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# Control and an Effective Leader in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*

## Control Through the Recognition of Needs

At times, 'good' leaders and 'effective' leaders are not synonymous. The novel *Lord of the Flies*, written by William Golding, is about a group of British boys who are forced to hunt for food, create shelter, and develop their own civilization without adult supervision after crashing into a deserted island. Trying to maintain control and leadership, a power struggle develops between two of the boys - Jack and Ralph. Jack proves himself to be the more effective leader because he appeals to the boys' desires, has a more united tribe, and is able to better assert control.

Jack is a more effective leader because he allows the boys to act completely on their impulses. When the boys are hungry, bored of the low hanging fruit that was the only thing they had eaten thus far, Jack understands and immediately suggests they go hunting for meat. "We'll get food... hunt... catch things" (Golding 30) he says with certainty. This shows that he is able to create a plan to fulfill a need. This is further proven when Jack proclaims to the boys, "We could steal up on one [pig] - paint our faces so they wouldn't see - perhaps surround them and then-" (Golding 54). He realizes that the boys are focused primarily on killing the pigs - as children, they only think in the short term. Not only does he allow for the boys to hunt for meat, he also encourages them to play and have fun.

By the end of the novel, Jack's tribe is much more united - demonstrating his effectiveness as a leader. When the boys are discussing their thoughts about fear, Jack reassures them, "Of course we're frightened sometimes but we put up with being frightened... fear can't hurt you any more than a dream" (Golding 82). Although the boys are afraid of what beasts may lurk outside of the light, Jack is quick to alleviate their anxieties and refuses to allow fear to tear them apart. When Jack asks the boys, "Who'll join my tribe?," almost all the boys agree to join Jack's cult (Golding 151). Jack is able to unite his followers together because he and the boys have common goals and this unity strengthens Jack's position as a leader.

Jack's ability to assert control helps him be a more advantageous leader. When Jack tells the boys to make a fire, "All at once the crowd swayed toward the island and was gone - following Jack" (Golding 38). Jack is a respected leader, proven when the boys consistently follow him and listen to his commands. When the boys are out of control, Jack silences them, "Let's be moving... we're wasting time" (Golding 101). Jack clearly demonstrates his authoritative personality and takes charge of the hunt.

While it may be argued that Jack is not an effective leader in comparison to Ralph because he contributed to the violence on the island and symbolized savagery, Ralph's strong commitment to civilization and morality do not prove to be influential for the boys in the long run. Jack establishes a united tribe, essentially becomes the 'voice of the people' due to his controlling persona, and appeals to the boys' blood thirst to become a powerful leader. If Ralph had been a more effective leader, he would have had more control over the boys and his tribe would not have collapsed.

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Throughout the novel, the boys continuously debate about who really is their 'leader', but by the end, the boys clearly choose Jack as their favorite. By recognizing what the boys want, he is able to appeal to the boys' desires and become an invaluable leader. He earns dignity as a hunter and as a chief from the group and is therefore able to easily unify his tribe. Jack is also able to gather the attention of the boys and command them by asserting control. Not all of Jack's actions are necessarily the qualities of a good leader, but he is able to retain power and authority over the boys and that is what makes him an effective leader.

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