

*Island of the Blue Dolphins*, Chapter 25  
**To Preserve or Not to Preserve**

**Grade Level**

Upper Elementary: Third Grade through Fifth Grade

**Subject**

Literacy and Language Arts, Science

**Common Core Standards**

W.5.8

**Next Generation Science Standards**

5-ESS3-1

**Background Information**

Chapter 25 gives readers a glimpse into how Karana and her people store and protect their food resources through preservation. The need to preserve food is still essential today, but we now have more technologies to draw upon.

The objective of this activity is to encourage thoughtful student discussion about food preservation: how it works and why it is a useful process. The students will generate their own list of everyday foods that have been preserved in a variety of ways.

**Materials**

- Copy of activity sheet for each student or group (provided)
- Class set of *Island of the Blue Dolphins*

**Procedure**

1. Decide if you want students to work individually or in groups. If small groups are used, decide how you will group students and how much time groups should devote to drawing and writing versus discussion.
2. To introduce the topic, share an example of preserved food, such as raisins or jerky.
3. Go over the student activity sheet directions.
4. Monitor the students as they work. You could run the activity as a timed competition to see who can generate the longest list of examples in the shortest amount of time.
5. To lengthen this activity: Have students consider the fact that climate can affect the use or popularity of different preservation methods. For example, in a very wet climate it would be more difficult to dry food. Discuss what methods would likely to have been used on San Nicolas Island in the 1800s (nineteenth century)—consider no ice, plentiful sunshine, lots of salt from the ocean, availability of fire, no glass/metal to can, etc.).

**Enrichment Activities**

Take time in class to attempt to preserve foods. For example, you could roast pumpkin or other types of seeds. Fruit, seeds, and meat are three foods that were available to Karana and that we eat today. Have students research ways these foods can currently be preserved.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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**Directions:** Can you imagine being in Karana's place, having to plan ahead and save food when it is abundant so that you have enough to eat all through the year? Remember, there are no grocery stores, refrigerators, or freezers.

You would need to preserve your food after gathering it. Food preservation is the process of treating and handling food in a way that stops or slows food spoilage. This allows it to be stored for a longer period of time. Make a list of all preserved foods you can think of. If one of your examples is found in *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, draw a star next to it. Try to generate the longest list in the class!

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