

Reading Project: Year 5

In our reading project we are going to discuss some of the most famous novels of English and American literature. All the novels in this project require careful reading beyond the plot level. For a full understanding you will have to read between the lines and find the symbolism and allusions of the texts. In order to see these hidden beauties always read with a pencil in your hand and mark any interesting or odd passages in the margin. Discuss your selections in your readers' conferences.

Step 1: Choosing a novel

Visit Amazon.com in the internet and find the five books in our project. Read the brief plot summaries and some readers' comments, then choose the novel that interests you most. You need not order them at Amazon. All of the books are available in Graz.

The Books:

John Steinbeck, *The Pearl*
George Orwell, *Animal Farm*
Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*
William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*
J.D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*
Ernest Hemingway, *The Old Man and the Sea*

Step 2: Getting Started: (Reading Diary)

Read the first chapter of your novel and write a 10-minute entry in your reading diary. Please take your reading diary very seriously. Go beyond the plot level and write about all your thoughts, associations, questions...(Check your handout "What is a reading diary?" for further instructions.) Write a second entry into your reading diary after you have read the first half of your novel, and a third one after finishing.

Your reading diary and your marginal notes in the book will be used as a basis for discussion in your readers' conferences. These notes will also help you remember your reflections later (for Matura preparation for example).

Step 3: Readers' Conferences and Workshop tasks

1. Work in your group and share your reflections and questions. Read each other's diaries and try to answer each other's questions. Ask your teacher for help in case of disagreements or open problems.
2. In each readers' conference choose 10 vocab. items that you would like to remember and write them into your vocab book.
3. Do the workshop tasks carefully and collect all the tasks in a folder.

Step 4: Preparing the Presentation

Choose one or two of the presentation tasks (see separate handout). Distribute the work load evenly among the group members and design an interesting, well-rounded group presentation. Copy your contribution for all the group members + one for your teacher.

Step 5: Presentations

Groups present their novels.

Peer-evaluation and feedback of the presentations + Assessment and feedback from teacher

Step 6: Project Folder

Organize your project folder and hand it in for final assessment. Hand in your reading diary.

Book Presentation

For our final presentations of the reading project choose one of the following tasks. Each student in your group must do a different task. Discuss which of the tasks are most meaningful in connection with your novel. Choose tasks that complement each other so that the class gets a full picture of the main themes, symbolism, background and style of your novel.

- Short biography of the author
- Present an alternative book cover and blurb (and print out all the covers and blurbs available at Amazon.com). Discuss the symbolism of these covers.
- Character portraits of the main characters. (You might want to use the *character profiles* handout. Adding a picture will make your portraits even more realistic.)
- Present the historical and cultural background of your novel. (Use visual aids)
- Write a newspaper article reporting an important incident in your novel.
- Write a poem or song-lyrics that might be used in a film or radio-play of your book.
- Act out a scene of your choice.
- Prepare a "bubble sheet" (A3 poster) where you collect important quotes from your book.
- Identity bags: Bring a bag full of objects that are somehow important to the main character of your book. Show them and explain their relevance.
- Design a board game or quiz to be played in class.
- Choose your favorite scene and imagine how it would be shown in a film. Draw a film storyboard.
- Write a summary of the book (see handout *Literature summary*)
- Find a painting or other work of art that deals with one of the main themes in your book. (Choose a painting that reflects the symbolic and metaphorical level of your book, rather than a painting that shows the setting of your story.)
- Road signs: Identify a few symbolic items in your book and draw them like "road signs". Consider the shapes and colors of road signs and make use of their symbolism. Explain the meaning of the symbol on the back of your sign (50 – 100 words).
- Alternative idea: If you have an idea of your own contact your teacher about it.

Additional ideas for the readers of *Animal Farm* and *Brave New World*

- Present the basic principles of propaganda and advertising (use visual aids)
- Give a propaganda speech about any topic of your choice. Then explain the methods you have used.
- Present to pros and cons of genetic engineering (use visual aids)

Lord of the Flies

By William Golding

1. Character Study

Lord of the Flies contains numerous characters, all of which are young boys. The most important characters in the novel are listed below. Work in your group and collect as much as you can about the main characters in the novel. Divide the work in your group, then share your findings.

Collect details about the following points:

- The character's appearance
- The character's life before arriving on the island
- What the character thinks about being on the island
- The character's actions in the novel, significant events
- The character's relationships with others on the island
- Anything else you find interesting about the character and predictions about what might happen to him in the rest of the novel
- What aspects of human behavior does the character represent
- Include one or two typical quotations from each character to support your points.

Ralph



Jack



Piggy



Simon



Roger



Sam and Eric



4. The Setting

Draw a map of the island. Mark the most important places and note the page numbers where you found the relevant information. Use an A4 sheet, landscape format for your map.

Reread the descriptions of the landscape carefully and collect a sheet full of descriptive phrases used by the author. Then use different colors to sort your phrases into the following categories:

Phrases that appeal to the

- sense of smell
- taste
- touch
- hearing
- seeing

Then discuss the significance of the following places and take notes .

Significance of setting overall:

Platform

Scar

Mountain

Castle rock

The beach

5. Themes

William Golding presented numerous themes and basic ideas that give the reader something to think about. One of the most basic and obvious themes is that society holds everyone together, and without these conditions, our ideals, values, and the basics of right and wrong are lost. Without society's rigid rules, anarchy and savagery can come to light. Golding is also showing that morals come directly from our surroundings, and if there is no civilization around us, we will lose these values.

Other themes of the novel include:

- Civilisation/Savagery
- Democracy & Order
- Leadership and the abuse of power
- Good versus evil
- Survival
- Outsiders
- Fear
- Violence
- Adults

Choose three of the above themes and find relevant passages that show how the author deals with the theme. Write relevant page numbers next to the themes above. Write a well structured paragraph about each of the three themes of your choice. Divide the themes in your group so that you cover as many as possible.

Civilisation and Rules: Who or what rules your life?

Think about who or what rules and governs your life and how this affects you.

1. First, list three of society's laws or rules that directly affect you as an individual.
2. Complete the table to show who created each of these rules, who enforces them and how they enforce them. What are the advantages and the disadvantages of each of these rules?

	Rule One	Rule Two	Rule Three
Rule			
Who created it?			
Who enforces it?			
How is it enforced?			
Advantages			
Disadvantages			

6. Symbolism in *Lord of the Flies*

Symbolism plays an important part in the development of the story. This narrative technique is used to give a significance to certain people or objects, which represent some other figure. The following table lists many of the examples of symbolism used throughout Golding's book. Discuss in your group what each of the objects or characters might represent.

Object/Character	Represents
Piggy (and Glasses)	
Ralph, The Conch	
Simon	
Roger	
Jack	
The Island	
The "Scar"	
The masks and war paint	
Lord of the Flies	
The Beast	See details next page

There are many other aspects in the story that may be considered symbolic, but the several above are probably the most significant. Another good example of symbolism is the shape of the island. The boat shape of the island is an ancient symbol of civilization. The water current around the island seems to be "flowing backwards," giving the subtle impression that civilization may be going backwards for the island or its inhabitants.

Lord of the Flies

The Beast

Although many of the boys on the island believe in the existence of 'the beast' it is not a real creature that can be hunted and killed. Rather, it comes to represent some of the boys' darkest fears and desires.

Look at the passage below which is taken from Chapter Two when the boys first talk about the beast and then answer the questions.

'He wants to know what you're going to do about the snake-thing.'
Ralph laughed, and the other boys laughed with him. The small boy twisted further into himself.
'Tell us about the snake-thing.'
'Now he says it was a beastie.'
'Beastie?'
'A snake-thing. Ever so big. He saw it.'
'Where?'
'In the woods.'
Either the wandering breezes or perhaps the decline of the sun allowed a little coolness to lie under the trees. The boys felt it and stirred restlessly.
'You couldn't have a beastie, a snake-thing, on an island this size,' Ralph explained kindly.
'You only get them in big countries, like Africa, or India.'
Murmur; and the grave nodding of heads.
'He says the beastie came in the dark.'
'Then he couldn't see it!'
Laughter and cheers.
'Did you hear that? Says he saw the thing in the dark-'
'He still says he saw the beastie. It came and went away again an' came back and wanted to eat him-'
'He was dreaming.'
Laughing, Ralph looked for confirmation round the ring of faces. The older boys agreed; but here and there among the little ones was the dubiety that required more than rational assurance.
'He must have had a nightmare. Stumbling about among all those creepers.'
More grave nodding; they knew about nightmares.
'He says he saw the beastie, the snake-thing, and will it come back to-night?'
'But there isn't a beastie!'
There was no laughter at all now and more grave watching. Ralph pushed both hands through his hair and looked at the little boy in mixed amusement and exasperation.
Jack seized the conch.
'Ralph's right of course. There isn't a snake-thing. But if there was a snake we'd hunt it and kill it. We're going to hunt pigs and get meat for everybody. And we'll look for the snake too-'
'But there isn't a snake!'
'We'll make sure when we go hunting.'
Ralph was annoyed and, for the moment, defeated. He felt himself facing something ungraspable.
The eyes that looked so intently at him were without humour.
'But there isn't a beast!'
Something he had not known was there rose in him and compelled him to make the point, loudly and again.
'But I tell you there isn't a beast!'
The assembly was silent.

1. Describe the boy who first mentions the ‘beastie’. What happens to him at the end of Chapter Two?
2. The beast is first described as a ‘snake-thing’ – what do you think is the significance of this? Where else do images of snakes appear in the novel?
3. Why does the boy think he has seen a ‘beastie’?
4. How do the following characters react to the boy’s revelation about the ‘beastie’ and what does this tell us about them?
 - Ralph
 - Jack
 - the other older boys
 - the other younger boys
5. What ideas does each character have about what the beast is during the story? What or who is mistaken for the beast at different stages in the novel?
6. Now trace how the idea of the beast develops through the whole novel by copying out and filling in a chart like the one below. You will need to re-read the following pages of your book: (Faber edition, 1958) You might have to find the right pages in your edition.
 - Chapter 2 34-6, 47
 - Chapter 3 52-3
 - Chapter 5 88-92, 94-99
 - Chapter 6 106-109, 112, 115-118
 - Chapter 7 127, 133
 - Chapter 8 151-2, 158
 - Chapter 9 161,168-70
 - Chapter 12 206

Page Number	Who mentions the beast?	What is said about the beast? (Include quotes)	What is the importance of the beast at this point in the novel?

7. Writing tasks:

7.1: Summary Writing:

Follow the instructions on the summary writing sheet and write a short summary (3-5 paragraphs) of the novel.

7.2: Literature Essay or Creative Writing task

Choose one of the following tasks. If you choose an essay task follow our guidelines for 5§ essays. First brainstorm your ideas, then formulate a clear thesis statement for your essay. Support your thesis in the following paragraphs and give examples from the novel.

Essay tasks:

a) Write an essay about the importance of the beast in *Lord of the Flies*. You will need to consider:

- How the different characters react to the idea of the beast
- How ideas about what the beast might be change during the novel
- What you think the beast represents

b) How much do you think Ralph is to blame for what goes wrong on the island? Write about:

- the ideas Ralph has about life on the island at the start of the novel
- the decisions Ralph makes
- how the writer presents the character of Ralph
- other reasons for things going wrong.

c) Although the reader's sympathies are usually with Ralph, many of the boys decide to follow Jack.
 Explain what you think are the differences in what Jack and Ralph stand for and in how they behave in the novel.

- Why do the boys follow Jack?
- Can you see any similar effects and developments in our society? Do you know any politicians who behave like Ralph or Jack?
- Explain what went wrong on the island and why. What is Golding saying about how societies operate.

Creative Writing tasks:

d) Piggy's Diary: If Piggy had had paper and a pen he would certainly have written a diary. Choose an interesting moment in the novel and write an entry into Piggy's diary. (Write about one page, typed)

e) Island Code of Conduct: If all the boys had followed certain rules of conduct the situation would not have got out of hand on the island. Imagine Ralph and Piggy had had time and the necessary equipment to write the 10 commandments or rules of conduct for the group of boys. Formulate the rules carefully and give reasons so that the other kids would understand the purpose of the rules and stick to them more willingly. Design a nice flyer that each of the boys would get to sign. Don't forget to write an introduction (a preamble).