

Lesson 1: The Call

☐ Getting Started

Let's imagine a perfect place. This place would be ideal not only because it is beautiful and populated with good creatures, but also because the weather suits all the activities people like. There would be food sources that are easy to harvest. Everyone would be provided for, with little work required. This place would be a paradise.

Now let's add people. How should people behave in this perfect place? In this paradise, people would interact in peaceful, friendly, and productive ways. Everyone would thrive.

The state of perfect social conditions has a name: **utopia**. In 1516, the term was devised by Sir Thomas More from the Greek *ou-topos*, a hybrid word that means "no place." The name itself suggests that a paradise of people behaving in a way that creates perfect social conditions is impossible.

The opposite of a utopia is a **dystopia**. In a dystopia, human wishes are not fulfilled; instead, a dystopian universe is a dangerous, uncomfortable, and stressful place to live. Dystopias may be chaotic, lawless, undeveloped, and savage, or they may be controlled with oppressive, totalitarian violence. Survival is the goal, often at high cost.

One important purpose of literature is to explore ideas in imagined places so people can think through root causes and the possible results of these scenarios. Great literature sparks great discussions. In this unit, you consider the forces in human beings that lead down the path to utopias or dystopias, to thriving or barely surviving.

Popular series of dystopian novels in recent years include the *The Hunger Games*, *Divergent*, *The Maze Runner*, *City of Ember*, and *The 5th Wave*. *Lord of the Flies* was an early model for these contemporary novels.

Many novels labeled utopian or dystopian are set in fantasy worlds, while others are futuristic with science fiction elements. Setting is important in novels that explore utopias and dystopias, because it can intensify the challenges faced by humans.

In 1954, in *Lord of the Flies*, author William Golding challenged his readers to consider how human nature would react if put to an extreme test of survival. The tropical island setting is realistic — seemingly perfect — not futuristic or fantastic. But on the island, Golding presents a world where youth is forced to lead, even

though they are unprepared for the challenge. You will contemplate human nature in this time-honored story of chaos and control — how do humans adapt or degrade in unknown, harsh, or threatening circumstances?

Stuff You Need

- *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding
- dictionary
- glue
- journal
- scissors

Ideas to Think About

- How does a society maintain order?
- Are laws necessary?
- How do fear and desire for acceptance influence human behavior?

Things to Know

- *Lord of the Flies* was written by William Golding as he grappled to find the root causes of the violence he saw during active duty in World War II. After the war, Golding returned to teaching and writing.
- An imagined universe that is perfect is called a **utopia**.
- The opposite of a utopia is a **dystopia**. A dystopian universe is a dangerous, uncomfortable, stressful place to live.
- Know the definitions of the following vocabulary words: *incredulous, errant, furtive, susurrations, sepals, decorum, discursive, leviathan*.

Activities

☐ Activity 1: Dystopias

In this activity, you will explore the concept of dystopias in more depth. If you have read two or more dystopian novels, or have watched two or more dystopian films, then choose Option 1. If you haven't read or watched two or more dystopian works of fiction, then choose Option 2.

Option 1

Use the "Dystopias" (Option 1) activity page to record the titles of any dystopian novels you have read and dystopian movies you have watched. You will then explore some elements the works have in common.

Option 2

Create two columns in your journal. Label one column "utopia" and the other "dystopia." In the utopia column list five bullet points of must-have characteristics

for the place of your dreams. Then consider the opposite — negative characteristics of a place to live — for the dystopia column.

Ask someone you know to do the same activity. Compare the lists. There may be conflicting items on those lists. People have different notions of how to live well and how to organize society. What happens when there is a clash of ideas when it comes to the ideal career, social, and home life?

☐ Activity 2: Vocabulary

Word choice is a tool authors use to create the tension and excitement in their stories that keep us turning the pages. Reading builds your vocabulary, which gives you new words to express your own ideas.

In this exercise, you will use the "Vocabulary" activity pages to match the word, its definition, its symbol, and the passage in which it appears. Cut out the squares and then use the pages with empty boxes on them to paste the matching items in a row.

Wrapping Up

In a dystopian story, characters' flaws and strengths have significant consequences as they struggle for life against powerful forces. Perfect social conditions are absent as lawlessness and savagery test the resourcefulness and world views of the different personalities. *Lord of the Flies* is a story based on these high stakes. As you begin to read *Lord of the Flies* for homework, try to predict which of the boys survive, if any.

Also consider the following questions and be prepared to discuss them:

- What makes someone likely to survive in a dystopian setting?
- What are effective leadership qualities in a survival situation?
- Is a utopian society possible? Why or why not?



How to Recognize a Dystopia

www.beyondthepage.com/link/4302/

If you'd like to learn more about utopias and dystopias, watch this 6-minute TED Ed video.

Homework

For homework you will begin reading *Lord of the Flies*. As you read, consider how the island may at first seem like a utopia. What do you think will turn this utopia into a dystopia? In the lessons that follow, also consider how the novel's dystopian

vision differs from those of more contemporary dystopian novels and movies you may be familiar with.

☐ Reading and Questions

Read Chapter 1 in *Lord of the Flies*. As you read, refer to the questions in the Wrapping Up section. You will see these unfold in the story. After reading, answer the following questions.

1. What do Ralph and Piggy find on the beach and how do they use it?

2. Which boy attempts to seize the leadership role for himself? Why does he think he should be a leader?

3. How do the boys choose a leader and who is chosen?

4. How does Jack become the leader of a group of boys?

Dystopias

Directions: Record the titles of any dystopian novels you have read and dystopian movies you have watched. Then answer the questions about what the works have in common.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What do the settings of the stories have in common?

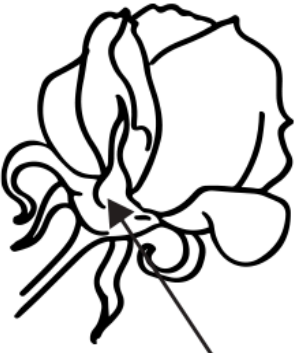
What plot ideas do they have in common?

What central struggles do the main characters have in common?

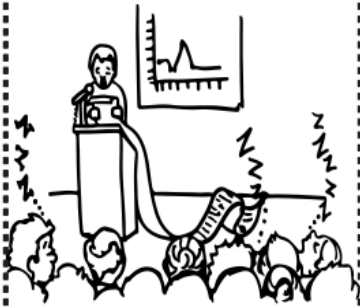
Based on your answers above, what are some common elements among the novels and movies?

Which elements do you anticipate you might see in *Lord of the Flies*?

Vocabulary

incredulous	Definition: nervous, avoiding attention often due to guilt	errant	
"That was from Piggy, shocked out of _____." (p. 89)	Definition: a sea monster or something very large and powerful	"They were twins, and the eye was shocked and _____ at such cheery duplication." (p. 19)	
"Their green _____ drew back a little and the white tips of the flowers rose delicately to meet the open air." (p. 57)	discursive	Definition: usually green and leafy, part of flower enclosing petals	
Definition: straying, misbehaving	susurrat	"Jack himself shrank at this cry with a hiss of withdrawn breath, and for a minute became less of a hunter than a _____ thing, ape-like among the tangle of trees." (p. 49)	

Vocabulary

Definition: murmuring, whispering	Definition: proper behavior, good form or manners	leviathan	
furtive	"The noise of the _____ assembly faded up the mountain." (p. 38)	"The deep sea breaking miles away on the reef made an undertone less perceptible than the _____ of the blood." (p. 57)	
"The assembly shredded away and became a _____ and random scatter from the palms to the water and away along the beach, beyond night-sight." (p. 92)	sepals	Definition: unable or unwilling to believe	
decorum	"Then the sleeping _____ breathed out, the waters rose, the weed streamed, and the water boiled over the table rock with a roar." (p. 105)	Definition: straying from the topic or shifting from subject to subject	

Vocabulary

Vocabulary

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Getting Started

✿ Ideas to Think About

- How does a society maintain order?
- Are laws necessary?
- How do fear and desire for acceptance influence human behavior?

📖 Things to Know

- *Lord of the Flies* was written by William Golding as he grappled to find the root causes of the violence he saw during active duty in World War II. After the war, Golding returned to teaching and writing.
- An imagined universe that is perfect is called a **utopia**.
- The opposite of a utopia is a **dystopia**. A dystopian universe is a dangerous, uncomfortable, stressful place to live.
- Know the definitions of the following vocabulary words: *incredulous, errant, furtive, susurrations, sepals, decorum, discursive, leviathan*.

⦿ Skills

- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (LA)
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. (LA)
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone). (LA)

Introducing the Lesson

The lesson introduces the concepts of utopias and dystopias. According to many critics, *Lord of the Flies* is a dystopian novel. The novel was written by William Golding after he came home from active duty service in World War II.

As Golding sought to explore the root causes of violence in society, he looked to human nature in its rawest form: children in an entirely uncivilized setting. Which aspects of human nature will prevail? The ones that lead people to seek order, cleanliness, and cooperation? Or the ones that lead us to fear, violence, and savagery? Students will explore these questions throughout the unit.

NOTE: Some flex days are included at the very end of the semester, should your child need them. The "Semester Exam" lesson is five days long, which students can use for project completion in addition to studying and exam taking.

Activities**Activity 1: Dystopias**

Students will explore dystopian works of fiction in more depth in this activity. Students who have read dystopian novels or watched dystopian movies should choose Option 1 (they should have at least two titles on the list to compare); those who do not have two titles should choose Option 2.

Option 1

In the first option, students are asked to recall dystopian novels they have read or dystopian movies they have watched. In their journals they should take notes that make connections between the commonalities among these stories. This will provide some context for what they can expect from *Lord of the Flies*. Answers will vary.

Option 2

Option 2 asks students to create two columns in their journals. They should label one column "utopia" and the other "dystopia" and list characteristics of each. They should ask someone else to do the same and compare lists. This will reinforce students' understanding of these terms, and it will demonstrate how different individual perspectives of these notions are. Answers will vary. Make sure the columns demonstrate students' understanding of the differences between a utopia and a dystopia.

Activity 2: Vocabulary

In this exercise students will learn the meanings of some words that are necessary for them to understand the novel. Some of the words in this exercise (such as errant, furtive, and incredulous) appear more than once in the novel. Note that the page numbers listed may differ from those in the other editions of the novel that might be used by students.

Students are provided with vocabulary words, definitions, and images associated with the words, as well as a passage from *Lord of the Flies* that provides context for each term. The contextual and image prompts are designed to help students independently decipher which words and definitions match up. Engaging the students by providing thinking prompts in the form of images and context strengthens critical thinking skills.

Answer Key:

incredulous: unable or unwilling to believe

"They were twins, and the eye was shocked and incredulous at such cheery duplication." (p. 19)

Image: surprised/disbelieving face

errant: straying, misbehaving

"The noise of the errant assembly faded up the mountain." (p. 38)

Image: person going through the door that says "Do Not Enter"

furtive: nervous, avoiding attention often due to guilt

"Jack himself shrank at this cry with a hiss of withdrawn breath, and for a minute became less of a hunter than a furtive thing, ape-like among the tangle of trees." (p. 49)

Image: boy tiptoeing

susurratation: murmuring, whispering

"The deep sea breaking miles away on the reef made an undertone less perceptible than the susurratation of the blood." (p. 57)

Image: people whispering

sepals: usually green and leafy, part of flower enclosing petals

"Their green sepals drew back a little and the white tips of the flowers rose delicately to meet the open air." (p. 57)

Image: flower with the sepal indicated

decorum: proper behavior, good form or manners

"That was from Piggy, shocked out of decorum." (p. 89)

Image: lady having tea

discursive: straying from the topic or shifting from subject to subject

"The assembly shredded away and became a discursive and random scatter from the palms to the water and away along the beach, beyond night-sight." (p. 92)

Image: person giving speech

leviathan: a sea monster or something very large and powerful

"Then the sleeping leviathan breathed out, the waters rose, the weed streamed, and the water boiled over the table rock with a roar." (p. 105)

Image: monster

Wrapping Up

Questions to Discuss

- What makes someone likely to survive in a dystopian setting? (Answers will vary, but some students may emphasize physical strength while others may note intelligence or cleverness.)
- What are effective leadership qualities in a survival situation? (Answers will vary. Some students may emphasize social intelligence or the ability to command respect, others may say physical strength and the desire for power.)
- Is a utopian society possible? Why, or why not? (Answers will vary. Some students may be optimistic and point to places with higher standards of living as evidence that something like a utopia is possible. Other students may point out that, based on what they've learned in social studies courses, even well-ordered societies may break down or are conquered by nature or aggressive humans.)

Things to Review

Review vocabulary terms and definitions with students to ensure they are prepared to come across the words in the text. Be sure students understand dystopias.

Homework

Students will begin reading *Lord of the Flies* for homework.

Reading and Questions

1. What do Ralph and Piggy find on the beach and how do they use it?

Ralph notices a large conch shell, and Piggy identifies it. Ralph blows into it and the other boys come to them. Piggy realizes they can use it as a signal and a way to take turns talking.

2. Which boy attempts to seize the leadership role for himself? Why does he think he should be a leader?

Jack claims he should be leader because he is the head of the choir and can sing C sharp.

3. How do the boys choose a leader and who is chosen?

They decide to vote and elect Ralph.

4. How does Jack become the leader of a group of boys?

Ralph sees that Jack wants power and has leadership skills, so Ralph tells him to take charge of the choir.