

TEXT: *LORD OF THE FLIES*, BY WILLIAM GOLDING

Lord of the Flies remains as provocative today as when it was first published in 1954, igniting passionate debate with its startling, brutal portrait of human nature. Though critically acclaimed, it was largely ignored upon its initial publication. Yet soon it became a cult favorite among both students and literary critics who compared it to J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* in its influence on modern thought and literature. Labeled a parable, an allegory, a myth, a morality tale, a parody, a political treatise, even a vision of the apocalypse, *Lord of the Flies* has established itself as a true classic. —Penguin/ Putnam (Publishers)

Summer reading assignments allow students to broaden their scope and knowledge of novels that may not be covered during the school year. This year, the department of English requires that all incoming freshmen read William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* before the start of school in August, 2011. Since freshmen teachers will assess the reading through the use of class discussion and timed, in-class essay writing during the first few weeks of class, students are required to annotate the text as they read.

As an "active reader," you already know that when you read assignments, you should have questions in mind. As you read, you should look for the answers to these questions. You should also have a pencil in hand so that you can "annotate" your text (as the word suggests, you "take notes" in your textbook—there are annotation guidelines below). Hopefully, you will discover that the process of taking notes as you read will help you to concentrate better. It will also serve to improve your comprehension. (Note: Students may use post-its or note cards in addition to – or in place of – annotation.)

It is recommended that you have roughly 5-10 annotations per chapter, but ultimately, since you will need to provide *many* quotations in your essay, you should annotate any quotation which stands out as significant and is relevant to the broad topics below. Ideally, you should read a text purely for enjoyment, and then annotate during a second read-through. While this is ideal (and the novel well worth more than one reading) you should also be fine annotating during a first read. On the first day of class, your teacher will discuss plans for the writing assignment—you must bring your book to write the essay, or you will have to write without it (and thus not be able to quote, and thus suffer a serious deduction of points).

Finally, the broad topics you will wish to consider and focus on during your reading and annotating connect to some of the major concepts of the freshman English curriculum. The interpretations of these concepts within the novel are up to you.

- Leadership
- Ethical versus unethical behavior
- Resourcefulness
- Innocence versus experience

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS TAKEN FROM THE HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY WEBSITE:

Annotating: “Dialogue” with yourself, the author, and the issues and ideas at stake.

From start to finish, make your reading of any text thinking-intensive.

- First of all: throw away the highlighter in favor of a pen or pencil. Highlighting can actually distract from the business of learning and dilute your comprehension. It only seems like an active reading strategy; in actual fact, it can lull you into a dangerous passivity.
- Mark up the margins of your text with WORDS: ideas that occur to you, notes about things that seem important to you, reminders of how issues in a text may connect with class discussion or course themes. This kind of interaction keeps you conscious of the REASON you are reading and the PURPOSES your instructor has in mind. Later in the term, when you are reviewing for a test or project, your marginalia will be useful memory triggers.
- Develop your own symbol system: asterisk a key idea, for example, or use an exclamation point for the surprising, absurd, bizarre . . . Like your marginalia, your hieroglyphs can help you reconstruct the important observations that you made at an earlier time. And they will be indispensable when you return to a text later in the term, in search of a passage, an idea for a topic, or while preparing for an exam or project.
- Get in the habit of hearing yourself ask questions—“what does this mean?” “why is he or she drawing that conclusion?” “why is the class reading this text?” etc. Write the questions down (in your margins, at the beginning or end of the reading, in a notebook, or elsewhere. They are reminders of the unfinished business you still have with a text: something to ask during class discussion, or to come to terms with on your own, once you’ve had a chance to digest the material further, or have done further reading.

Look for repetitions and patterns:

These are often indications of what an author considers crucial and what he expects you to glean from his argument. The way language is chosen or used can also alert you to ideological positions, hidden agendas or biases. Be watching for:

- Recurring images
- Repeated words, phrases, types of examples, or illustrations
- Consistent ways of characterizing people, events, or issues

“Interrogating Texts: 6 Reading Habits to Develop in Your First Year at Harvard.” *Harvard College Library*.
<http://hcl.harvard.edu/research/guides/lamont_handouts/interrogatingtexts.html#annotating>.

ENGLISH I AND I HONOURS SUMMER READING RATIONALE

The objective of the NCHS English Department's Summer Reading assignment is two-fold:

1. To foster a love of reading (for both pleasure and edification) by assigning engaging works of fiction, both classic and contemporary.
2. To keep those essential analytical and critical reading skills honed for the next year.

The English Department has selected *Lord of the Flies*, by William Golding, for the summer reading for incoming freshmen in both English I and English I Honours. Not only is Golding's novel a wonderful vehicle for teaching allegory, symbolism, and theme (along with additional literary devices), it also introduces students to the following essential ideas:

- Leadership
- Ethical versus unethical behavior
- Resourcefulness
- Innocence versus experience

In addition, *Lord of the Flies* is a fascinating literary work which cannot help but elicit productive classroom discussion. Based on both its literary and humanist values, *Lord of the Flies* has significant merit in the high school environment.

Evidence of students' understanding of the deeper themes and engagement with the text will be assessed by use of timed in-class essay writing upon the students' return to school in August, as well as class discussion of the text. In order to prepare for the essay, students are asked to annotate their books while reading, and they will be expected to use these annotations during the essay to provide evidence for the argument of their essays. Besides the reading and annotating, no other assignment will be required for the summer. The writing students perform over the first couple of weeks of class will be assessed according to usual English Department standards.