



Lesson

Lord of the Flies

A novel by William Golding

Lesson: *Lord of the Flies*

Overview

In the following unit, students will explore the themes of power, control, abuse and respect between the characters in the novel *Lord of the Flies*. The terms “power” and “control” refer to how power in an intimate relationship or between peers can be used, either positively or negatively, to control or influence another person.

Learning Objectives

- Identify and describe power and control dynamics between the characters and how their circumstances influence their behavior.
- Identify and explain the consequences of physical and verbal abuse.
- Propose ways in which the principles of respectful behavior can help people to have healthier relationships.
- Create a visual or audio presentation that demonstrates the principles of respectful behavior.

Instructional Sequence

Outlined below you'll find the *Lessons from Literature* recommended instructional sequence for teaching *Lord of the Flies*. This lesson was designed to be taught as-is or integrated into your existing lesson plan for this book. We recommend you tailor this sequence to your own teaching style and your students' abilities and interests.

Part I: This section kicks off the lesson with an activity to familiarize students with the themes of power, control, abuse and respect.

Part II: This section deepens students' understanding of power, control, abuse and respect after they've had the opportunity to explore these themes in Part I.

Part III: This section has culminating activities and assessment opportunities that you can select from to complete this literature unit. At this point in the lesson, it is assumed that students have engaged in most or all of the Discussions, along with any other activities you've taught along the way.

Approximate Time: 3 Weeks (daily 55-minute sessions)



Lord of the Flies
©1954
ISBN 0-399-52920-9

Materials

Lord of the Flies – one copy of the novel per student recommended

Teacher Preparation

Photocopy [Handouts](#) (see page 31) – one per student

Terms

Power, control, consequences, principles of respectful behavior, equality, exclusion, autonomy (See online section [Getting Ready to Teach](#) for term definitions.)

English Language Standards

- Reading comprehension/Critical thinking/Analysis
- Expression (verbal and written)
- Language/literary techniques, terms
- Research skills
- Technology skills
- Cultural understanding
- Active (civic) participation

Print or download the full NCTE Education Standards Chart at www.lessonsfromliterature.org.

Discussions: Designed to be integrated throughout Parts II and III of the lesson, this section offers discussion topics and activities that address themes of power, control, abuse and respect, as students make their way through the reading. These Discussions provide students with multiple opportunities to articulate their ideas, engage in dialogue with their peers, and reflect on how these ideas relate to the text and the real world.

Part I | Understanding Power and Control and Their Impact

1 Game set-up: Have students play the “I’m Going to a Party and Bringing...” game. Ask for three volunteers to begin; they will be the leaders. All three leaders will be told that to attend the party, classmates must bring an item that has a double consonant in it: **eggs**, **butter**, **balloons**, **apples**, **kittens**, etc. Leaders 2 and 3 each have an additional rule which they do NOT share with other leaders. Here are the rules:

- **Leader 1:** Accepts all students who offer a correct item (double-consonant word)
- **Leader 2:** Accepts only students who offer a correct item *and* share a common trait, such as eye or hair color, with this leader (leader decides prior to starting the game, but doesn’t share with other leaders)
- **Leader 3:** Accepts only students who offer a correct item *and* are sitting in a particular row or area of the classroom (leader decides prior to starting the game, but doesn’t share with other leaders)

2 Game play: Allow the leaders to run the game. Leaders begin by giving classmates examples of the things they may bring to the party. Leaders should NOT tell their classmates the double-consonant rule; classmates have to figure out the secret/pattern. Classmates begin to offer their items, stating: “I’m going to a party and bringing _____.” Leaders may move students to a different part of the classroom as they become “admitted” to the party. Allow the game to run until students have divided themselves up into two factions, with some students admitted to the party and others denied even though they offered a double-consonant item.

3 Debrief: Ask students (including the leaders) to think about how it felt to be admitted or excluded from the “party.” Use the following questions:

- How did it feel to be in charge?
- How did it feel to be able to come to the party?

- How did it feel to be left out of the party?
- What happened when certain people could or could not get into the party/group?
- Was leadership challenged? If so, how? What were the results?
- In this game, who had power and control?
- In what ways were power and control used?

4 Wrap-up: Remind students that while this was just a game, repeated and intentional exclusion among groups and between individuals happens every day. Explain that using power to exclude another individual or group from attending a party may be *hurtful*, but the repeated and intentional use of power and control to exclude and isolate can be *abuse*. Tell the class that they are going to explore ways that power and control are used among groups and individuals in the book, *Lord of the Flies*.

5 Homework: Observe the student population in your school and the various groups that exist. Look at characteristics that define and distinguish each group, such as mannerisms or clothing preferences. What do these groups have in common? In what ways do individuals behave differently when in a group versus alone? Does each group have a leader? What distinguishes the leader from other group members?

TEACHING Tip

Observation research can be conducted in the school whereby students analyze the behavior of their peers. As an alternative, you can also choose to have students examine behavior they witness on TV, in a movie, or in another form of media.

6 In-class follow-up: Introduce and distribute the [Power and Control Wheel/PCW](#) and [Respect Wheel/RW](#) (see pages 32–33) to students and ask them to consider the importance and influence of groups.

TEACHING Tip

Discussions (see page 23) can begin once students have completed Part I.

Part II | Deepening Our Understanding of Power and Control through Literature

TEACHING Tip

The following mock-trial activity can follow the characterization activity (Discussions, page 24).

- 1 **Mock trial:** The following mock-trial activity will challenge students to think like one of the characters and respond on his behalf. Divide the students into three groups:
 - **Group Jack:** This group should look at the entire time on the island from *Jack's* point of view.
 - **Group Ralph:** This groups should look at the entire time on the island from *Ralph's* point of view.
 - **Group Judges:** This group will act as an audience of judges, and will ask questions of Groups Jack and Ralph and pass judgment on them.
- 2 **Considering point of view:** The groups supporting Jack and Ralph should consider the following questions in order to prepare for questions from the judges:
 - What happened?
 - What events does each boy have firsthand knowledge of?
 - What events did each boy *hear* about?
 - Which actions will each boy defend the most emphatically?
 - What will each boy say about the other?
- 3 **Preparing to make a judgment:** The group acting as judges should prepare questions for both groups. In order to come to a fair judgment, what do the judges need to find out? How can they look beyond the boys' personalities and leadership styles to find an accurate depiction of what happened on the island? Explain that the judgment group must create questions that elicit both objective *and* subjective answers.
 - **Objective:** Facts with no personal feelings (*Jack left the fire to hunt; Ralph gave a list of rules for boys to follow on the island; etc.*)
 - **Subjective:** Opinions; the boys' personal feelings (*Jack was acting arrogantly and disrespectfully; Ralph didn't have enough sense to understand why meat was important; etc.*)

- 4 **Wrap-up:** In a debriefing discussion, explain to students that even with the unique circumstances the boys faced on the island, there was no excuse for the violence that occurred. While Jack and his team became violent toward others, many characters did not resort to violence. Most people are able to respond to stress, frustration, anger and adversity in ways that aren't abusive or violent. Use the RW and invite students to give examples of respectful ways to respond to difficult situations. (*For instance: communicating, negotiating and taking responsibility*)
- 5 **Homework:** Write a **SEE** format letter (**S**tatement, **E**xample, **E**xplanation) to one character that you feel strongly about. In your letter, assess the character's behavior by describing his actions and analyzing his motivations and intentions. Use the PCW, RW, the characterization activity (see page 24) and your own thoughts.

Here's the letter format:

- **Paragraph 1:** Introduce yourself to the character and give your purpose for writing the letter.
- **Paragraphs 2-4:** Describe what you understand about his actions using specific details from the story. These paragraphs should be very detailed and include examples from the text.
- **Paragraph 5/Conclusion:** Explain your assessment by making recommendations to the character.



Part III | Assessment and Culminating Activities

Assessment Opportunities

1 What Would You Do?

Choose three boys from the island and address the following questions for each:

- Does this boy contribute in any way to the tragedy on the island? Explain your viewpoint.
- Could he have acted to prevent any of the deaths? Why or why not? Explain.
- In your conclusion, imagine you were one of these boys, and write about what you might have done differently in his situation.

2 What If ...?

Think about how the use of power and control affected the outcome of events on the island. Choose one of the following scenarios to respond to:

- Imagine the boys weren't rescued from the island. What do you think would have been the long-term effects of Jack's abusive leadership style? In what ways could respectful behavior have created a more peaceful society?
- Why was Piggy excluded and not considered a leader? How could things have been different if the boys had respected Piggy and his opinions?

Culminating Activities

1 Ad Campaign

Create a commercial (such as a TV skit, radio script, or poster) that addresses abuse or respect. Use examples from the PCW and RW. Have students explain how abusive or respectful behavior affects relationships, individuals and groups.

- You may wish to refer to www.adcouncil.org or www.endabuse.org for examples of public service announcements.

TEACHING *Tip*

You may choose to allow students extra class periods to develop their presentations.

2 Code of Conduct

Imagine that you and your friends are faced with a challenge like that confronted by the boys in *Lord of the Flies*. How would you cope and behave on a deserted tropical island? Design a code of conduct to live by that would teach the knowledge, values and skills you would need to surmount all the challenges you would face. Use the RW as a reference and consider the following questions:

- How would you ensure that your own personal boundaries are upheld?
- How would you ensure the safety of everyone?



Discussions | Weaving Power and Control into the Central Literature Theme

Lord of the Flies is a novel that explores themes of autonomy and groups, acceptance and fear as motivations, and mechanics and defects of society. After a group of British schoolboys, escaping England during World War II, end up marooned on a tropical island, they attempt to establish a social order and a plan for being rescued. The book follows their attempts at social order and the results of those attempts.

Essential Questions

The following *essential questions* can help guide class discussion throughout the reading of the text:

- What makes an individual powerful?
- How does individual power change in relationships with others?
- Do individuals control groups, or do groups control individuals?
- How does a society maintain order? Are laws necessary?
- How do fear and desire for acceptance influence human behavior?
- What are the implications for contemporary society?
- Does violence create power or control?



Facilitating Safe and Respectful Class Discussion

Your students may not be familiar with discussing topics of relationship abuse and violence. If your students need a break from a difficult topic, you can reintroduce an essential question to guide the discussion toward more philosophical and general concepts. You can also assign [dual-entry journals](#) (see Strategies for Supporting Student Learning on page 8) or written reflections for students to explore their opinions and feelings beyond the discussion.

Be aware of the mandatory reporting requirements that apply to you as a teacher, and be prepared to refer a student to the school counselor, a local resource or emergency services, if needed. See [Responding to Relationship Abuse](#) on page 39.

*Characterization***Societal Expectations and Gender Roles/Social Order**

Divide students into groups to complete character analyses on each of the major characters: Ralph, Piggy, Sam and Eric, Jack Merridew, Maurice, Roger and Simon. Students can complete this activity throughout the reading of the literature selection.

TEACHING Tip

You may choose to introduce Being a Boy, by Julius Lester, to kick off the discussion.

- Discuss society's expectations for boys as they grow into adulthood, considering how expectations differ between cultures and over time.
- Make a list of society's expectations for boys as they grow into men. Have students refer to this list as they analyze the characters.
- Describe each boy's attributes. Create a **CASA** chart to document evidence from the text for the following:
 - Other Characters' reactions to the boy
 - The character's **Actions**
 - The character's **Speech**
 - The **Author's** (Golding's) descriptions of the boy
- As students work, have them consider what motivates each boy to act the way he does. You may have students keep a [think aloud journal](#) (see *Strategies for Supporting Student Learning* on page 8) to record their thoughts as they move through the work. They may also record observations about the boys related to the PCW and RW. They may consider the following guiding questions:
 - How does the evidence for each boy's attributes reflect societal views of men?
 - How do societal views of men influence the amount of power and control each boy has or is perceived to have by the other boys?

*Ideas and Events to Consider for Individual Characters***Ralph**

- Referring to Simon, "He's queer. He's funny." (**chapter 3**)
- Criticizing the boys for their lack of cooperation (**chapters 3, 4**)
- Treatment of the littluns (**chapter 5**)
- Demonstrating his hunting prowess (**chapter 7**)
- Waning confidence in himself (**chapters 7, 8**)

Maurice

- Destroying the littluns' sand castle (**chapter 4**)

Roger

- Destroying the littluns' sand castle (**chapter 4**)
- Harassing the young boy named Henry (**chapter 4**)

Jack

- Slashing the green candle buds (**chapter 1**)
- Hesitating when he lifts his knife to kill the piglet, and his promise for the next time he meets a pig (**chapter 1**)
- Treatment of the littluns (**chapter 5**)
- Overthrowing Ralph's authority (**chapters 7, 8**)
- Reaction if someone interferes with him (**chapter 10**)
- Plans for Ralph (**chapter 11**)

Simon

- Saying he thinks the "beast" may be inside the boys themselves (**chapter 5**)

*Chapters 1, 2***The Acquisition of Power and Control**

As students read, have them keep a [dual-entry journal](#) (see *Strategies for Supporting Student Learning* on page 8). In class, have students begin the CASA character analysis for Ralph, Piggy, and Jack, the first three characters described at length in the text. After completing the four elements of the character analysis (see CASA description on page 24), have students consider how the boys begin to create a society for themselves: Why do they generate the rules they do? Have students use their character analyses to apply the PCW to Ralph, Piggy, and Jack; they should consider each boy's treatment of others, using the following guiding questions:

- How does each boy use his physical characteristics to influence individuals and the group? Are these actions respectful?
- How does each boy use his personality traits to influence individuals and the group? Are these measures respectful of others?
- How successful in controlling others is each of these three boys? How does each boy acquire power? Are these ways respectful?

Wrap-up: Based on examining physical and personality traits, what are the different types of strength and power? Have students free-write on this topic first, then discuss as a group.

- Consider how personality characteristics of the three boys affected their acquisition of power. Write a reflection on the similarities and differences between these characteristics and those valued in society today.

*Chapter 3***Power and Control, Respect and Acceptance and Fear**

In this chapter, Ralph and Jack discuss the feelings of the boys on the island. Have students [think aloud](#) (see *Strategies for Supporting Student Learning* on page 8) about these feelings as they read, considering the following guiding questions:

- Why do people choose to join a group?
- Why do groups choose to accept others into their group?
- Why do groups choose to reject others from their group?
- Why do people choose to remain in a group? What are the risks of leaving a group?

Wrap-up: Have students free-write about how the boys' society compares to their own high school environment or other behavior they have observed, experienced or learned about.

*Chapter 4***Power and Control and Violence**

The boys on the island seem to have split into two groups: Ralph's builders and Jack's hunters. As students read, have them create a [dual-entry journal](#) (see *Strategies for Supporting Student Learning* on page 8) to address the following guiding question:

- What do the focus on hunting and the desire to kill a pig reveal about the boys' understanding of life, violence, power and control?

Wrap-up: Have your views about life, violence, power and control changed since the beginning of the book? Discuss.

Chapters 5-8 | Power and Control and the Mechanics and Defects of Society

- Simon says, "...maybe there is a beast...What I mean is...maybe it's only us." As they read these chapters, have students create a [dual-entry journal](#) (see *Strategies for Supporting Student Learning* on page 8) to address how the boys are the beast, considering their use of power and control and using the PCW to help support their answers. The left column will contain examples of the boys as the beast; the right column will contain connections to the PCW.
- Consider the sign from the world of grown-ups in chapter 6. How does this compare/connect to what happens to the boys on the island? *Student answers may include: The men are at war (World War II); the boys are becoming as out of control as the men are. They have learned the hunting/killing behaviors from men.*

Chapters 9-12 | Power and Control, Violence and Acceptance and Fear

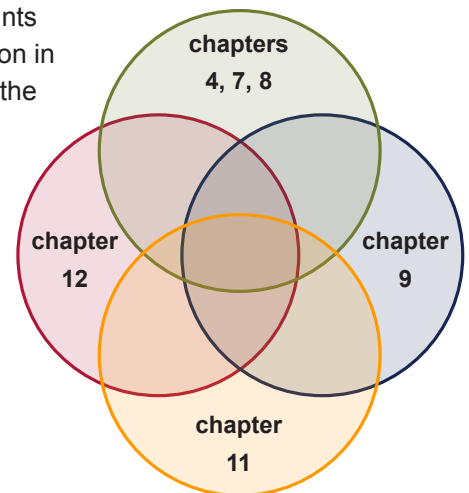
- Trace either the boys' treatment of Simon from chapters 1–8 or the boys' treatment of Piggy from chapters 1–11. As students read, have them use a [dual-entry journal](#) or [annotate the text](#) (see *Strategies for Supporting Student Learning* on page 8) to guide their reading. The left column will include treatment examples from the text; the right column will include connections to the PCW and consideration of the following guiding questions:
 - How was each boy treated by individuals and groups? (right-column examples)
 - Do you think this treatment influenced each boy's death? (left-column analysis)

Wrap-up: Have students write a reflection/response on what the boys' treatment of Simon and/or Piggy reveals about the use of power and control and the impact of groups.

Discussions Wrap-up

Examining the Misuse of Power and Control

- Have students use a Venn diagram to compare the hunts in chapters 4, 7 and 8 to the accidental murder of Simon in chapter 9, the capture of Samneric in chapter 11, and the intentional murder of Piggy in chapter 12.
 - What characteristics do they share?
 - How and why did intent change?
 - How does each event connect to the PCW?



Venn Diagram Example