

60 copies
3 hole punch

Research Paper Draft

A runner gets first place in a race, a fisher catches a bigger fish, a student receives a better grade, a team wins the championship game, a country wins the war; humans are associated with many competitions. Whether it is a little game or an international battle, humans compete with each other. Why do humans compete with each other even when the risks could be very high, possibly losing their own life? Could it be love for their country? Passion for a sport? A need to be better than others? What drives a person to possibly go to extremes to win? William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* explains natural competition through the boys and their actions to prove the humans have a desire to assert themselves above their peers.

Before getting into examples from *Lord of the Flies* and defining "natural competition," a few terms need to be defined. The word "explain" is often used in many people's vocabularies, but what does it mean? According to *Oxford Dictionaries*, "explain" means "[to]make (an idea, situation, or problem) clear to someone by describing it in more detail or revealing relevant facts or ideas" ("Explain" 1). *Dictionary.com* defines "explain" as "to make plain or clear; render understandable or intelligible" or as "to assign a meaning to; interpret" ("Explain" 1, 3). Another definition of the word "explain" is "to make clear the cause or reason of; account for" ("Explain" 4).

In relation to my subject, the word "explain" directly refers "to assign a meaning to" ("Explain" 3) the phrase "natural competition" through the scenarios presented *Lord of the Flies*. The phrase

“natural competition” can be defined but the book explains it better than the textbook definition. *Lord of the Flies* “assigns a meaning to” the phrase because of the events taken place in the story. The other definition of “explain” can be used here as well. *Lord of the Flies* also does as the definition states and “makes plain or clear” the meaning of “natural competition.”

Events like hunting for game not for food or fighting each other and foreign things for fun or entertainment not for survival. *Lord of the Flies* “explains” that competition starts not just for survival purposes, but also for a sense of pride, power, and proven masculinity. Now, in a society where we have easy access to most essential items we need to survive, competition between people has developed into a feud over power.

Another phrase that needs to be defined is “natural competition.” The term natural means “existing in or caused by nature; not made or caused by humankind” (Natural 1). For further clarification, nature means “the phenomena of the physical world collectively... as opposed from humans or human creation” (Nature 1). Competition means “the activity or condition of competing” (Competition 1). Competing means “[the act of] striv[ing] to gain or win something by defeating or establishing superiority over others who are trying to do the same” (Compete 1). Combining these two definitions together, natural competition would mean the act of striving to win something over others not caused or made by humans. In relation to *Lord of the Flies*, this would mean that the two tribes (Jack’s and Ralph’s tribes) were trying to get an advantage or gain superiority over each other without thinking rationally like humans. They were slowly becoming more inhumane and acting like animals.

Natural competition is “assign[ed] a meaning” through details and real scenarios in *Lord of the Flies*. Humans, whether it be trying to be first in a race or get a step ahead of their opposition, want to compete against others in order to prove themselves in society. Humans want to be recognized as better

than the societal average. But in a situation without a society, (like the boys in *Lord of the Flies*) humans are taken over by self-pride and a need to assert themselves above the rest. Humans' perception of the whole situation changes. In a society, they prove themselves to others. However, in a situation without a society, they compete to prove their self-worth to themselves as individuals. "From his [Jack's] left hand dangled Piggy's broken glasses" (Golding 151); Jack shows from this quote that he wanted the advantage and upperhand over the opposing tribe. He wanted to assert himself over the rest; wanted to be considered better or having a superiority over the tribes. He also proves his actions are for his own intentions and for self-pride by the following quote: "The chief [Jack] led them [his tribe], trotting steadily, exulting in his achievement" (Golding 151). Jack, like many humans, wanted a reminder and physical evidence of his dominance or victory; Piggy's glasses were a trophy to Jack. Humans want that constant, physical reminder of their achievements and accomplishments.

Natural competition, as it is not given a proper definition through dictionaries, but is "render[ed] understandable." People can only achieve a basic understanding of a topic or word by the definition of it alone. Most people usually can achieve a better understanding, however, through practical use, real (or close to real) life scenarios, and other examples. Note that people learn in different ways and visual aids or examples might not help some people. A quote in *Lord of the Flies* that helps express the phrase natural competition is: "'I'm [Jack] not going to be a part of Ralph's lot—' ... 'I'm going off by myself,'" (Golding 113). Jack says this at a meeting with all the boys after being disrespected and insulted by Ralph. This shows one of the ways that natural competition is started and fueled. Jack wants to assert himself over Ralph and obtain more power than him physically and in the society that the boys had formed. Jack's competition for power is also described in the beginning of the book with this quote: "Ralph turned to him [Piggy]. 'You're no good on a job like this.' [said Ralph]. 'All the same—' [said

Piggy] 'We don't want you,' said Jack, flatly" (Golding 17) This shows how Jack, from the start, was competing with everyone and anyone foreign to him for power. Jack, and many humans, want to assert themselves and set themselves apart from the average through talent, status, and (in Jack's case) power.

Natural competition is "ma[d]e...clear by...revealing relevant facts or ideas" and one of these relevant facts includes the transformation from conformed school boys to unruly, uncultured beasts. "'I [Jack] went on. I thought, by myself--' The madness came into his eyes again. 'I thought I might kill'" (Golding 42). For clarification, Jack refers to killing an animal, not an actual person. This quote shows how Jack, a British choir boy, was changed and essentially devolved to a primal level. He was driven crazy by the lack of a society and competition between himself and the other authoritative figures on the island. Humans will go to drastic measures and change a lot about themselves for competitive purposes. Another quote that helps express this is: "'I cut the pig's throat,' said Jack, proudly..." (Golding 58). This is a prime example of how the boys (more specifically Jack) have changed. These boys are no longer disgusted or scarred or fear the thought of death, whether it be the death of animals or (later in the story) each other. They have devolved to primal beasts and take away the characteristics that make each of them unique. They changed themselves from cultured schoolboys to monsters. Jack was not the only person to change, "Ralph too was fighting to get near, to get a handful of that brown, vulnerable flesh. The desire to squeeze and hurt was overmastering" (Golding 101). Ralph, the main character of the story who is affable and often keeps a cool head, also became corrupt from the constant competition between the boys. These previous quotes reinforce the fact that natural competition changes civilized people to uncultured beasts.

"Kill the pig! Cut his throat! Kill the pig! Bash him in!" (Golding 101); this was the phrase that the boys would chant during the killing of animals, which makes the tribes of boys seem uncultured.

These boys came from living and growing in a society where going to school, getting good grades, and maybe doing extracurricular activities (like choir) were the norm. Now, they have devolved into a primal state. They lost their innocence and turned into something new when they arrived to the island. The main authoritative figures throughout the book (Ralph, Jack, and occasionally Piggy) held a constant competition between each other. Jack would undermine Ralph's rule, Ralph would insult and degrade Jack and his fellow hunters. This led to the corruption of the "littluns" who looked up to these boys. They lost their innocence and destroyed their formation of personal moral code. The older boys changed the lives of the "littluns." These "littluns" did not have a complete understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They get the idea from the older boys that killing and other forms of violence (later expressed in the book) are fine. "Kill the pig!" (Golding 101) This phrase really reinforced the "littluns'" ideas that violence was fine. This is a prime example of how competition, when taken out of hand, leads humans to drastic measures to accomplish what they want.

Competition is around all humans, whether its a sporting event, someone trying to get better grades than their friends, or countries fighting over international problems, humans have to deal with it. Natural competition proves how much people can and will change drastically to win or gain an advantage over their peers. It shows us what measures people go through in order to achieve their final goal and defeat their opposition. *Lord of the Flies* explains this natural recurring item through the measures that the boys go through. It makes people desire things and items (physical or status) that are unnecessary and causes them risk too much to achieve it. Competition between humans has negative and positive effects, but it will never stop. Naturally, humans enjoy that opposition in their life that they fight against to prove their self-worth to themselves. Humans enjoy the constant reminder that their better (or worse) by judging themselves against each other. Natural competition is the balance in many

people's lives that makes them want to keep improving.