

'Lord of the Flies' – Vocabulary Help – Chapters 1-3

1. proffer

a proposal offered for acceptance or rejection

The fat boy waited to be asked his name in turn but this **proffer** of acquaintance was not made; the fair boy called Ralph smiled vaguely, stood up, and began to make his way once more toward the lagoon.

2. upheaval

a violent disturbance

The ground beneath them was a bank covered with coarse grass, torn everywhere by the **upheavals** of fallen trees, scattered with decaying coconuts and palm saplings.

3. prominent

having a quality that thrusts itself into attention

He was old enough, twelve years and a few months, to have lost the **prominent** tummy of childhood and not yet old enough for adolescence to have made him awkward.

4. apprehension

fearful expectation or anticipation

Piggy clasped his hands in **apprehension**.

5. efflorescence

the time and process of budding and unfolding of blossoms

It was clear to the bottom and bright with the **efflorescence** of tropical weed and coral.

6. **specious**

deceptively pleasing

Ralph had been deceived before now by the **specious** appearance of depth in a beach pool and he approached this one preparing to be disappointed.

7. **loll**

be lazy or idle

Ralph **loll**ed in the water.

8. **swathe**

wrap in or as if in strips of cloth

Sleep enveloped him like the **swathing** mirages that were wrestling with the brilliance of the lagoon.

9. **effulgence**

the quality of being bright and sending out rays of light

With that word the heat seemed to increase till it became a threatening weight and the lagoon attacked them with a blinding **effulgence**.

10. **enmity**

a state of deep-seated ill-will

He trotted through the sand, enduring the sun's **enmity**, crossed the platform and found his scattered clothes.

11. **decorous**

characterised by propriety and dignity and good taste

Suddenly Piggy was a-bubble with **decorous** excitement.

12. **interpose**

be or come between

The shell was interesting and pretty and a worthy plaything; but the vivid phantoms of his day-dream still **interposed** between him and Piggy, who in this context was an irrelevance.

13. **emboss**

raise in a relief

Between the point, worn away into a little hole, and the pink lips of the mouth, lay eighteen inches of shell with a slight spiral twist and covered with a delicate, **embossed** pattern.

14. **strident**

unpleasantly loud and harsh

The note boomed again: and then at his firmer pressure, the note, fluking up an octave, became a **strident** blare more penetrating than before.

15. **incredulous**

not disposed or willing to believe; unbelieving

They were twins, and the eye was shocked and **incredulous** at such cheery duplication.

16. **furtive**

secret and sly

There was a slight, **furtive** boy whom no one knew, who kept to himself with an inner intensity of avoidance and secrecy.

17. **mortification**

strong feelings of embarrassment

Even the choir applauded; and the freckles on Jack's face disappeared under a blush of **mortification**.

18. **pallor**

unnatural lack of colour

Now that the **pallor** of his faint was over, he was a skinny, vivid little boy, with a glance coming up from under a hut of straight hair that hung down, black and coarse.

19. **pliant**

capable of being shaped or bent or drawn out

Here the roots and stems of creepers were in such tangles that the boys had to thread through them like **pliant** needles.

20. **immure**

lock up or confine, in or as in a jail

Immured in these tangles, at perhaps their most difficult moment, Ralph turned with shining eyes to the others.

21. **contemptuously**

without respect; in a disdainful manner

"Green candles," said Jack **contemptuously**.

22. **hiatus**

an interruption in the intensity or amount of something

There came a pause, a **hiatus**, the pig continued to scream and the creepers to jerk, and the blade continued to flash at the end of a bony arm.

23. **errant**

straying from the right course or from accepted standards

The noise of the **errant** assembly faded up the mountain.

24. **ebullience**

eager enjoyment or approval

Then, with the martyred expression of a parent who has to keep up with the senseless **ebullience** of the children, he picked up the conch, turned toward the forest, and began to pick his way over the tumbled scar.

25. **officious**

intrusive in a meddling or offensive manner

There was pushing and pulling and **officious** cries.

26. **recrimination**

mutual accusations

His voice lifted into the whine of virtuous **recrimination**.

27. **festoon**

decorate or adorn

Smoke was rising here and there among the creepers that **festooned** the dead or dying trees.

28. **caper**

jump about playfully

Beneath the **capering** boys a quarter of a mile square of forest was savage with smoke and flame.

29. **vicissitude**

a variation in circumstances or fortune

Jack stood there, streaming with sweat, streaked with brown earth, stained by all the **vicissitudes** of a day's hunting.

30. **contrite**

feeling or expressing pain or sorrow for sins or offenses

Simon's **contrite** face appeared in the hole.

31. **antagonism**

a state of deep-seated ill-will

Now the **antagonism** was audible.

32. **rapt**

feeling great delight and interest

Ralph gazed bewildered at his **rapt** face.

33. **tacit**

implied by or inferred from actions or statements

Jack nodded, as much for the sake of agreeing as anything, and by **tacit** consent they left the shelter and went toward the bathing pool.

34. **susurration**

an indistinct sound, as of whispering or rustling

The deep sea breaking miles away on the reef made an undertone less perceptible than the **susurration** of the blood.

35. **riotous**

produced or growing in extreme abundance

With the fading of the light the **riotous** colours died and the heat and urgency cooled away.

Vocabulary Help – Chapters 4-6

1. dubious

fraught with uncertainty or doubt

*The decrease in size, from Ralph down, was gradual; and though there was a **dubious** region inhabited by Simon and Robert and Maurice, nevertheless no one had any difficulty in recognizing biguns at one end and littluns at the other.*

2. belligerence

a natural disposition to be hostile

*Percival was mouse-coloured and had not been very attractive even to his mother; Johnny was well built, with fair hair and a natural **belligerence**.*

3. chastisement

verbal punishment

*In his other life Maurice had received **chastisement** for filling a younger eye with sand.*

4. impalpable

incapable of being perceived by the senses, especially touch

*With **impalpable** organs of sense they examined this newfield.*

5. incursion

the act of entering some territory or domain

*Perhaps food had appeared where at the last **incursion** there had been none; bird droppings, insects perhaps, any of the strewn **detritus** of landward life.*

6. detritus

the remains of something that has been destroyed or finished

*Perhaps food had appeared where at the last incursion there had been none; bird droppings, insects perhaps, any of the strewn **detritus** of landward life.*

7. myriad

a large indefinite number

*Like a **myriad** of tiny teeth in a saw, the transparencies came scavenging over the beach.*

8. vagrant

a wanderer with no established residence or means of support

*He poked about with a bit of stick, that itself was wave-worn and whitened and a **vagrant**, and tried to control the motions of the scavengers.*

9. swarthy

naturally having skin of a dark colour

*When Roger opened his eyes and saw him, a darker shadow crept beneath the **swarthy**ness of his skin; but Jack noticed nothing.*

10. sinewy

possessing physical strength and weight; rugged and powerful

*Beside the pool his **sinewy** body held up a mask that drew their eyes and appalled them.*

11. appall

fill with apprehension or alarm

*Beside the pool his sinewy body held up a mask that drew their eyes and **appalled** them.*

12. balm

preparation applied externally as a remedy or for soothing

*Of all the boys, he was the most at home there; but today, irked by the mention of rescue, the useless, footling mention of rescue, even the green depths of water and the shattered, golden sun held no **balm**.*

13. exhilaration

the feeling of lively and cheerful joy

*There was the brilliant world of hunting, tactics, fierce **exhilaration**, skill; and there was the world of longing and baffled common-sense.*

14. **bumble**

walk unsteadily

*Piggy was only just visible, **bumbling** up from the beach.*

15. **reverence**

a feeling of profound respect for someone or something

*Ralph felt a kind of affectionate **reverence** for the conch, even though he had fished the thing out of the lagoon himself.*

16. **indignant**

angered at something unjust or wrong

*"I got the conch!" said Piggy **indignantly**. "Ralph—they ought to shut up, oughtn't they?"*

17. **subdued**

quieted and brought under control

*The assembly murmured in **subdued** agreement.*

18. **testy**

easily irritated or annoyed

"Serve you right if something did get you, you useless lot of cry-babies! But there is no animal—"

*Ralph interrupted him **testily**.*

19. **effigy**

a representation of a person

*At first he was a silent **effigy** of sorrow; but then the lamentation rose out of him, loud and sustained as the conch.*

20. **lamentation**

a cry of sorrow and grief

*At first he was a silent **effigy** of sorrow; but then the **lamentation** rose out of him, loud and sustained as the conch.*

21. **gesticulate**

show, express, or direct through movement

*In a moment the platform was full of arguing, **gesticulating** shadows.*

22. **perilous**

fraught with danger

*Simon felt a **perilous** necessity to speak; but to speak in assembly was a terrible thing to him.*

23. **inarticulate**

without or deprived of the use of speech or words

*Simon became **inarticulate** in his effort to express mankind's essential illness.*

24. **tempestuous**

characterised by violent emotions or behavior

*A shadow fronted him **tempestuously**.*

25. **incantation**

a ritual reciting of words believed to have a magical effect

*Percival Wemys Madison, of the Vicarage, Harcourt St. Anthony, lying in the long grass, was living through circumstances in which the **incantation** of his address was powerless to help him.*

26. **fitful**

intermittently stopping and starting

*Here the breeze was **fitful** and allowed the strings of the parachute to tangle and festoon; and the figure sat, its helmeted head between its knees, held by a complication of lines.*

27. **interminable**

tiresomely long; seemingly without end

*An **interminable** dawn faded the stars out, and at last light, sad and grey, filtered into the shelter.*

28. **embroil**

force into some kind of situation or course of action

*Piggy, finding himself uncomfortably **embroiled**, slid the conch to Ralph's knees and sat down.*

29. **diffident**

lacking self-confidence

***Diffidently**, Simon allowed his pace to slacken until he was walking side by side with Ralph and looking up at him through the coarse black hair that now fell to his eyes.*

30. **bastion**

a stronghold for shelter during a battle

*This side of the castle, perhaps a hundred feet high, was the pink **bastion** they had seen from the mountain-top.*

31. **leviathan**

monstrous sea creature symbolizing evil in the Old Testament

*Then the sleeping **leviathan** breathed out, the waters rose, the weed streamed, and the water boiled over the table rock with a roar.*

32. **plinth**

an architectural support or base, as for a column or statue

*The squareness of the rock allowed a sort of **plinth** round it, so that to the right, over the lagoon, one could inch along a ledge and turn the corner out of sight.*

33. **exult**

feel extreme happiness or elation

*"One heave," cried Jack, **exulting**, "and-wheee-!"*

34. **somberly**

in a serious and solemn manner

***Somberly** he watched the mountain.*

Vocabulary Help – Chapters 7 – 9

1. **dun**

of a dull greyish brown to brownish grey colour

*If you could shut your ears to the slow suck down of the sea and boil of the return, if you could forget how **dun** and unvisited were the ferny coverts on either side, then there was a chance that you might put the beast out of mind and dream for a while.*

2. **covert**

a covering that serves to conceal or shelter something

*If you could shut your ears to the slow suck down of the sea and boil of the return, if you could forget how dun and unvisited were the ferny **coverts** on either side, then there was a chance that you might put the beast out of mind and dream for a while.*

3. **wallow**

an indolent or clumsy rolling about

*He would like to have a bath, a proper **wallow** with soap.*

4. **sufficient**

of a quantity that can fulfill a need or requirement

*The hunters sat, stuffing themselves with this easy meal, trying to convince themselves that they got **sufficient** kick out of bananas and that other olive-grey, jelly-like fruit.*

5. **flounder**

walk with great difficulty

*The boar was **floundering** away from them.*

6. **brandish**

exhibit aggressively

*Jack had him by the hair and was **brandishing** his knife.*

7. **rueful**

feeling or expressing pain or sorrow for sins or offenses

*He rubbed his rump **ruefully**.*

8. **clamber**

climb awkwardly, as if by scrambling

*Here and there they could **clamber** over wave-wet rock, leaping across clear pools that the tide had left.*

9. **crestfallen**

brought low in spirit

*"I don't remember this cliff," said Jack, **crestfallen**, "so this must be the bit of the coast I missed."*

10. **glower**

look angry or sullen as if to signal disapproval

*Jack **glowered**.*

11. **impervious**

not admitting of passage or capable of being affected

*So they sat, the rocking, tapping, **impervious** Roger and Ralph, fuming; round them the close sky was loaded with stars, save where the mountain punched up a hole of blackness.*

12. **bravado**

a swaggering show of courage

*Ralph surprised himself, not so much by the quality of his voice, which was even, but by the **bravado** of its intention.*

13. **tremulous**

quivering as from weakness or fear

*Jack's voice went on, **tremulous** yet determined, pushing against the uncooperative silence.*

14. **prefect**

a chief officer or chief magistrate

*He'd never have got us meat. He isn't a **prefect** and we don't know anything about him.*

15. **rebuke**

censure severely or angrily

*Piggy gave up the attempt to **rebuke** Ralph.*

16. **sanctity**

the quality of being holy

*The wood he fetched was close at hand, a fallen tree on the platform that they did not need for the assembly, yet to the others the **sanctity** of the platform had protected even what was useless there.*

17. **sodden**

wet through and through; thoroughly wet

*Much of it was damply rotten and full of insects that scurried; logs had to be lined from the soil with care or they crumbled into **sodden** powder.*

18. **laden**

filled with a great quantity

*They were **laden** with fruit.*

19. **demure**

shy or modest, often in a playful or provocative way

*Each of them wore the remains of a black cap and ages ago they had stood in two **demure** rows and their voices had been the song of angels.*

20. **fervor**

the state of being emotionally aroused and worked up

*If Jack was astonished by their **fervor** he did not show it.*

21. **pall**

become less interesting or attractive

*This time Robert and Maurice acted the two parts; and Maurice's acting of the pig's efforts to avoid the advancing spear was so funny that the boys cried with laughter. At length even this **palled**.*

22. **illusive**

based on or having the nature of a fantasy

*There were no shadows under the trees but everywhere a pearly stillness, so that what was real seemed **illusive** and without definition.*

23. **alight**

settle or come to rest

*Gorged, they **alighted** by his runnels of sweat and drank.*

24. **iridescent**

varying in colour when seen in different lights

*They were black and **iridescent** green and without number; and in front of Simon, the Lord of the Flies hung on his stick and grinned.*

25. **vexed**

troubled persistently especially with petty annoyances

*He was **vexed** to find how little he thought like a grownup and sighed again.*

26. **solemnly**

in a serious and dignified manner

*The littluns sat, **solemnly** thinking of meat, and dribbling.*

27. **buffet**

strike against forcefully

*A **buffet** of wind made him stagger and he saw that he was out in the open, on rock, under a brassy sky.*

28. **corpulent**

excessively fat

*Then as the blue material of the parachute collapsed the **corpulent** figure would bow forward, sighing, and the flies settle once more.*

29. **derision**

contemptuous laughter

*Piggy once more was the center of social **derision** so that everyone felt cheerful and normal.*

Vocabulary Help – Chapters 10 – 12

1. reckon

judge to be probable

*He had **reckoned**, during the terrible night, on finding at least some of the tribe holding out against the horrors of the island in the safest place.*

2. torrid

extremely hot

*Sitting on the tremendous rocks in the **torrid** sun, Roger received this news as an illumination.*

3. assimilate

take up mentally

*He ceased to work at his tooth and sat still, **assimilating** the possibilities of irresponsible authority.*

4. earnest

characterised by a firm, humorless belief in one's opinions

*The chief was vague but **earnest**.*

5. daunt

cause to lose courage

*Half-relieved, half-**daunted** by the implication of further terrors, the savages murmured again.*

6. speculation

a hypothesis that has been formed by conjecturing

*"Perhaps," said the chief. A theological **speculation** presented itself. "We'd better keep on the right side of him, anyhow. You can't tell what he might do."*

7. ungainly

lacking grace in movement or posture

*Ralph remembered the **ungainly** figure on a parachute.*

8. conviction

an unshakable belief in something without need for proof

*Then, at the moment of greatest passion and **conviction**, that curtain flapped in his head and he forgot what he had been driving at.*

9. woebegone

affected by or full of grief

*His twitchings exhausted him till he lay, breathless and **woebegone**, waiting for the next spasm.*

10. myopia

eyesight abnormality in which distant objects appear blurred

*The twins watched anxiously and Piggy sat expressionless behind the luminous wall of his **myopia**.*

11. multitudinous

too numerous to be counted

*There was silence, except for the **multitudinous** murmur of the bees.*

12. **falter**

be or become weak, unsteady, or uncertain

*The tribe of painted savages giggled and Ralph's mind **faltered**.*

13. **cessation**

a stopping

*The twins, puzzled, looked at each other; while Piggy, reassured by the **cessation** of violence, stood up carefully.*

14. **parry**

impede the movement of

*He struck in a humming circle behind him and Ralph only just **parried** the blow.*

15. **talisman**

a trinket thought to be a magical protection against evil

*By him stood Piggy still holding out the **talisman**, the fragile, shining beauty of the shell.*

16. **inquisitive**

showing curiosity

*An **inquisitive** ant was busy in one of the eye sockets but otherwise the thing was lifeless.*

17. **acrid**

strong and sharp, as a taste or smell

*He rubbed his cheek along his forearm, smelling the **acrid** scent of salt and sweat and the staleness of dirt.*

18. **inimical**

not friendly

*To carry he must speak louder; and this would rouse those striped and **inimical** creatures from their feasting by the fire.*

19. **hamper**

prevent the progress or free movement of

*The stick that had supported a skull **hampered** him but he would not be parted from his only weapon.*

20. **essay**

make an effort or attempt

*He wagged his spear and **essayed** fierceness.*

21. **ululation**

a long, loud, emotional howl or cry

*Eric raised his head and achieved a faint **ululation** by beating on his open mouth.*

22. **goad**

urge with or as if with a prod

*He could not bring himself to be specific at first; but then fear and loneliness **goaded** him.*

23. **ensconce**

fix firmly

*At first light he would creep into the thicket, squeeze between the twisted stems, **ensconce** himself so deep that only a crawler like himself could come through, and that crawler would be jabbed.*

24. **cordon**

a series of sentinels or posts enclosing some place or thing

*There he would sit, and the search would pass him by, and the **cordon** waver on, ululating along the island, and he would be free.*

25. **bramble**

any of various rough thorny shrubs or vines

*A nearer cry stood him on his feet and immediately he was away again, running fast among thorns and **brambles**.*

26. **wary**

marked by keen caution and watchful prudence

*A naval officer stood on the sand, looking down at Ralph in **wary** astonishment.*

27. **epaulette**

an ornamental cloth pad worn on the shoulder

*He saw white drill, **epaulettes**, a revolver, a row of gilt buttons down the front of a uniform.*

28. **gilt**

having the deep slightly brownish colour of gold

*He saw white drill, epaulettes, a revolver, a row of **gilt** buttons down the front of a uniform.*

29. **distend**

swell from or as if from internal pressure

*Other boys were appearing now, tiny tots some of them, brown, with the **distended** bellies of small savages.*