Lord of the Flies

English 10
Class Notes on Plot & William Golding
Lord of the Flies, was published in England in 1954.

The idea came from a children’s story about an island coupled with Golding’s war experiences.
Golding was born in Cornwall, Great Britain.

He went to college at Oxford and started out as a natural science major before changing to English literature.

He worked as a actor, writer, producer, and school teacher.
Golding joined the British Royal Navy and was involved in WWII.

His experiences in WWII gave him the idea to write a book about human nature and evil.

He won the Nobel Prize in 1983.
Allegory:

- A story, poem, or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral or political one.
- A symbol.
- What might this story be an allegory for?
British schoolboys are stranded on an uninhabited island after a plane crash.

Island whereabouts unknown.

During a fictional nuclear war (not WWII).
• 2 boys serve as main characters in the beginning.

• Elementary – middle school aged boys.
...If you over think this story.

- Don’t think about all adults dying and all children alive.
- Don’t think about where they were flying.
- Don’t think about the island location.
A look at society...

- Realizing there are no adults, the boys try to follow the rules of society.
- The division of labor is agreed upon.
- A mini society is formed.
What types of emotions might play out?

A “beast” is on the island. Where might the best come from?

Words of a famous president “We have nothing to fear…”
Laced with fears, a struggle for power begins.

The boys become more and more fascinated with their savage side.
Nature vs. Nurture...

■ Discussion:

■ Evil = Born with it.

Or

■ Evil = Raised with it.

Is Society evil?
- Humanity needs civilization.

- Contrary to the belief that man is innocent and society evil, the story shows that laws/rules/structure/society are necessary to keep the darker side of human nature in line.

- When these concepts slip away or are ignored, human beings revert to a more primitive part of their nature.
Evil (the beast in the novel) is within man himself.

Golding implies that evil is not created but is ingrained within us all.

Loss of innocence is needed in order to see reality and for humanity to survive.

Age is not directly related to innocence...young can be corrupt/structure can save.
Humans

Civilization
This quote directly portrays the message that Golding is trying to express; that the heart of man is not good and kind, it is selfish and corrupt.

- Simon
In the novel, it refers to a pig head on a stick, an offering to the “beast.” It becomes the beast…sort of.

“Lord of the Flies”

Bible: Jesus refers to Satan as “Beelzebub”; Hebrew for LOTF
BE ON THE LOOKOUT! THERE ARE LOTS OF SYMBOLS IN THIS BOOK!
IT’S LIKE A GAME OF WHERE’S WALDO!!!!

Conch shell

- Must have in order to speak
  - Make predictions. What might physically happen to the shell and what might that mean?

Glasses (specs)

- Used to start a fire
  - Make predictions. How might this symbol play into the book? How might it change over time?
Golding uses symbols to represent different meanings within the book. Examples:
- The title *Lord of the Flies* = Evil
- A seashell used to call the boys and designate a speaking order might represent?
- Keep an eye out for anything that could be symbolic (There are lots of them!).
In addition to objects, people/characters can be symbolic too.

What are various character traits that can be used to describe humans?

Golding attempts to emphasize this point by giving certain characters stronger attributes (one character embodies wisdom, one evil, etc.)
The island is a perfect microcosm. It is like an ant-farm.

A microcosm is a _____________.

Population of leaders/followers.
Different areas of the island are associated with different ideas.

Beach = Dreams/hope of rescue

Mountain = ?

Bush/Forest = ?

Rocky-outcrop = ?
“The heart of the human condition is the condition of the human heart.”

- This is relevant because...
Is our civilization really civil?