

Lord of the Flies Essay Prompt 3

When put into certain social circumstances a person is able to change their personality based on the strengths and weaknesses of the people they interact with. In *Lord of the Flies*, by William Golding, the character, Jack, has aspects of leadership that develop into savage and wild actions towards others. The morals that Jack enters the island with begin to dissipate as he becomes more powerful, but with the power he obtains, he also becomes noticeably primitive. With his loss of morality, he violates the social contract theory, thus proved by the ideas of philosopher, Thomas Hobbes.

In an environment where a person is able to hide their true selves, they can switch from timid to confident, delightful to unpleasant, or even from a leader to a follower, or vice versa. *Lord of the Flies* begins with a group of boys that are thrust onto an uninhabited island due to of a plane crash in which no adults survived. This creates a scenario where it is easy for conflict and hardship to arise. When Jack first encounters the other boys on the island, he is followed by a group of choir boys that he is in control of. He displays his leadership abilities when he gives orders and demands to his underlings. Jack reckons that he is superior, when in comparison to the other boys. Jack's arrogant and assertive nature leads the others to be "intimidated by the uninformed superiority and the off hand authority in Merridew's voice" (21). Even though Jack has asserted his dominance, he does not obtain the role of the leader on the island due to Ralph's enjoyable and handsome qualities. Even though Jack doesn't get to be the leader, he and his group of choir boys become the hunters. They are also assigned the job of keeping the smoke fire going so they can be rescued by people that pass by the island. Although Jack's dominance has not gone unnoticed, it is lessened when he is unable to slay the pig that the other boys crave. Golding states, "They knew very well why he hadn't: because of the enormity of the knife

descending and cutting into living flesh; because of the unbearable blood” (31). Being that the boys just crashed onto the island, they still have a sense of society present in their thoughts and morals. From where they are from, slaughtering a pig would be taboo. His sense of morality makes him hesitate, allowing the pig to break free. Eventually the hunters get more chances to go hunting, but Jack becomes enchanted by the hunt. In the article, “What Makes Good People Do Bad Things?”, by Melissa Dittman, she writes about the experiments of Philip Zimbardo. Zimbardo declares, “You don’t need a motive... All you really need is a situation that facilitates moving across that line of good and evil” (15). When Jack first came onto the island he is a normal snobby child, but ever since he was introduced to hunting he is walking on the edge that separates him from evil and good. In addition, Jack’s relationship with the hunt has caused him to lose sight of his other responsibilities on the island. He was in charge of keeping fire going but neglects it, and it burns out. Unfortunately, Jack’s negligence causes the boys to not get rescued sooner because a ship goes by but doesn’t see them since there is no smoke.

In unsupervised situations or when there is no higher power, morals tend to be abandoned causing a person to become more uncivilized. When Ralph first came into power, Jack remained obedient, but over time Jack began to rebel against Ralph’s authority. Golding shows Jack’s transition to savagery through the events that happen after he puts on the literal a physical masks. The boys find and use clay, charcoal and dirt to put masks on their faces, and “Jack planned his face... he looked in the pool for his reflection... He looked in astonishment, no longer at himself, but at an awesome stranger” (63). Jack’s new face serves two purposes: to hide himself from the prey that he is hunting down, and to hide his insecurities from the other boys on the island. With this new mask, he is able to project a new image of himself as an astounding new hunter that is not afraid of the dangers of the island. In reality, Jack is not really

any of the things that he tries to portray himself as. The article, "Online Identity", written by the CommonLit Staff, closely relates to the situation of Jack and his captivation with the thrill of hunting. CommonLit posits, "Online identity offers potential social benefits to those with physical and sensory disabilities, because others cannot see them. These users can free themselves from their disabilities by creating online personas that are not disabled. This is called 'disembodiment,' and gives these users the opportunity to operate outside the constraints of social stigmatization" (6). Jack's insecurities can be successfully hidden as long as he keeps up the powerful facade that he has with the mask. The alternate Jack may be more powerful, but a lot of his principles are lost and he becomes more evil than good. His weak code of ethics transgresses the precedents of the social contract theory that were set by Thomas Hobbes: "The means by which to escape the state of nature and create a civil society... men's passions can be expected to overwhelm their reason, the Sovereign must have absolute authority in order for the contract to be successful" (6). As Jack and the other boys disregard Ralph's authority more and more every day, they begin to band against him and the little people that are on his side. Jack creates his own clan where he can lead; a clan where there is little responsibility and savagery is permitted. Jack's desires to be a leader and hunt constantly overwhelm his morals, which makes him more primitive.

When a being's personality changes, their morals change as well; in the sense that the way they view the world and their opinions on certain matters also transform. Morals can be gained or lost depending on how a person changes. In Jack's case, his are lost, and it is not for the better. In the beginning of the story, Jack couldn't even kill a pig, but now that his virtues have been lost, he has gone to the extremes of being able to kill a human. Now that Piggy and Simon are dead the only thing that stands in Jack's way is Ralph, who he must kill: "Smoke was

seeping through the branches... Ralph was running with the swiftness of fear through the undergrowth" (195). He wants Ralph dead because he is the last sense of civilization in the group of boys; this would make him the all-powerful savage leader. Jack originally did not care about the fire and seen it as unimportant, and now that he realizes that he can use it to kill, he needs it. Rather than using the fire for good and trying to create a signal to be noticed, he wants to use it to draw out a person so they can be executed. Jack's determination to kill Ralph has overpowered his superego in his psyche. Jack is now in a complete state of nature and Hobbes ideas claim that, "the State of Nature is the worst possible situation in which men can find themselves. It is the state of perpetual and unavoidable war" (5). Jack and Ralph are the two main parts of this "war", whereas the civilized, Ralph, and the savage, Jack, are battling to see who prevails. Jack's side is more enticing because of the strength in numbers and the mouth watering meat that he promises. Ralph almost gets caught by Jack and his clan, but as soon as an adult arrives on the island, Jack's immoral actions cease. Ironically, the fire used to smoke out Ralph is the fire that saves them in the end. The boys begin to act like boys again once the naval officer interacts with them: "the other little boys began to sob and shake too... wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart" (202). The boys all realize the horrible things that they have done on this island, even Jack. Jack came into the island a proper school boy and throughout the story he morphs into a savage and apathetic monster. Once he gets back to civilization, it is likely that he will revert, but he will have to live with the dishonorable things he did. Ultimately, evil and negativity proved to be victorious over the righteousness, which was only possible because of the harsh circumstances experienced by the boys that crashed on the island.

Rationale for 10th grade essay: *Lord of the Flies*

High

This essay scored a 4 due to its clarity, development, and clear purpose. The writer is able to extend examples of Jack's character development in the novel with textual evidence that is thorough and explicit. The writer's analysis shows evidence of careful thought and insightful ideas. The thesis supports an important theme and following this theme is implicit in the details the writer provides within the context of his/her body paragraphs. The writer's ability to dissect the social contract theory and supplementary articles, relating them to character development, is superior. The essay has clear closure as well.

10th grade Lord of Flies essay 2nd semester

Common Core All-Subject Writing Rubric					
Writing Type(circle one): Argumentative Informative/Explanatory Narrative (ELA only)					
CONTENT X4	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.	X4
ORGANIZATION	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.	
SPELLING & GRAMMAR (Conventions)	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}}				Total Points Earned	
				Score	