutist: What We Know That They Don't

What the Reader Knows

Golding reveals to the reader that the 'beast' is in fact a dead airman — a casualty of the war being fought above the island. The body, caught in its parachute, moves in the wind, creating the illusion of a living, breathing creature. There is no supernatural monster. The terror is entirely man-made.

What the Boys Believe

Sam and Eric, exhausted and terrified, are convinced they have encountered a real beast. Their description is vivid and distorted by panic. The rest of the boys, already primed for fear after the meeting, accept the account without question. Reason has been abandoned in favour of hysteria.

> The figure fell and crouched and the parachute flopped and banged on the mountain-top... something like a great ape was sitting asleep with its head between its knees.

Golding's description deliberately blurs the boundary between the real and the imagined — mirroring the boys' own confused mental state.

Activity 4: Discussion — Golding's Narrative Choice

Why does Golding tell *us* what the beast is — before the boys find out?



Dramatic Irony

By revealing the truth to the reader first, Golding creates dramatic irony. We watch the boys spiral into fear and violence, knowing their terror is based on a misunderstanding. This makes their behaviour both more tragic and more revealing.



A Comment on War

The dead parachutist is a direct product of the adult world's war. By placing it at the heart of the boys' fear, Golding suggests that the real beast is not on the island — it is the violence of humanity itself, descending from above.

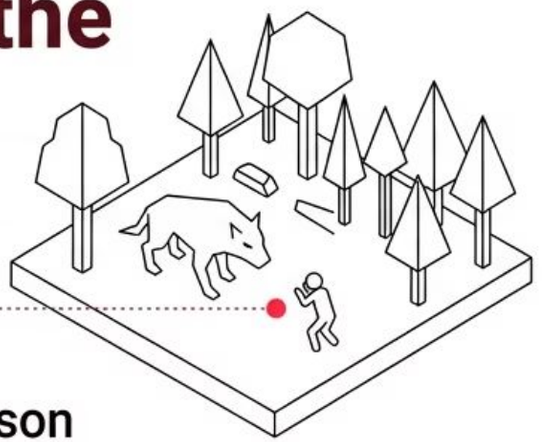


Character Perspective

The narrative technique allows us to judge each character's response more clearly. Knowing the truth, we can see which boys are rational and which are consumed by fear — and what that tells us about human nature under pressure.

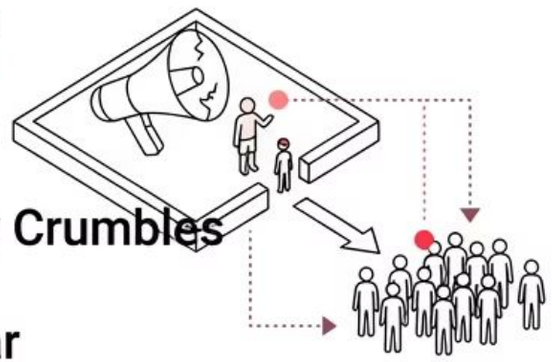
Key Themes in Chapter 6

Fear and the Unknown



#9C5461
Irrational Terror Undermining Reason

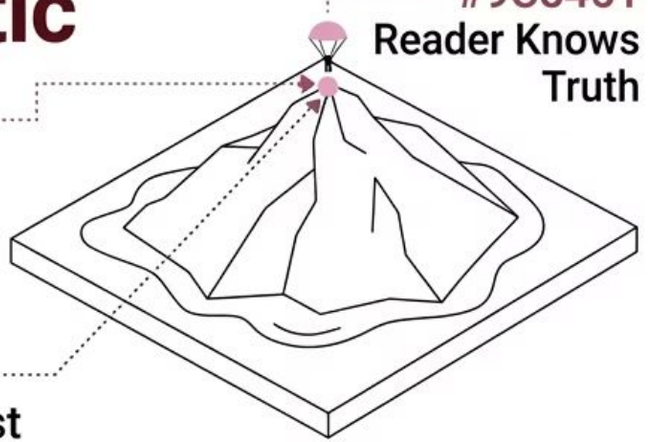
Civilisation vs Savagery



#9C5461
Ralph's Authority Crumbles

#4A4A4A
Jack Exploits Fear

Dramatic Irony



#9C5461
Reader Knows Truth

#4A4A4A
Boys See Beast

The Adult World Intrudes



Dead Parachutist

#4A4A4A
Connects to War

#4A4A4A
Violence From Within

These four themes are deeply interconnected. As you continue reading, consider how Golding develops each one — and how they build towards the novel's devastating conclusion.

Plenary: Make Your Prediction

Based on everything we have explored in this lesson, write a short prediction about what you think will happen next in the novel. Your prediction should be specific and grounded in evidence from the text — not just a guess.

Your Prediction Should Include...

- A clear statement of what you think will happen
- At least one piece of evidence from the text to support it
- A brief explanation of your reasoning
- Reference to at least one character by name

Questions to Guide Your Thinking

- Will Ralph manage to hold on to authority?
- How will Jack exploit the fear of the beast?
- What will happen when the boys go to investigate?
- Is there any hope of rescue — or of the boys maintaining order?

The best predictions use the word **"because"** — they do not simply state what will happen, but explain *why* it is likely, using Golding's characterisation as evidence.