

NBS

Language and Literature

Lord of The Flies

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### Conch: The Shell of Leadership

Why did William Golding use the conch in *Lord of The Flies*? This is because it is a symbol of leadership and brings everyone together. The boys use the conch as a right to speak. The person who is holding the conch forms the rules. Ralph and Piggy discover the conch shell on the beach at the start of the book and use it to summon the boys together after the crash separates them. Used in this capacity, the conch shell becomes a powerful symbol of civilization and order in the novel. This takes place of how the conch forms the rules. On page 15, Ralph found the shell in the weeds: "It's a shell! I seen one like that before. On someone's back wall. A conch he called it." Ralph decided that they needed rules for the island so they could work together. He explains on page 91: "The rules are the only thing we've got." Ralph decided they could use the conch in three ways. First, they decided that when they blow the conch, everyone needs to come together. Second, they also decided to blow it when there was danger. Finally, whoever has the conch is the person who is commanding the group.

The conch shows who is in charge. Ralph is mainly the one using the conch, and he is the main character in the book. The conch only works as long as the boys all believe in its power. At the beginning of *Lord of the Flies*, all the boys treat the conch with care. Once Jack gets a taste of power, however, he doesn't use the conch anymore and controls the boys by torturing them.

When Jack raids Ralph's camp, he ignores the conch and steals Piggy's glasses instead. He doesn't work with the leaders or the group anymore.

Lastly, Ralph's leadership was formed by the conch and Ralph uses the conch the most. Although, in the end, Jack is violent and doesn't believe in the conch anymore. Simon dies after his conversation with the Lord of the Flies and how Simon explains the beast is after them. When he finds out the beast is inside all the boys. There are no more rules and Piggy dies after he asks whether it is better to have rules or hunt and kill. After asking this question, Roger rolls a boulder on to Piggy. When the conch is broken, then Jack puts the forest on fire to try to smoke out Ralph.