

*Island of the Blue Dolphins*, Chapter 1  
**Observing the Natural World**

**Grade Level**

Upper Elementary: Third Grade through Fifth Grade

**Subject**

Literacy and Language Arts, Science

**Common Core Standards**

3.W.8, 4.W.8

**Next Generation Science Standards**

3-LS4-3

**Background Information**

The descriptions in chapter 1 of the novel help the reader visualize the book's setting: the Island of the Blue Dolphins. This activity is designed to help students compare and contrast the characters' observations of the natural world with their own observations of the same natural features and phenomena. Through textual analysis and research, students will practice making and recording descriptive observations.

Expanded observation activity sheet: This is a graphic organizer-based strategy designed to help students compare and contrast observations. The chart consists of three columns. Students fill each row of the first column with the name of an organism, landform, or natural object or phenomenon appearing in the novel. In the corresponding row in the second column, they write what they learn about the term from the book, providing quotations and page numbers. In the final column, students record their own observations about the term based on their personal experiences or research.

**Materials**

- ☐ Copy of activity sheet for each student (provided)
- ☐ Any pictures or materials necessary for student observations
- ☐ Class set of *Island of the Blue Dolphins*

**Procedure**

1. Give each student a copy of the activity sheet.
2. Model the strategy using an example from the chapter.
3. Assign students to work in pairs to complete the activity sheet.
4. Discuss student findings as a class. Emphasize what can be learned through observation.
5. To shorten this activity: Divide students into three groups and assign each group two to three pages of *Island of the Blue Dolphins* to use to fill column one of the chart. Once all groups have completed their work, have students share their findings.
6. To lengthen this activity: Have students work alone first. Then, pair them up to share their answers. Finally, conduct a full-class discussion.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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**Directions:** Reread chapter 1 closely and look for places where Karana or Ramo describes organisms, landforms, or natural objects or phenomena. Keep the following questions in mind as you work:

1. What is the organism, landform, or natural object or phenomenon being described?
2. What kinds of words are used to help you see the feature in your own mind?
3. What do your five senses help you observe about similar objects or phenomena in the real world?

Complete the chart below, using the model provided.

Phenomenon	Book's Description	Real World and Research Observations
The Sea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "The sea is smooth...it is a flat stone without scratches" (p. 2)</li><li>• "It is water and no waves" (p. 2)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Blue water</li><li>• Large</li><li>• Salty</li></ul>
Clouds		