

OCR GCSE English Literature

Activities and Exam Practice

Lord of the Flies

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(Sample pages)

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Part 2: Exam preparation and practice

Types of question set by OCR

You will have two questions to choose from, one based on a provided extract, and one focusing on a particular character or characters, or on a theme or idea.

Foundation Tier

Questions may consist of a question or instruction followed by three bullet-pointed suggestions for what you should cover in your answer. Or they may ask you to comment on ONE or TWO key points in the novel.

It is a very good idea to follow these suggestions.

You might be asked about:

- 1 how a character changes and develops
- 2 a character's role in the book
- 3 how the ideas in the book are presented.

Example

What is Simon's role in the novel?

You may wish to consider:

- *Simon's part in the plot*
- *how Simon is different from the other boys*
- *Simon's strengths and weaknesses.*

You might be asked to consider two characters. You might also be asked your opinion about how effectively the writer presents themes.

Higher Tier

Questions on this paper may not contain suggestions or prompts for writing your answer. They are likely to present you with a statement and ask you to agree or disagree, or ask you an open question which encourages you to structure and develop your own ideas through your own choice of examples and textual reference. You might be asked to compare aspects of the book, such as the way in which different characters or contrasting settings are presented. Be prepared to give your opinion about the effectiveness of Golding's techniques and how he presents his ideas.

You might be asked about:

- 1 how characters are presented
- 2 what characters represent
- 3 how the ideas in the book are presented
- 4 your response to the ideas in the book.

Example

Some of the characters in the novel could be described as outsiders. How does Golding present these characters and use them to highlight his ideas?

What to expect from any question

All questions will focus on one or more of the following areas:

- characterisation
- plot and structure
- setting and atmosphere
- style and language
- themes and ideas
- the writer's motives for exploring these themes and ideas
- your personal response and views on aspects of the text and the writer's methods.

Choosing which question to answer

The first thing you should do is **read each question carefully** to make sure that you have understood what it is asking you to do. Even if there is one question which you instinctively choose, take a few moments to check out both questions.

Do not immediately –

- reject a question because you have not attempted one with a similar title before
- opt for a question because you think that you can reproduce an answer you have done before
- opt for a question because it refers to a character you know a lot about
- opt for a question because it refers to a theme or idea with which you are familiar.

Always –

- remember that lack of focus on the actual question asked is one of the main causes of candidates not doing as well as they hoped
- remember that the key to a good grade is to apply what you have learned to help you to give a personal response to the question, supported by appropriate textual detail.

Understanding what the question requires

For each question, go through the brief but vital process of checking that you have understood what it requires you to do. This process has two parts:

- 1 Check that you understand what the key words are. You could underline or highlight them.
- 2 Put the question in your own words, making sure that you do not distort or change its meaning. A good way to practise this is to imagine that you are explaining it to someone else.

You could use the following prompts:

- 1 'This question is asking me to write about ...'
- 2 'In answering this question, I will have to focus on ...'

Practice exercises

- 1 Try out this two-part process on the questions in the previous section:

<i>What is Simon's role in the novel?</i>	<i>1 Key word? What does it mean?</i> <i>2 Own words:</i>
<i>Some of the characters in the novel could be described as outsiders. How does Golding present these characters and use them to highlight his ideas?</i>	<i>1 Key words? What do they mean?</i> <i>2 Own words:</i>

- 2 Now try the process on two or three of the essays you have done for class or homework.

2 Making a plan

Once you have chosen your question, the next step is to make a plan. This is an essential part of structuring your essay and it will help you to keep on track as you write. Without a plan, you are more likely to wander off the point.

One way of making a plan is to jot down all the ideas that come to mind, in the form of a list, map or diagram, then number each point to show the order in which you will present them. Group similar ideas together.

Do –

- keep your plan short. A few words to remind you of each point should be enough.

Do not –

- write out the whole answer in brief
- write down the quotations that you will use.

Examples of plans for exam essays

Question

What do you learn about the role of Simon in the book? You may wish to consider:

- how Simon is different from the other boys
- Simon's strengths and weaknesses
- the ways in which the writer uses Simon to convey his ideas.

Plan

- Everything that Simon does, and what happens to him
- Loner, quiet, weak
- Kind, reflective, understanding. But can't save them. Can't make them listen.
- Shows writer's ideas about Beast – Simon knows what the Beast is. Shows savagery of other boys.

Comment

This plan uses the bullet points and shows how the candidate will develop each aspect. The first point in the plan, however, is very broad, and may well lead to the writer retelling too much of the story, with little discussion.

A more focused introduction might cover:

- Most important things Simon does – 'talks' to Beast; finds airman; wants to help the others; gets killed.