

Lesson 3: Paths in the Jungle

☐ Getting Started

When you read an essay or an article, you instinctively look for the writer's **thesis** — the argument that he or she puts forth. When it's not clear, you might say, "What's the point?" In order to determine the author's main point and supporting arguments, you have to read carefully. If you are able to write in the text, it helps to make notes in the margin, circle important words, underline main points, and draw stars next to supporting evidence, etc. In other words, as you read, you can keep track of your own understanding and focus your thoughts with these study tools:

- **Annotate** -- highlight or write comments or notes with your questions and reactions in the margins of the text.
- Underline **topic sentences** -- sentences that directly state the focus of the paragraph. (These are often the first sentence of the paragraph.)
- Mark words you don't understand and then look them up.
- Re-read the text, replacing the unknown words with the definitions. Now what does the sentence mean?

In this lesson, you will explore an article on the reasons students enjoy the sub-genre of dystopian fiction. Use your critical thinking strategies to help you decide your own opinion about what the writers have to say.

Stuff You Need

- *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding
- dictionary
- highlighter
- journal
- printer

Ideas to Think About

- How do fear and desire for acceptance influence human behavior?
- What are the implications for contemporary society?

Things to Know

- **Annotate** means to use a pencil or pen to interact with and ensure a close reading of a text. You can highlight, write comments or notes with your questions and reactions in the margin of a text, circle important words, underline main points, and draw stars next to supporting evidence.

- The **thesis** is the main argument an author puts forth, serving as the central idea that guides the entire work. It is typically expressed in a single sentence and provides a clear stance or claim that the author will support with evidence and reasoning throughout the text.
- The **topic sentence** of a paragraph expresses that paragraph's focus or main idea.
- An **omniscient narrator** exists in a space and time outside the story and can relay characters' thoughts and histories.
- A **first-person** narrator can tell a story only from his or her own point of view.

Activities

☐ Activity 1: Dystopian Fiction

Dystopian storytelling is widely enjoyed in popular culture among both teens and adults. But why does dystopian fiction have such broad appeal? In this activity, you will read an article on this topic, identify the author's thesis and supporting points, and then respond to the author's opinion.



Why Is Dystopia So Appealing to Young Adults?

www.beyondthepage.com/link/4420/

Annotating the article will help you analyze it. Use your browser's Print command to print out the article.

After you print out the article, annotate it to keep track of your ideas, questions, and reactions as you read. The passage below is an excerpt from an article by Robert McCrum that appeared in *The Guardian*, a news publication. McCrum explains how *Lord of the Flies* came to be considered a classic, but this paragraph is about how William Golding's now-famous book was rejected at first. The annotations are examples of how you might mark up an article to guide your comprehension.

Annotation Example

When it first arrived at Faber & Faber (its eventual publisher), it was a dog-eared manuscript that had obviously done the rounds. Its first in-house reader, a certain Miss Perkins, famously dismissed it as an "absurd and uninteresting fantasy about the explosion of an atom bomb on the Colonies. A group of children who land in jungle country near New Guinea, worthless, useless & dull. Pointless." However, a newly recruited young Faber editor, Charles Monteith, disagreed. He saw that the first chapter (about the aftermath of the bomb) could be dropped, fought for the book, and then, having persuaded Golding to cut and rewrite, steered it through to publication.

Wow! Golding's book was rejected?

Interesting. A suggested location. Check map.

idom that means ragged, used, bent at the corners

? There was a chapter that never made it into the book?

Even famous authors were told to revise their work, just like I have to sometimes.

McCrum, Robert. "The 100 best novels: No 74 — *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding (1954)." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 16 Feb. 2015. Web. 20 Apr. 2017

NOTE: This excerpt is from an article about the novel; it appears in the 3rd paragraph under the section "A Note on the Text." This article is part of a series about the 100 best novels written in English.

You can develop your own system of codes to mark articles with symbols that mean something to you. Here are some suggestions:

- star or highlight important ideas
- put a question mark beside ideas you doubt or don't understand
- circle key terms or words you need to define to understand the text
- add exclamation points for new insights or innovative ideas

As you read the article, fill in the organizer on the "Dystopian Fiction" page. Review the completed organizer as a guide to form your own opinion about why dystopian books are appealing.



The Rising Popularity of Dystopian Literature

www.beyondthepage.com/link/4421/

Reading the first two paragraphs of this article may give you additional input to help you form your opinion. (You may also read the whole article if you'd like.) What three reasons does this author give for dystopian literature's popularity with young adults?

☐ Activity 2: Character Journal Entry

William Golding wrote *Lord of the Flies* from the position of an omniscient narrator. **Omniscient narrators** exist in a time and space outside the story, so they can relay

the thoughts and histories of all the characters. These narrators can see inside the heads of the characters.

In contrast, a **first-person narrators** can only relay their own thoughts. A story told by a first-person narrator is shaded by the bias of the narrator telling the story. In this activity, you will see how reading *Lord of the Flies* from a first person narrative point of view might make it a different story. To do this, you get to play a character.

Great actors are good at their craft because they know how to get into character. They get to know all of their characters' attributes: their ages, where they are from, their favorite dishes, their families and friends, their relationships with others, their religions, political views — all of the influences that contribute to how those characters act and react.

At the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, actors are trained to bring characters to life by understanding the details of the characters' lives, even from outside the story. This is called a character's "backstory."

Imagine you won a role as one of the characters you are following in the character pages (Ralph, Piggy, Jack, Simon, Roger, or Sam 'n Eric). Fill in the list on the "Character Journal Entry" page as if you are preparing for a role in your local community theater as that character. Answer the questions on the page from that character's point of view. In your journal, write a short paragraph in which you take on the role of your character to imagine how he perceives his situation on the island. What is his perception of other characters?

Write the character's emotional response to his circumstances at the point in the story where he is writing this entry. Your character may reflect on significant events happening on the island, what he is learning about the island, or how he is adapting to survive.

Wrapping Up

If you get into the habit of reading articles about books, you'll notice that other people's impressions give you new insight into what you read. Take the time to develop the skill to articulate why you agree or disagree with others' opinions. Now that you have developed your own annotation symbols, use them as you read for other subjects as well. Remember to find the thesis of a piece of writing.

By thinking like an actor who was playing a role, you were able to shift from the point of view of an omniscient narrator to the first-person point of view of the character. Think about what you were able to learn about a character by looking at

the story through his eyes. When you read Chapter 4, watch for the shift in the story when the signal fire becomes important. How does this incident change the relationships among the boys?

Review the difference between omniscient and first-person narrators.
Review what a thesis is.

Homework

For homework you will read Chapter 4 of the book. As you read, be sure to add to your STEAL character pages.

☐ Reading and Questions

Read Chapter 4 and then answer the following questions. Add to the STEAL character pages as you read or after you have completed the reading.

1. How are the littluns doing on the island?

2. What did Jack do to make himself a better hunter?

3. Why was Ralph upset with Jack?

Dystopian Fiction

Author's main argument/thesis

Key points that support the thesis

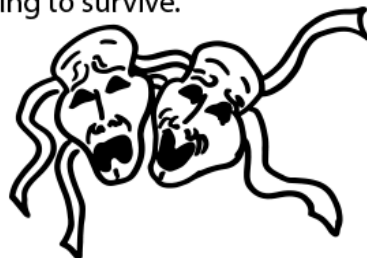
Your reaction to the points

Directions: Read and annotate the article "Why Is Dystopia So Appealing to Young Adults." Then fill in the boxes for the article's thesis and main points. In the box below, describe your opinion about the topic.

Why do you think dystopian literature is popular?

Role Review

Directions: Choose one of the following characters for this activity: Ralph, Piggy, Jack, Simon, Roger, or Sam 'n Eric. Answer the following questions as if you are preparing for a role in your local community theater as that character. Answer the questions from that character's point of view. When you are done, write a short paragraph in your journal in which you imagine how the character perceives the situation he is in on the island. Your character may reflect on significant events happening on the island, what he is learning about the island, how he perceives the other boys, or how he is adapting to survive.



1. Who am I?

2. Where am I?

3. When is it?

4. Where have I just come from?

5. What do I want and why do I want it?

6. What will happen if I don't get it?

7. What do I have to overcome?

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Getting Started

✿ Ideas to Think About

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⦿ Skills

- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (LA)
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (LA)
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. (LA)
- Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations. (LA)

Introducing the Lesson

Students review the concept of the thesis as the main argument a writer wants to make, and they will practice by locating the thesis in an article. The lesson allows practice with study skills including annotation in a text in order to monitor their own comprehension. Students use a top-hat graphic organizer to organize their responses and form their own opinions.

Activities

Activity 1: Dystopian Fiction

In this activity, students are provided with a link to an article that addresses the question of why dystopian fiction has such broad appeal. As they read, students will practice annotation and analysis. As they identify the thesis and the supporting points, students will record their reactions to those ideas. At the end, they will evaluate the writer's view and their reactions and decide their final opinion. Optionally they can read

part of an additional article to get more opinions. The author's main arguments are located in the last sentence of the second paragraph.

Answer Key:

Main argument (thesis): Teenagers like to read dystopian fiction because it's exciting.

Supporting points: Answers will vary.

Student opinion: Answers will vary. Students may agree with the author or provide their own argument for why dystopian fiction is so popular.

Activity 2: Character Journal Entry

In this activity, students pretend they are preparing for an acting role in *Lord of the Flies* in the local community theater. They will choose the character they would like to play and then think about the way actors prepare for roles. Actors must try to step into the circumstances, hearts, and minds of the subjects they'll play. Students will practice these skills guided by the "Role Review" activity page. Once they have completed the activity page, students will write a one-paragraph journal entry from the point of view of their chosen character.

Framing this activity around an acting role will enable students to step into the perspective of a first-person narrator without claiming to truly inhabit mindsets that they may find disturbing. Acting preparation questions can guide them when looking for details to record in their journals. Answers will vary. These entries should be reflective and thoughtful, and they should demonstrate an effort and ability to describe what a character is thinking and feeling.

Wrapping Up

Questions to Discuss

- Why did you choose the character you did for the first-person journal? (Answers will vary.)
- What new insight did you gather from looking at the story from that character's point of view? (Answers will vary.)
- The boys argue over whether shelter (the huts) or food (hunting) is more important. Which do you think they should prioritize? (Answers will vary. Students may debate whether it is better for people to have strength from staying warm and dry or whether a balanced diet should be the highest priority.)

Things to Review

Homework

For homework, students will continue reading the novel and adding to their STEAL character pages.

Reading and Questions

1. How are the littluns doing on the island?

They are playing and eating. They cry sometimes and have terrors in the dark. They get sick sometimes from their diet.

2. What did Jack do to make himself a better hunter?

He painted his face so that the pigs would not see him.

3. Why was Ralph upset with Jack?

Because they did not keep the signal fire going, and a ship passed near the island.