

Worksheet 6. Theme Ideas in *Lord of the Flies* (teacher version)

William Golding's novel conveys more than one idea about individuals and groups. Consider information from the text supplied for you; write in the theme idea that you think the author is trying to convey through that scene.

Information from the text	Theme idea
Piggy is overweight and asthmatic; he has weak vision; he is smart and not at all athletic. The other boys tend to discount his ideas and make fun of him.	People often judge by appearances and victimize others who seem somehow inadequate. The strong tend to bully the apparently weak.
The boys on the island end up at war with each other, and war in the outside world is what led to their castaway experience in the first place.	War is an inevitable product of human nature. When there is no real reason to fight, people create one.
When Jack first has a chance to kill a pig, he hesitates. When the boys kill the sow, they are filled with bloodlust and savagery.	Killing, with practice, becomes easy and even pleasurable. People can become inured to what at first seems awful.
As the novel draws to a close, it seems certain that Ralph will be killed and his head will be mounted on a stick. At the very last minute, a naval officer arrives to save his life and get the boys off the island.	Sometimes miracles do occur. (Imagine how different the novel would be if it ended with Ralph's death and an island covered with burned out flora and fauna.)
The boys become convinced that an unidentified monster or beast threatens them; each day starts out okay, but as night and darkness near, uneasiness and fear grow.	Fear leads people to imagine danger and threats; it can generate irrational behavior.
Ralph, the elected leader, tries to make rules and keep order, but he has no means of enforcement. Gradually he completely loses influence until he ends up with no one on his side. Jack maintains order with the excitement of the hunt and with harsh punishments.	Chaos erupts when there is no effective law enforcement. A good leader can fail, while a despot can succeed based on fear.
The castaways on the island are young boys, none of them yet in his teens and some very small. There is no adult presence except in their memories until the navy arrives at the end.	Without adults to enforce acceptable behavior standards, children go completely wild. Destructive behavior is a built-in part of human nature.
In chapter 5, when the boys discuss the Beast, Simon says, "Maybe there is a beast ... maybe it's only us."	The evil in the world originates not from outside threats, but from human nature. This is the novel's dominant theme.