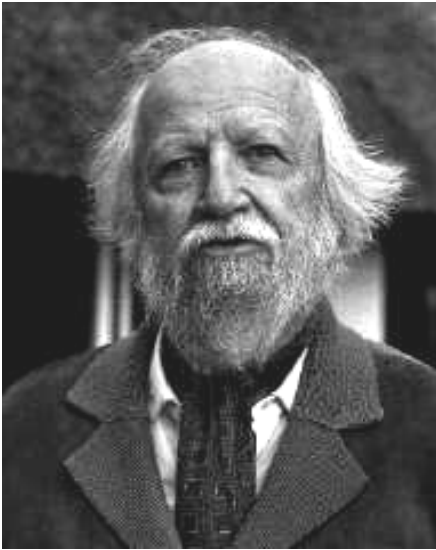


Pre-Reading Preparation

Author Biography: William Golding



William Golding was born September 19, 1911 in Cornwall, England. Not long after he was born, The Great War (World War I) began, and continued throughout the majority of his early childhood. His mother, Mildred, was an advocate for women's rights, while his father, Alec, was a schoolteacher. Golding attended Marlborough Grammar School where his father taught. His father had a tremendous influence upon him, and when he entered Brasenose College at Oxford in 1930, he studied science in deference to his father. In his third year of college, Golding made the decision to pursue his true desire, and began his study of English literature and philosophy. His first book, a collection of poems, was published the year before he received his degree. In 1935 he graduated from Oxford with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English.

After graduation, Golding began working as a writer, actor, and producer in a small theatre in London. In 1939, the same year he married Ann Brookfield with whom he had two children, he began teaching English and philosophy at Bishop Wordsworth's School in Salisbury. As World War II broke out, he joined the Royal Navy, where he served for six years. He was involved in the sinking of the famous German battleship, the Bismarck, and in the invasion of Normandy on D-Day. His experiences in the Royal Navy gave Golding first-hand knowledge of the atrocities of war and the cruelties of combat, and had a major influence on his writing. At the close of the War, he returned to his teaching position at Wordsworth's, where he remained a teacher until the early 1960s. Most of his novels, plays, and essays were written during this post-war period.

Golding's first major novel, *Lord of the Flies*, was published in 1954. Although it was initially rejected by twenty-one different publishers, it went on to surprising success. In 1962, eight years after its first publication, *Lord of the Flies* became a best selling novel. His subsequent novels include *The Inheritors*, which was published in 1955, *Pincher Martin* (1956), *Free Fall* (1959), *The Spire* (1964), *The Pyramid* (1967), *Darkness Visible* (1979), *Rites of Passage* (1980), *The Paper Men* (1984), *An Egyptian Journal* (1985), *Close Quarters* (1987), and *Fire Down Below* (1989).

In 1980, Golding won the "Booker Prize" for his novel, *Rites of Passage*. He received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1983, and in 1988, he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II. His novel, *Lord of the Flies*, was twice made into a film—once in 1963 and again in 1990.

At the time of his death, he was working on *The Double Tongue*, which was published posthumously in 1995. William Golding died on June 19, 1993 in Perranarworthal, Cornwall, England.

Standards Focus: Exploring Expository Writing

Directions: Using the article about William Golding, answer the following questions using complete sentences.

1. William Golding was greatly influenced by his environmental circumstances. Cite some of those influences as mentioned in the article. _____

2. What is meant by the phrase "...when he entered Brasenose College at Oxford in 1930, he studied science in deference to his father." _____

3. Where would be the best place to insert more facts about his personal life? _____

4. In three or four sentences, give a brief summary of the life Golding led. _____

5. If you were given the opportunity to interview William Golding, what two questions would you ask him? _____

6. Referring to the information from the article, use the back of this paper or a separate sheet of paper to draw a timeline of the important milestones in Golding's life. Be sure to include dates for each event.