

Characters



Ralph (the protagonist)

What do we know about Ralph?

- Ralph is the first character that we meet on the island. He is 'The boy with fair hair' – the opening line.
- Ralph is elected chief.
- Ralph and Jack are engaged in a power struggle throughout the novel.
- Ralph works to create a civilised society with order, shelter and rescue.
- Ralph also begins to descend into savagery as the novel progresses, especially after Piggy's death.
- By the end of the novel he is alone, being chased by Jack and his tribe in a deadly hunt.
- He steps forward as the leader at the end of the novel in response to the naval officer.

How Golding presents Ralph

How does he behave?

- Ralph's focus is on rescue and shelter.
- He protects Piggy against Jack and develops respect for Piggy's intelligence and wisdom.
- He is brave when he goes to confront the beast on the top of the mountain.
- Ralph yearns for home and the safety of his previous life. He hates the dirt of his clothes and his need of a haircut.
- Ralph discovers the thrill of hunting and gets caught up in the frenzy of the dance that ends with Simon's death. He stabs a 'smallish' savage as he tries to escape the hunt at the end of the novel.

How is he described?

- Physically, 'he might make a boxer...but there was a mildness about his mouth and eyes that proclaimed no devil.'
- Ralph is 12 years old with blond hair.

What does he represent?

- Ralph represents democracy and morality – doing the right thing.
- He can represent the force of good in the struggle between good and evil.

NAILIT!



The character of Ralph is useful when writing about all of the themes but is key to the themes of savagery, civilisation and the end of innocence as he contrasts with Jack.