

Year 9 (Lord of the Flies)



1. Historical Context	
World War	The people of Britain had just been through the Second World War. In the novel, the boys seem to create their own war, suggesting the reality of human nature.
Food	Food was still being rationed in Britain. Desire for food is a major part and motivation of LOTF.
Nuclear War	It was feared that there might be a nuclear war between Western countries and the Soviet Union. References to bombs and fighting are made throughout the novel.
Science	The mid-20th Century was a time of scientific advancement, and meant that religion was questioned by science. Golding explores issues that science cannot explain, such as sin, good and evil.
Good vs. Evil	Golding came to the conclusion that all human beings had the capacity for incredible evil, even children.
British Empire	Britain was having to come to terms with the loss of the British Empire.
School	Public schools (where most of the boys on the island went to) still produced most of Britain's leaders and top professionals.
Class	The class system was very much existent in Britain. Piggy stands out for being lower class; the others are upper class.
Nazi Germany	Nazi Germany had adopted a system of rewarding the strong and attacking the weak. The same system appears to happen in the novel.
Salvation	The adults the boys wish could help them are the same ones who are fighting the war that has led to the boys being stranded.

2. Key Characters	
Ralph	Anglo Saxon word for council: leader, tall, rational, blonde hair.
Piggy	Nickname only (we never learn his real name): glasses-wearing, asthma- suffering, low class, bullied.
Jack	One who takes over' – tall, intimidating, red hair.
Simon	'One who listens' – small, shy, spiritual, black hair.
Roger	'One with a spear' – secretive, sadistic, Jack's sidekick.
Sam and Eric	Twins, always together.
The Littluns	Collective name of the younger boys.

3. Key Themes	
Democracy	Control of an organisation or group by the majority of its members
Dictatorship	An authoritarian form of government, characterized by a single leader
Civilisation vs Savagery	The conflict between the human impulse towards savagery and the rules of civilisation.
The loss of innocence	An experience or period in a person's life that leads to a greater awareness of evil, pain and/or suffering in the world around them.
Good vs Evil	Evil is the opposite of good, and good should prevail.
Human nature	The natural desires we have in us: to be selfish, savage and immoral.

4. Symbols	
Conch	Civilization, democracy and order.
Piggy's glasses	Science and technology and the power to transform.
Fire	Hope of salvation.
The Beast	Human nature (the desire to be a savage).
The Lord of the Flies (pig's head)	A physical manifestation of the beast.
Adults	Civilization and social order.
The ocean	The unconscious mind; the desires and thoughts we have within ourselves.