

## *Lord of the Flies* Essay

When faced with temptation a person's judgement and reasons can be clouded. In *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding, Ralph is faced with the temptation of being a savage and turning away from society. Ralph breaks away from his temptation by remembering that he is a leader and he needs to set a good example. This ties into John Locke's theory of the state of nature as being of perfect and complete liberty. The way that Ralph develops throughout the story provides the perfect caricature of all of the theories on the state of nature: John Locke's, Thomas Hobbes', and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's.

Initially Ralph follows the typical standards of society by trying to be rescued and by being a good example or a role model to the other boys. Ralph follows the quintessential levels of being a leader by suggesting a strategy that will help him and the others find a way off of the island: "If this isn't an island we might be rescued straight away. So we've got to decide if this is an island. Three of us will go on an expedition and find out"(Golding 23). This passage goes to show that Ralph is thinking logically as if he is wearing the face or mask of society on the island at this point and moment in time. Once the boys find out that they are in fact on an island and they have a infinitesimal chance of being rescued, they start to become perturbed. To reassure the boys of their chance of being rescued, Ralph vocalizes, "We can help them to find us. If a ship comes near the island they may not notice us. So we must make smoke on top of the mountain. We must make a fire"(Golding 38). This implies that Ralph is trying to become more comfortable in his new role as a leader to the rest of the boys on the island. He decides that they need to have established rules: "We ought to have more rules. Where the conch is, that's a meeting"(Golding 42). Ralph is inaugurating himself as a leader by making and applying rules to attempt to have a controlled society on the island. Ralph's confidence in himself shows the

other boys that they have nothing to worry about. Ralph also shows his great leadership when he reassures the younger kids that there is no beast that can harm them: ““But there isn’t a beastie!’... ‘Ralph’s right of course. There isn’t a snake-thing”(Golding 36). Ralph tells the kids that there is no beastie because he knows if they think there is a beast then they will be fearful and more strenuous to watch after and keep out of trouble.

Later on Ralph is trying to stay connected to society but he has tempting thoughts to harm others which according to Thomas Hobbes exemplifies the typical behavior of the state of nature: “Humans are necessarily and exclusively self-interested... they respond by being drawn to that which they desire”(Social Contract Theory Paragraph 2). Ralph gives into his desires when he takes part in Jack’s clan: “Piggy and Ralph, under the threat of the sky, found themselves eager to take place in this demented but partly secure society. They were glad to touch the brown backs of the fence that hemmed in the terror and made it governable”(Golding 152). Ralph felt that it was most secure to join a group because it would protect him from the storm. Thomas Hobbes’ theory on the state of nature is seen in Ralph when him and the rest of the boys are pretending to kill a pig. The boys have let this image control and corrupt their impressionable minds so that they end up killing one of their own: “The beast was on its knees in the center, its arms folded over its face. It was crying out against the abominable noise, something about a body on the hill. The beast struggled forward, broke the ring, and fell over the steep edge of the rock to the sand by the water... Simon’s dead body moved out toward the open sea”(Golding 152-154). This shows that the boys were fulfilling their own desires without thinking about the severe and long term consequences of their actions. Ralph and the other boys are a perfect depiction of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's theory on the state of nature at this point in time. Rousseau implies that individual people can’t be given the liberty to decide if something is for themselves

or if it is for the general people. Rousseau also insinuated that the only way a democracy would work is if it were in between small amounts of people. If you tried to use a democracy with a group of people it would cause severe consequences later on like the death of Simon.

After Ralph gives into the temptations he has, he returns to his civil, societal self and is trying to regain his composure and his humanity. To show that he has gained back his humanity, Ralph says, "That was Simon... That was murder"(Golding 156). Ralph recognized that what he did was wrong and he is acknowledging his faults and mistakes. Since he has fallen off the trail he has to work twice as hard to get back on. Ralph at this point in time is a paradigm to John Locke's theory on the state of nature: "The Law of Nature... commands that we do not harm other with regards to their 'life, health, liberty, or possessions'"(SCT Paragraph 8). This goes to show that Ralph is feeling remorseful for partaking in the murder of Simon and he wants to wash away the guilt by becoming a commendable leader again: "Ralph spoke again loudly, 'I'm calling an assembly'"(Golding 175). The fact that Ralph takes initiative to become a leader shows his determination to get back to society and civilization. When Ralph and the other boys are being rescued, "Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy"(Golding 202). This quote shows how Ralph has realized that man as a whole is corrupt but there are also good things in life as well.

Overall, it may be said that not just one of the theories on the state of nature is true and that they all are veracious in different aspects. We see that this is accurate when Ralph goes from being a leader, to giving into temptations, to becoming a leader again in a failed society. This falls into the pattern of Ralph following John Locke's theory of having morals and not wanting to harm another one of God's living creations, to being an example of Thomas Hobbes' theory and how humans are selfish and only do activities and other things to please and satisfy



their own desires, and then finally becoming an illustration of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's theory and how a democracy will fail with an abundance of people who are free but are all bound in chains everywhere they go. All in all, Rousseau is implying that while people may be free they are always bound to society with an imaginary tether.

Rationale for 10th grade essay: Lord of the Flies

Medium

This essay scored a 3 overall. While there is a strong clarity of focus in terms of character development, the essay falls short in its ability to discuss a theme. The writer did a superior job of incorporating social contract theories, but did not tie them in enough to a theme. Textual evidence is often too long and often repeats ideas that have been conveyed already through paraphrasing. The scope of the writer's essay is extensive, but a top essay would be slightly more insightful. Quality does not always match quantity. Not all parts of the prompt have been addressed. The writer does show good control of grammar and conventions; only minor errors which do not detract from meaning.

*10th grade Lord of Flies essay 2nd semester*

Common Core All-Subject Writing Rubric					
Writing Type(circle one):    Argumentative    Informative/Explanatory    Narrative (ELA only)					
<b>CONTENT X4</b>	The writing has a sharp focus and clarity of purpose. The ideas are developed with examples and specific details including textual evidence and are thoroughly elaborated. All elements of the prompt are addressed.	The writing has a clear central idea and a clear focus. Ideas are developed with textual evidence, even though the development may be uneven. Information is relevant. Most elements of the prompt are addressed.	The writing has a vague central idea; there are shifts in focus or digressions. Ideas are listed, information may be incomplete or irrelevant, textual evidence may be lacking, and there is little development. Some elements of the prompt are <u>not</u> addressed.	The writing has unclear or confusing ideas. The ideas are missing relevant information, there is not enough information, or there is little or no development, and little textual evidence. Significant elements of the prompt are <u>not</u> addressed.	<b>X4</b>
<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	There is a beginning, middle, and end in the writing with strong transitions between ideas. Ideas are presented in a logical order and there is a sense of completion about the writing.	There is a beginning, middle, and end in the writing with simple transitions between ideas. Ideas are presented in a logical order and the writing may have a weak ending.	There is a weak beginning, middle, and end with gaps in ideas. Ideas are presented in random order, there may be significant repetition, and the writing may have no ending.	There is no beginning or end with severe gaps in ideas. Ideas are presented in a random or repetitive order. There may be too little information to demonstrate organization.	
<b>SPELLING &amp; GRAMMAR (Conventions)</b>	The writing exhibits superior control over grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. If there are errors present, they do not appear to be part of a pattern of errors.	The writing exhibits proper control over grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. If there are errors present, they do not appear to be a part of a pattern of errors.	The writing exhibits weak control over grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. The errors minimally affect the meaning of the writing.	The writing exhibits little to no control over grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. The errors greatly affect the meaning of the writing.	
Teacher Feedback:			{{Student Reflection on Back}}		<b>Total Points Earned</b>
					<b>Score</b>