**“Golding’s Voyage Ends Without Landfall”** Sunday 20 June 1993 18.34 BST The Writer Victoria Glendinning pays tribute to William Golding, who died yesterday.

The last time I spoke to him, in October last year, he was sitting with his wife in the foyer of a hotel in Toronto in the small hours; we, like other authors at the Harbor Front Festival and the rest of the hotel guests had been driven out of our beds and down dark staircases the escalators were out of action by a screaming fire alarm. He was patient and funny about it, and very tired. It turned out there was no fire.

His novel *Fire Down Below* completed the *Sea Trilogy* of which the first volume, *Rites of Passage*, won the Booker Prize. The competition that year, as everyone knew, was between his book and Anthony Burgess's *Earthly Powers*. Because of that contest, these two major writers are still often spoken of in the same breath. But their greatness is not of the same kind. Golding's strength is that he combines earthly and unearthly powers.

He was our Grand Old Man of literature. It is as if a familiar ship in a familiar seascape has suddenly disappeared over the horizon. He has been a revered name, and a revered figure, for so long. *The Lord of the Flies* became a classic with extraordinary rapidity, and as is the fate of many classics it became a book considered suitable for young people rather than adults, and of course it is. It expresses for children, as for adults, truth about themselves that they did not know they knew. There can be few adults, among those who read anything at all, who have not read it.

So much is said now about the decline of reading, and there are bitter arguments going on about what kind of English literature should be taught in schools. As Golding himself claimed, "The right interpretation is the one that rises to the reader the first time he reads the book." But whatever else young people have or have not been reading over the past 25 years, the many thousands who have taken English Literature O-level or GCSE during that period all read *The Lord of the Flies*, and probably *Free Fall* and *The Inheritors* as well. 'The Lord of the Flies', as a phrase, has passed into the language; everyone knows what is meant by 'a Lord of the Flies situation'.

*The Lord of the Flies* is not strikingly original. It has its roots in *Treasure Island, The Coral Island* and *High Wind in Jamaica* - 'Islands Incorporated', as he put it. It was a great restatement and no less great for that. It made Golding financially independent, yet he was sometime rueful about feeling, as he said, like 'a set book'. His attitude to his Nobel Prize was equally ambivalent. 'You become a kind of object, with certain reactions expected of you.' He expressed some of his feelings about being a lionized author in *The Paper Men*, which may be taken as a tragicomic cautionary tale for all literary biographers. He had been a schoolmaster, and there was something of the kindly, humorous, slightly subversive teacher remaining in him.

He was wary, he gave nothing away that he did not intend to. Always self-deprecating, never a self-publicist, he and his wife took the extreme step of leaving the house in Wiltshire, where they had lived ever since their marriage in 1939, in order to escape the unwanted attention of strangers. He returned to his native Cornwall. But he will always be a local hero in Malborough, where there is already a road named after him, close to the school.

He believed in a god, but rejected organized religion. He believed in the forces of evil, and he was no stranger to grief and anger, though he was more hopeful about man's condition than his books might suggest. But it was always hard to cast him as a sage. When pressed for big statements about the meaning of life, he would refer to his puzzlement, and uncertainty, or he would make a joke. Yet he was capable of magisterial eloquence, and the occasional visionary passage in speech, as well as in his fiction. He read a lot of poetry, and his first published work was a volume of poems. This mixture of irony, even frivolity, and deep seriousness, is peculiarly English, and sometimes hard for foreigners to come to grips with. All voyages come to an end. No landfall for William Golding, just a sailing away. But the books remain.

Average Number of Words Per Sentence: *16.25*  
Dale-Chall Readability Index: *7-8th Grade Level*

Percent of “Unfamiliar” Words in Sample = 15.38%

I have a theory that students don’t read directions as much as they should. In fact, you are probably not reading this right now. In fact, you will probably ask me a silly question that would have normally appeared in these directions-which you probably didn’t read. ☺ Therefore, the directions for this assignment are make marks with your writing stick on the back of this page that show me you can use this article to be proficient in the three items on the rubric. Attach an additional sheet of paper if needs be.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Learning Targets** | 4.0 | 3.0 | 2.0 | 1.0 |
| **Comprehend** and  explain the **literal** main  ideas and detail of a text | **I can insightfully**  **explain** the author’s  “big picture” & details  **accurately beyond**  **teacher’s expectations.** | **I can plainly explain**  the author’s “big  picture” & details **relatively**  **accurately and**  **consistently.** | **I can just mention** the  author’s “big picture” & details  **somewhat accurately and**  **somewhat consistently.** | **I struggle to identify**  author’s “big picture” & details  I have **some inaccuracies**  **and/or need teacher assistance.** |
| Analyze the **author’s craft** of narratives, informational and persuasive texts. | **I can insightfully**  **explain** **all examples**  of author’s craft  **accurately beyond**  **teacher’s expectations.** | **I can plainly explain**  **several examples** of  author’s craft **relatively** **accurately and consistently.** | **I can mention some**  **examples** of author’s craft  **somewhat** **accurately and somewhat consistently.** | **I can partially identify**  **a few examples** of  author’s craft with  **some inaccuracies & teacher assistance.** |

**Guided Highlighted Reading for NPR article about William Golding’s death**

**Anticipation Guide:**  Students just finished reading *Lord of the Flies* and discussing how the idea of “Human Nature in Chaos” is reflected in the text. In addition, they read *Hunger Games*, by Suzanne Collins, and discussed the same topic’s prevalence in that text.

**Summary:** William Golding lived an interesting life. *Lord of the Flies* was the pinnacle achievement of his writing career, as is evident by the vast number of references to the text in our culture and its notoriety among the masses. Much like Hemingway, Golding wrote based on his own life experiences.

**Genre:** Informational text, transcript of audio story heard on National Public Radio, prose, nonfiction.

**How the Text is Written:** Informational text that starts with an anecdote about the interview, follows with an exposition about the facts of Golding’s life, follows with connections between *Lord of the Flies* and other texts of literary merit, and ends with the thesis of the article using a metaphor.

**Vocabulary:**

**Revered = celebrated, honored; an adjective in the text that describes Golding’s reputation or “name”**

**Subversive = sneaky, rebellious; an adjective that describes what kind of teacher Golding was.**

**Sage = wise person, teacher; noun that is used to label Golding**

**The goals** for this activity are to prepare for reading a selection, build silent reading fluency, to determine what is important in a paragraph, to make inferences, and to read with a larger context in mind. Specific to content, this reading is helpful in contextualizing the author’s biographical influence on *Lord of the Flies*.

**Guided Highlighted Read for “What was said?”**

Paragraph #1

1. Highlight the most specific word that describes where the interviewer met Golding = foyer
2. Highlight why the interviewer had to meet Golding in the foyer = screaming fire alarm

Paragraph #2

1. Highlight which novel earned the Booker Prize = *Rites of Passage*
2. Highlight how Golding differed from Anthony Burgess = he combined earthly and unearthly powers.

Paragraph #3

1. Highlight the fate of many classic pieces of literature, such as the *Lord of the Flies* = became considered suitable for young people
2. Highlight what the text mainly addresses = truth about themselves that they did not know they knew.

Paragraph #4

1. Highlight a numerical word that labels which reading of a text that Golding thinks is the most “right” = first
2. Highlight how many people know what is meant by a “*Lord of the Flies* situation” = everyone

Paragraph #5

1. Highlight the one word that best describes the kind of tale that *Lord of the Flies* is; highlight the one noun that best summarizes the type of writing *Lord of Flies* is = restatement
2. Highlight the three adjectives that describe the teacher style that still remained in Golding = kindly, humorous, subversive
3. Highlight a zoological adjective that the interviewer used to describe Golding’s perception of his own status as an author = lionized

Paragraph #6

1. Highlight Golding’s hometown = Cornwall
2. Highlight one way that you know Golding is considered a local hero in Malborough = road named after him

Paragraph #7

1. Highlight the two actions Golding performed when the interviewer tried to convince him to discuss big unversal ideas about humanity = refer to his puzzlement, make a joke.
2. Highlight the three aspects that make Golding’s writing style specifically British = mix of irony, frivolity, seriousness

**Guided Highlighted Read for “How was it said?”**

Paragraph #1

1. Highlight the appositive in the first sentence. = in October last year

Paragraph #3

1. Highlight the simile that describes how Golding left the literary scene = as if…ship…disappeared

Paragraph #7

1. Highlight the juxtaposing statements the interviewer used to describe Golding’s views = God/organized religion, evil/hopeful.
2. Highlight the metaphor that the interviewer used to describe Golding = sage
3. Highlight the metaphor that the interviewer first used as a simile earlier in the passage = voyages (ship paragraph #3)

**Guided Highlighted Read for “Why was it said?”**

Highlight the words, phrase or sentence that best illuminates the purpose and function of the text.

**Guided Highlighted Read for “So what?”**

Highlight the sentence that most appropriately rings true in your life, another text or the human experience.