

AQA GCSE English Literature

Activities and Exam Practice

Lord of the Flies

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Part 2: Exam preparation and practice

Types of question set by AQA

You will have two questions to choose from. It is likely that one of them will focus on a particular character or characters, and one will focus on a theme or idea.

Foundation Tier

Questions on this paper are likely to consist of a question or instruction followed by several bullet-pointed suggestions about parts of the book you could refer to in your answer.

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

The boys think that Simon is odd, but he is one of the most important characters in the novel. Do you agree?

You may wish to consider:

- 1 *What Simon is like*
- 2 *How Simon is shown to be odd*
- 3 *Why you think Simon is important*
- 4 *How Golding uses Simon to convey his ideas.*

You might be asked to consider more than one character. Or you might be asked your opinion about how well Golding presents his 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 with it, 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 William Golding's techniques and how convincingly 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 how the ideas in the book are presented.

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.

Advice: For both tiers, the best way to prepare for questions is to know and understand the text thoroughly, to have ideas about it and to be ready to respond to whatever type of question you are asked.

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 contains the name of 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>The boys think that Simon is odd, but he is one of the most important characters in the novel. Do you agree?</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.