

Language, structure and form

Language

How Golding uses language to increase tension

When we talk about the language of a text, we mean how the writer *chooses* words to create effects. In other words, we are studying the writer's *word choices*.

In Chapter Twelve, we see Ralph being chased by Jack's hunters. Towards the end of the chase, Golding uses language to manipulate the reader's emotions as we see the action through Ralph's eyes. (Ralph is hiding in bushes.)

DO IT!

Find a further extract from Chapter Twelve. Analyse it to show the methods Golding uses to increase tension.

Example from the text	How this language is used by Golding
“He laid his cheek against the chocolate-coloured earth,”	This is a comforting image with associations of childhood with the softness of a baby's 'cheek' and the sweetness of 'chocolate'. However, this is a chase to the death and Ralph is fighting a very adult war.
“or perhaps there was a sound”	We are seeing the action through Ralph's eyes. Golding uses tentative language 'or perhaps' to show Ralph's wandering thoughts. In this section of the book, Golding connects a series of clauses to offer different alternatives to the noises that surround Ralph.
“Someone cried out.”	The short sentence dramatically wrenches Ralph and the reader out of circling thoughts.
“Hide, break the line, climb a tree – which was best after all?”	Golding signals the urgency of Ralph's thoughts now. This list of imperative verbs 'Hide...break...climb' shows Ralph commanding himself to act. This call to action is broken by the dash as Ralph's indecision takes over, shown by the final question.
“Now the fire was nearer; those volleying shots were great limbs, trunks even, bursting. The fools!”	Again, Golding uses a series of clauses to show Ralph's thoughts. Notice the naturalistic speech of 'trunks even' to show Ralph's inner monologue, as if he is adding a detail as an afterthought. A gun and war metaphor 'volleying shots' brings the reader back to the deadly war between Jack and Ralph. Here is a violent image again 'bursting', relating to the guns and what happens in the frenzy of war. The exclamation 'The fools!' – an adult-sounding statement – breaks the chain of thought.
“Ralph stirred restlessly in his narrow bed.”	Golding returns to a childhood image suggesting the comfort and security of home. This juxtaposes with the seriousness of Ralph's situation.