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In order to continue enjoying our site, we ask that you confirm your identity as a human. Thank you very much for your cooperation. Get Revising Created by: MicahCreated on: 20-01-13 20:30 Controlling - Immediately wants to be leader. Some leadership abilities - Manages to get the boys to become members of his tribe. Ambitious - Breaks rules himself to further his own interests. Quite savage - This gradually comes to the surface as the book progresses. Proud/Arrogant - "I'm head boy." or "I can sing C sharp.." Is the main antagonist of the novel. Represents dictatorship - uses rhetorical skills to twist Ralph's words, uses the other boys as standard bearers who say "The Chief has spoken." Is the main obstacle to Ralph - separates the boys Represents the darker side of human nature Used along with Ralph to show how the darker side of human nature and the good side of human nature can exist together but one side will eventually dominate if the person is put under certain conditions. Used to show how easily we as human beings can be corrupted. From the start of the novel the reader can see Jack is quite stubborn when he immediately claims that 'he should be leader.' When Jack first encounters a pig he is unable to kill it showing he still retains some sense of moral propriety that society had instilled in him before he became stranded with the other boy son the island. As the novel progresses Jack becomes more primitive and almost 'ape-like' as he prowls through the jungle trying to hunt. Jack soon becomes very aggressive towards Ralph and Piggy and starts his own tribe, showing the break from democracy to dictatorship. Jack has an active part in the murder of Simon and is also obsessed with hunting showing how he has turned 'savage' and almost 'inhuman.' This also shows how primal instincts have almost taken over and how he has succumbed to the darkness of human nature. At the end of the novel Jack steps forward to challenge Ralph when the naval officer asks 'who is in charge?' However, he stops as he comes to recognise that the rules that they had abandoned are now enforced once again. By the end of the novel Jack has learned how to manipulate the boys fear of the beast to control them which shows the reader how religion and superstition can be used as 'instruments of power.' Jack's physical description is quite unattractive. Golding describes him as being 'ugly without silliness.' This encourages the reader to develop a certain attitude towards him and hints at the ugly personality and character as well. Jack paints his face creating a 'mask-like' effect. Golding makes Jack do this to show how he has become a almost completely different person to his previous self and is almost hiding behind this 'mask.' Copyright Get Revising 2025 all rights reserved. Get Revising is one of the trading names of Tutorist Limited. Register Number: 15241839 (England and Wales), VAT No. 454 2876 70 Registered office: The Old Casino, 28 Fourth Avenue, Hove. BN3 2PJ (Click the character infographic to download.)For Jack, the island is like the best summer vacation ever. He gets to swear, play war games, hunt things, and paint his faceall without any grownups around to send him to his room for accidentally killing the neighbors. Like Ralph, Jack is charismatic and inclined to leadership. Unlike Ralph, he gets off on power and abuses his position above othersso, he's basically an '80s teen villain, without good hair and daddy's credit card. Let's see how he transforms from arrogant choir boy into painted savage. Not-So-Golden BoyJack is ugly. Well, according the narrator he is: he's "tall, thin, and bony; and his hair was red beneath the black cap. His face was crumpled and freckled, and ugly without silliness. Out of this face stared two light blue eyes, frustrated now, and turning, or ready to turn, to anger" (1). We've just met him, and we're already getting a bad feeling. Where Ralph is described as "fair" and "attractive," Jack is freckled and redheaded. (Duh, everyone knows redheads are evil.) And check out those angry eyes. It's no surprise that Jack can't wait to pick up a spear. Ralph is elected leader because he's cute and seems pretty mature, and he's our protagonist for pretty much the same reasons (check out "Character Roles" for more on this). But Jack doesn't get it. He thinks that he deserves to be chief because he's "chapter chorister and head boy. [He] can sing C sharp" (1.228-30)in other words, for no good reason at all. He should be leader because he's always been leader in the past, even though that leadership was based on something completely unrelated to his ability to govern: a nice singing voice. The problem with this kind of social structure is that it's not based on anything real. At first, Jack seems ready to help Ralph establish order: "We've got to have rules and obey them. After all, we're not savages. We're English, and the English are best at everything" (2.192). That doesn't exactly sound like a kid who's five seconds away from slaughtering a wild pig and painting himself with its blood, right?But saying "we have to have rules because we're English and awesome" is, when you think about it, identical to saying "I should be leader because I can sing C sharp." It's meaningless. It's jingoistic. And it disguises the fact that Jack is actually a pretty scary dude. As soon as there's no civilization to keep him in line, heunlike Ralphfalls out of line. Majorly. Power CorruptsJack's litany of evil is pretty impressive. He leads the brutal slaughter of a pigand then Simon. He fosters rebellion. He has his minions beat a kid named Willfred for some unspecified misdeed. He throws a spear at Ralph with "full intention" (11), trying to kill him, and then sends the minions after him to finish the job. But he couldn't do any of this without power. And somehow, he gets it. When he leaves Ralph's group, he convinces the others to come with him by promising a hunt. The pre-teen boys aren't interested in Ralph's boy-scout team-building and fire-watching. They want blood. And once Jack gets control, he turns from a choir boy into a, well, this: A great log had been dragged into the center of the lawn and Jack, painted and garlanded, sat there like an idolPower lay in the brown swell of his forearms; authority sat on his shoulder and chattered in his ear like an ape."All sit down."The boys ranged themselves in rows on the grass before him but Ralph and Piggy stayed a foot lower, standing on the soft sand. Jack ignored them for the moment, turned his mask down to the seated boys and pointed at them with his spear. (9.37, 52-56)Jack is an "idol" with an "ape" sitting on his shoulder; he's no longer a little boy. He's a "chief," and not only the boys but the narrator actually calls him "the chief": "the chief was sitting there, naked to the waist, his face blocked out in white and red" (10). Jack? There is no Jack by this point. "Jack" is a just a name covering up the ugly, primitive core beneath the British choir boy exterior. When Jack picks up a spear and then walks out on Ralph's pitiful attempt to impose order, he's not a boy anymore: he's a savage. (And if you're thinking that this all sounds a little racistwe think you're right. Check out our "Primitivity" theme for some thoughts on that.)Kid StuffBy the end of the book, Jack has become a subhuman terror, inspiring panic in Ralph and awe in the rest of the boys. Or has he?Throughout the whole story, we get little hints that this might be nothing more than a game gone wrong. When Jack leaves Ralph's group, check how he does it: His voice trailed off. The hands that held the conch shook. He cleared his throat, and spoke loudly."All right then."He laid the conch with great care in the grass at his feet. The humiliating tears were running from the corner of each eye."I'm not going to play any longer. Not with you." (8.67-75)Does this sound like a savage psychopath in the making, or does it sound like a little boy who's mad that things aren't fair? What's cool about this moment is that Golding mostly keeps us in the boys' viewpoint, and particularly Ralph's. When they're scared, we're scared; when they're having a fun pig-killing orgy, we're having a fun pig-killing orgy. But occasionally he drop in moments like this, where we see the boys in a new ways kids playing a game gone horribly wrong. At the end, we see things from the naval officer's perspective. He asks who's in charge (assuming very Britishly that someone is), and Ralph steps up. Keep in mind that being in charge also means taking some sort of responsibility for, oh, the two gruesome murders. Maybe that's why Jack ends up hanging backA little boy who wore the remains of an extraordinary black cap on his red hair and who carried the remains of a pair of spectacles at his waist, started forward, then changed his mind and stood still. (12)To the boys, Jack is a powerful, savage chief. To the officer (and to us), he's just a "little boy" wearing goofy clothes. Golding leaves us with a question: what is Jack, really? Is he a heartless savage, or is he just a little British boy playing a game?Jack TimelineJack Merridew, in William Goldings Lord of the Flies, is the antagonist. The iron-willed, egocentric Jack symbolizes savage instinct, violence and the desire for power. In one word he is the antithesis of Ralph. At the very onset of the novel, power thirsty Jack wants to dominate and lead the boys in the island. He is thus, the representative of totalitarianism as does not appreciate the results of the election. In his lust for power, he eventually using his strength, his aggressiveness and his choirboy militia seizes power in a coup and rules alone, making himself chief and the other boys his tribe.Jacks physical appearance as painted by Golding - tall, thin, and bony; and his hair was red beneath the black cap. His face was crumpled and freckled, and ugly without silliness. Out of his face stared two light blue eyes, frustrated now, and turning, or ready to turn with anger.Jack is the representative of that anarchic instinct of man which remains dormant under the mask of civilization but resurfaces whenever opportunity occurs. Jack may also represent the Id in contrast to Ralph as the ego and Piggy as the superego. The logic behind this is that Jack seeks to immediately satisfy the needs and act on instinct, fulfilling the description of the ego, while Ralph upholds the social norms of the superego.Jack has as overwhelming urge to lead because he is confident, fluent, arrogant and inconsiderate of others. He is a narcissist. Simons faints do not move him, he has no concern for littluns and says that if there were shortage of pigs, they would have to kill a littlun. He is irresponsible as he lets the fire go out, while he indulges in pig-hunting. He is incapable of rational thought like Ralph. He is very narrow-minded as he moves in the little society of his own making.His urge to lead and assert deteriorates into lust for hunting. Like Satan of Paradise Lost his character moves towards degeneration through stages. Previously, Jack holds the sense of morality that society instilled in him. In fact, in school, he was the leader of the choirboy. When he encounters a pig for the first time, he is unable to kill it. But Jack soon becomes obsessed with hunting and devotes himself to the task, painting his face like a barbarian and giving himself over to bloodlust. Throughout the novel there is constant reference to his eyes as mad, bolting, opaque. This produces a feeling of revulsion, showing that he is not normal. We often find him on the verge of hysteria.He is a bully and this is proved by his treatment of Piggy. He takes Piggy's glasses by force and uses them to light the fire. He always ridicules him and laughs at his expense. He is a potential killer and dictator as Golding writer.He snatched his knife out of the sheath and slammed it into a tree trunkHe looked round fiercely, daring them to contradict.In fact he is a sadist and gradually becomes skilled at his trade a little boy practised beyond his years in the process of slaughter.Jack begun to clean his bloody hands on the rock. Then he started work on the sow and punched her.Jack allows Roger to torture the twins and kill Piggy. He abuses power and this is aggravated by his fear of the unknown. He is superstitious and offers a sacrifice to the beast to appease his fear of the unknown. However, by the end of the novel, Jack has learned to use the boys fear of the beast to control their behaviour a reminder of how religion and superstition can be manipulated as instruments of power.Jacks lust for absolute power blurs his rational ability. He frees himself from shame and self-consciousness. He gives vent to those tendencies which have been latent in him and which in the past had been checked by the rules of society. His philosophy of life can be summed up in his words:Who will join my tribe and have fun?After Simons murder he is given to cunning and becomes hypocritical, denying that the beast has been killed warning his tribe that it may appear again (in the guise of Ralph).Viciously, with full intention he hurled his spear at Ralph.Now he is a primitive chief. In his final attack on Ralph on the beach, when the naval officer appears he is wearing one of his trophies Piggy's glasses at his waist,Jacks character shows that where there are no restrictions from adults (civilized world), the primitive desires are released hence a reversion to a primitive type. Apart from his black cap, he loses everything civilized. He replaces his leadership of the choir by the chieftainship of a tribe based on torture and murder and a lust for blood. No moral standards can check his drifting towards complete depravity.Quotes about Jack in Lord of the Flies#1Bollocks to the rules! Were strongwre hunt! If theres a beast, well hunt it down! Well close in and beat and beat and beat! #2Weve got to have rules and obey them. After all, were not savages. Were English, and the English are best at everything. #3His mind was crowded with memories; memories of the knowledge that had come to them when they closed in on the struggling pig, knowledge that they had outwitted a living thing, imposed their will upon it, taken away its life like a long satisfying drink. #4They looked at each other, baffled, in love and hate. #5I ought to be chiefbecause Im chapter chorister and head boy. I can sing C sharp. #6His specs use them as burning glasses! #7I agree with Ralph. Weve got to have rules and obey them. After all, were not savages. Were English, and the English are best at everything. So weve got to do the right things #8I thought I might kill. #9Kill the pig, cut her throat, spill the blood #10Well hunt. Im going to be chief.Written by: Nick RedgroveReviewed by: Deb OrrockUpdated on 17 June 2025Jack takes over from Ralph as the boys chief, ruling through fear and violence; his conflict with Ralph suggests that savagery and individualismare stronger forces than democracy and morality.JackKey characteristicsRoleThemesOverviewMiddle-classAutocraticIndividualisticViolentJack is the novels central antagonist, and represents the savagery and individualism at the heart of humanity, in contrast to the values of cooperation and civilised order embodied by Ralph and PiggyPower and LeadershipCivilisation versus SavageryGood versus EvilLoses the leadership election to RalphLeads the hunters, but clashes with Ralph and PiggyStarts his own tribe of painted, bloodthirsty savagesJacks tribe tries to hunt down Jack and kill himAs the central antagonist, Jack demonstrates how quickly even the most civilised of individuals can descend into selfish and savage behaviour; his rise to power suggests how humanity is drawn to violence at the expense of civilised social values.He is violent. Jack is first described as the head of a creature made up of choristers, setting the theme for his animalistic behaviour. He is described as having slashed at plants, becomes obsessed with hunting and killing and he later recruits boys to his tribe through violence. He is individualistic: Jack prioritises his personal desires at the expense of what would be best for the group, such as when he takes his choristers hunting instead of tending the signal fire and ensuring the boys rescue. He also considers rules only in terms of how they benefit him (or his hunger to mete out punishment). He is influential: He is athletic, strong and violent, and his promise of a rule-less tribe is attractive to many of the boys on the island, as demonstrated by his dominance at the end of the novel. He even influences Ralph, who establishes the nickname Piggy after Jack calls Piggy fat.From Chapter 1 onwards, Jacks language, and the language used to describe him, highlights his alarming capacity for violence and his opposition to Ralphs civilised order:Innate violence: In Chapter 1, Jack is described as having slashed at flowers (as opposed to Simon, who admires their beauty); in Chapter 4, killing a pig feels to him like taking a long satisfying drink. His violence extends to his own tribe as he tortures and threatens the boys to ensure their obedience.Bullying and autocratic: Jack initially gives the impression of valuing rules and order, but seems especially excited at the prospect of dishing out punishment foreshadowing his later autocratic leadership: Then when anyone breaks 'em-Represents individualism: Golding contrasts the opposing leadership styles of Jack and Ralph, especially in Chapter 5 when Jack says Bollocks to the rules! This statement shows how Jack considers civilisation and cooperation less appealing than the brilliant world of hunting.Jack key quotesChapters 1-4Chapters 5-9Chapters 10-12Jack is established as Ralphs opposite: Jack loses the leadership vote to Ralph, but remains leader of his group of hunters. Jack supports Ralph in establishing rules for their survival, but only wants to hunt. Jack and his hunters choose to hunt a pig instead of tending the signal fire; the fire goes out and they miss a chance for rescue. Jack argues with Ralph about his actions.Jack and his hunters descend into savagery. The boys start to fear a beast on the island, and Jack and Ralph try to hunt it down. The boys disagree on how to deal with it, and Jack leaves to start his own tribe of face-painted savages. During a war dance, Jacks tribe, Ralph and Piggy mistake Simon for the beast, and murder Simon.Jacks autocratic rule: Jack uses violence to force the boys to join his tribe. He has stolen Piggy's glasses, and has the power to make fire. At Castle Rock, Ralph confronts Jack but Roger kills Piggy and destroys the conch. Jacks tribe hunt him through the jungle. Jack sets fire to the jungle while hunting Ralph.Golding uses Jack to show how swiftly civilised individuals will ignore rules, straining to break rules, or abuse rules for their own basedesires. In Chapter 2, Jack tells the others that rules are a vital part of civilisation: we've got to have rules and obey them. After all, we're not savages". However, it soon becomes clear that Jack is not interested in the boys behaving in a civilised way. If anything, he is eager for some to break the rules because if people dont obey them, he may be able to impose discipline, or even dish out punishment. Indeed, later at the same meeting he says "we'll have rules! ... Lots of rules! Then when anyone breaks 'em ", foreshadowing his cruel torture of boys on Castle Rock who dare to defy Jacks commands.As the novel goes on, Jack also loses the clothing that represents civilised society, and by Chapter 4 the choral gowns and hats are discarded, and Jack has long hair and fewer clothes. He even paints on a mask which frees him from the shame and self-consciousness of society and the members of his tribe follow suit. The boys appearance is a metaphor for their turn towards savagery, and away from the trappings (neat appearance, short hair) of civilisation.Did this page help you? The head boy of his chorus back in civilization, Jack becomes the leader of the hunters on the island. Jack loves power. Laws and rules interest him only because they give him the chance to punish the other boys and express his dominance over them. He loves to hunt and kill because it gives him a chance to dominate nature. Jack gets angry whenever he doesn't get his way: he believes a proper leader issues orders and is obeyed. By the end of the novel he becomes exactly that sort of leader, wielding power only for his own whim and benefit. Jack symbolizes the human love of dominance and power.

**Character traits of jack in lord of the flies chapter 1. What are some character traits of jack in lord of the flies. Lord of the flies character jack. Lord of the flies jack characteristics. Jack lord of the flies character analysis. Five character traits of jack in lord of the flies.**