Lord of the Flies: Context and Chapter 1

Year 9 | 60 minutes | Mixed ability

Lesson slides, with teacher notes, pupil sheets and an answer key at the back

Learning objectives

0-2 mins

Understand To **understand** the social and historical context of *Lord of the Flies*

Describe To **describe** and order the key events of Chapter 1

Analyse To **analyse** how Golding presents Ralph, Piggy and Jack in Chapter 1

Today: survive an island, uncover the context, take a quiz, order the plot and profile three characters.

Teacher note: *Read the objectives aloud. Ask for a thumbs rating of how much pupils already know about the novel and its context.*

Hook: Stranded!

2-7 mins

Imagine your plane crashes on an island with **no adults**. There are about 30 children, aged 6 to 12.

Decide with a partner (2 minutes):

- Who should be in charge? **Why?**
- What is the first **rule** you would make?
- What would be the biggest **problem** on the island?

Starters: *I would choose... because... / The first rule would be... / The biggest problem would be...*

Teacher note: *Run as pairs then a class vote. Collect the choices on the board: they preview the novel's questions about leadership and rules. Support: the choices are given. Extend: 'what rule would you make first, and who enforces it?'*

Context 1: William Golding

7-10 mins

Who was William Golding?

- Born in **1911** in Cornwall, England.
- He worked as a **teacher**, so he spent a lot of time with boys.
- He served in the **Royal Navy** during the Second World War and saw its violence first hand.
- *Lord of the Flies* was published in **1954**, after many publishers rejected it.
- He won the **Nobel Prize in Literature** in 1983.

Think:

Why might a teacher who saw war write a story about boys who become violent?

Starter: *This might be because...*

Teacher note: *Pupils note two facts on Sheet 1 (fact finder). Gallery walk option: print slides 4-6 and put them on walls. Check the dates against your own reference.*

Context 2: War and the atomic age

10-13 mins

A world after war

- The Second World War lasted from **1939 to 1945** and killed millions of people.
- In 1945 **atomic bombs** were used for the first time, and people feared another, bigger war.
- After the war, the **Cold War** brought fear that nuclear weapons might end the world.
- During the war, many **children were evacuated** from cities to keep them safe.
- The novel begins with boys **evacuated** by plane during an imagined war.

Think:

How might a society that has just seen war and atomic bombs feel about human nature?

Starter: *People might have felt... because...*

Teacher note: *Link to the novel: the boys are on the island because of an imagined war. Keep sensitivity in mind. Pupils add two facts to Sheet 1.*

Context 3: The Coral Island and British boys

13-17 mins

A different kind of island story

- **The Coral Island** (1857) by R.M. Ballantyne was a popular adventure for boys.
- In it, three British boys are shipwrecked and stay **brave, clever and good**.
- People believed British boys were **civilised** and children were **innocent**.
- Golding borrowed the idea and the names **Ralph** and **Jack**, but changed the story.
- In his version, without adults and rules, the boys become **cruel**.

Think:

Why did Golding want to change the ending of the island story?

Starter: *Golding wanted to show that...*

Teacher note: *Ask: in an adventure story, how would you expect shipwrecked boys to behave? Then reveal Golding's reversal. Pupils add facts to Sheet 1 and answer the 'Why does it matter?' column.*

Retention quiz (1-4)

17-21 mins

1. Who wrote *Lord of the Flies*?

A William Golding B Charles Dickens C Roald Dahl

2. When was it published?

A 1854 B 1954 C 2004

3. Which war did Golding serve in with the Royal Navy?

A First World War B Second World War C Vietnam War

4. Which new weapon, first used in 1945, made people fear the end of the world?

A Atomic bomb B Cannon C Crossbow

Teacher note: *Pupils write A, B or C on mini-whiteboards and hold up together. Answers: 1 A, 2 B, 3 B, 4 A. Support: they may keep Sheet 1. Extend: write a fifth question for a partner.*

Retention quiz (5-8)

21-24 mins

5. Which 1857 adventure story did Golding respond to?

A *The Coral Island* B *Treasure Island* C *Peter Pan*

6. In that story, how do the shipwrecked boys behave?

A Badly and cruelly B Well and cooperatively C They never reach the island

7. What was Golding's job before he became a full-time writer?

A Teacher B Chef C Pilot

8. What did Golding want to show about people?

A Children are always good B Without rules, people can become cruel C Islands are dangerous

Teacher note: *Answers: 5 A, 6 B, 7 A, 8 B. Count scores by show of hands (0-4, 5-6, 7-8). Revisit any context fact that many pupils missed.*

Chapter 1: The Sound of the Shell

24-28 mins

Summary card (read aloud):

A plane carrying a group of boys has crashed on a remote island. A boy called **Ralph** meets a boy nicknamed **Piggy**, who is clever but overweight and wears glasses. They find a **conch shell** in the lagoon. Piggy suggests blowing it to call the other survivors. Boys gather at the sound, including a group of **choirboys** led by **Jack**. The boys vote for a leader, and **Ralph is chosen as chief**. Jack is angry, and Ralph says Jack's choir can be the hunters. Ralph, Jack and Simon explore the island and climb the mountain. On the way back they find a piglet trapped in creepers, but Jack hesitates to kill it.

Teacher note: *Read the summary aloud (or ask a confident pupil to read it). If pupils have read the chapter, use it as a recap instead. Check details against your edition. Optional: read the scene where the choir arrives from your class copy.*

Activity: Put the events in order

28-36 mins

Cut out the 9 event cards on **Sheet 2** and **put them in order**. Stick them in your book, then check with a partner.

Support

Order the first 5 cards, with the first and last already placed. Then add a one-word feeling to each.

Core

Order all 9 cards. Add who is involved in each event.

Extend

Order all 9 cards. Choose the **most important** event and explain why. Link it to Ralph, Piggy or Jack.

Teacher note: *Cut-out cards are on Sheet 2. Answer order: 1 Ralph meets Piggy, 2 they find the conch, 3 Ralph blows the conch, 4 the boys gather, 5 the choir arrives, 6 the vote, 7 Jack gets the choir as hunters, 8 the exploration, 9 the piglet. Check against your edition.*

Meet the characters

36-38 mins

Ralph

fair-haired, friendly, sporty, around twelve; chosen as chief

Piggy

clever, practical, overweight, wears glasses, has asthma; often mocked

Jack

tall, confident, red-haired; leads the choir; wants to be chief

Your job: become an expert on one character. Use Sheet 3.

Teacher note: *Jigsaw: split the class into three expert groups (Ralph, Piggy, Jack). After 6 minutes, regroup into mixed trios to teach each other. Check traits against your edition.*

Activity: Character profile

38-48 mins

Complete your character's profile on **Sheet 3**. Choose adjectives, give **evidence** from Chapter 1, and say what it shows.

Support

Tick **three adjectives** from the word bank. Use the frame: *Piggy is... We know because...*

Core

Write **three adjectives**, with evidence (an event or a short quotation) for each. Say what it shows about the character.

Extend

Do the Core task, then explain what the character **represents** (order, reason or power) and how this links to the context.

Word bank: fair, kind, brave, clever, anxious, bossy, proud, confident, practical, shy, determined, weak, leader, arrogant

Teacher note: *Pupils complete their character's column on Sheet 3, then teach the other two in trios. Support: tick adjectives from the word bank. Extend: add what the character might represent (order, reason, power) and link to the context.*

Write: What do we learn about one character?

48-56 mins

Question: What does the reader learn about **one** character in Chapter 1?

Support

Frame: In Chapter 1, we learn that ___ is ___. For example, he ___. This shows that he is ___.

Core

PEE: Point (what kind of person?), Evidence (an event or short quotation), Explain (what it shows and how the reader feels).

Extend

Core, plus **context:** explain what the character might represent and why Golding wanted readers to think about this after the war.

Starters: *Golding presents Ralph as... / This suggests... / The reader might feel... / This links to the idea that...*

Teacher note: *Pupils write 4-6 sentences on Sheet 3, using the frame at their level. Circulate to Support first. Swap with a partner for a star and a wish if time allows.*

Plenary and exit ticket

56-60 mins

1. Name one fact about the **context** that helps us understand the novel.
2. Which character interests you most so far, and why?
3. **Predict:** What do you think might go wrong on the island?

Starters: *One context fact is... / The most interesting character is... because... / I think... will go wrong because...*

Teacher note: *Collect Sheet 4 as pupils leave, or use the questions on mini-whiteboards. Return to the learning objectives and the starting thumbs.*

Sheet 1: Context Fact Finder and Quiz

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Fact finder. *Write two facts from each slide, and say why they might matter to the novel.*

Context	Two facts I learnt	Why might this matter to the novel?
William Golding		
War and the atomic age		
The Coral Island and British boys		

Retention quiz. *Circle the correct answer.*

1. Who wrote *Lord of the Flies*?
A William Golding B Charles Dickens C Roald Dahl

2. When was it published?
A 1854 B 1954 C 2004

3. Which war did Golding serve in with the Royal Navy?
A First World War B Second World War C Vietnam War

4. Which weapon, first used in 1945, made people fear the end of the world?
A Atomic bomb B Cannon C Crossbow

5. Which 1857 adventure story did Golding respond to?
A *The Coral Island* B *Treasure Island* C *Peter Pan*

6. In that story, how do the shipwrecked boys behave?
A Badly and cruelly B Well and cooperatively C They never reach the island

7. What was Golding's job before he became a full-time writer?
A Teacher B Chef C Pilot

8. What did Golding want to show about people?
A Children are always good B Without rules, people can become cruel C Islands are dangerous

My score: ____ / 8

Sheet 2: Chapter 1 Event Cards

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Cut out the cards. Put them in order and stick them in your book. Then number them 1-9.

The boys vote and Ralph is chosen as chief	They find a conch shell in the lagoon	They find a piglet trapped in creepers, and Jack hesitates to kill it
Boys gather on the beach, including the littluns	Ralph climbs out of the jungle onto the beach and meets Piggy	Ralph says Jack's choir can be the hunters
Ralph blows the conch and calls the boys together	Ralph, Jack and Simon explore the island and climb the mountain	A group of choirboys led by Jack marches along the beach

Timeline strip. *Write the number of each event in order.*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Extend: Which event is the most important, and why? _____

_____

Sheet 3: Character Profiles and Writing

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Word bank: fair, kind, brave, clever, anxious, bossy, proud, confident, practical, shy, determined, weak, leader, arrogant

Complete your character's column. Teach the other two characters to your group.

	Ralph	Piggy	Jack
3 adjectives			
Evidence from Chapter 1 (event or short quotation)			
What does it show?			
Extend: what might he represent? (order, reason, power)			

Write. *What does the reader learn about one character in Chapter 1?*

Support frame: In Chapter 1, we learn that ___ is ___. For example, he ___. This shows that he is ___. **Core/Extend:** Point, Evidence, Explain. Extend: link to what he might represent and to the context.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sheet 4: Exit Ticket

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

1. One fact about the **context** that helps us understand the novel:

_____

2. The character who interests me most is _____ because:

_____

3. Predict: I think _____ will go wrong on the island because:

_____

I can...	Not yet	Nearly	Yes
explain some social and historical context of the novel	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
describe and order the key events of Chapter 1	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
analyse how Golding presents Ralph, Piggy and Jack	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Teacher Answer Key

Check all facts and plot details against your edition and reference sources before use.

Retention quiz

1 A, 2 B, 3 B, 4 A, 5 A, 6 B, 7 A, 8 B.

Chapter 1 event order (Sheet 2)

1. Ralph climbs out of the jungle onto the beach and meets Piggy
2. They find a conch shell in the lagoon
3. Ralph blows the conch and calls the boys together
4. Boys gather on the beach, including the littluns
5. A group of choirboys led by Jack marches along the beach
6. The boys vote and Ralph is chosen as chief
7. Ralph says Jack's choir can be the hunters
8. Ralph, Jack and Simon explore the island and climb the mountain
9. They find a piglet trapped in creepers, and Jack hesitates to kill it

Character profiles (suggested answers)

Character	Possible adjectives	Evidence idea	What he might represent
Ralph	friendly, fair, sporty, confident	Chosen as chief; blows the conch; sees the island as an adventure	Order, fairness and leadership
Piggy	clever, anxious, practical	Knows how to use the conch; has glasses and asthma; others mock him	Reason and intellect
Jack	confident, proud, bossy, arrogant	Leads the choir; wants to be chief; hesitates to kill the piglet	Power and the urge to hunt and rule

Differentiation summary

Support: tick adjectives from the word bank, use sentence frames, order 5 cards. Core: PEE with an event or short quotation. Extend: link characters to what they represent and to the war and Coral Island context.