

Island of the Blue Dolphins, Chapter 26

Karana's Loneliness

Grade Level

Upper Elementary: Third Grade through Fifth Grade

Subject

Literacy and Language Arts, Social Studies

Common Core Standards

4.SL.1, 4.RL.1

Background Information

In chapter 26, Karana spends a lonely winter in her cave. During that time, she thinks about how she wants to catch and domesticate one of the wild dogs that she had seen on the island. O'Dell uses this desire to reveal Karana's longing for companionship and family. Karana wants to capture one dog in particular—a dog that has the same yellow eyes and thick gray fur that Rontu did. Rontu had been her constant companion, and Karana's desire to domesticate his son reveals her longing for Rontu. Other details of the chapter also tell of Karana's loneliness. For example, she tries to domesticate a young fox, and O'Dell ends the chapter with Karana thinking about Ulape, her sister, and Tutok, her friend.

Think-Pair-Share: This learning strategy positions the teacher as a facilitator and allows students to learn through peer collaboration. First, the teacher asks the class a question and gives the students a certain period of time to think about how they would answer that question. Then, the students talk about their answers with a partner (either chosen or assigned). Once students have concluded their one-on-one conversations, they participate in a whole class discussion about the questions raised

Materials

- Copy of question list for each pair or group (provided)
- Class set of *Island of the Blue Dolphins*

Procedure

1. Decide on how you will divide students into pairs and how much time you will allow for thinking, partner discussion, and class discussion. For this activity, one to two minutes of thinking time and two to three minutes of partner talking time should be sufficient.
2. Give each student a copy of the activity sheet and assign partners.
3. If needed, explain the steps of Think-Pair-Share to students and tell them how much time they will have to think about and discuss each question. Encourage students to refer to the text as they think and talk about the questions.
4. Pose the first question.
5. Give students time to think.
6. Give students time to discuss their thoughts with their partners.
7. Repeat steps 5–7 until you have covered all the questions.

8. Invite students to share what they have learned with the whole class.
9. To shorten this activity: Give students fewer questions or less time to think and talk.
10. To lengthen this activity: Have students write their answers before discussing their thoughts with their partners (step 6). Students could also be asked to write about what they have learned before joining in a wider class discussion.

Enrichment Activities

1. Research prompt: Karana uses local plants to drug the wild dogs in this chapter, and earlier in the novel, she used herbs to heal Rontu. How much do you know about the local plants in your area? Go outside and choose three plants. Identify each plant using the Internet, library, and people in your community as resources. Once you have identified the plants, continue to research them. Then, sketch each plant and write a short paragraph about each summarizing what you have learned (three sketches and three paragraphs total).
2. Hands-on activity: Work in pairs or small groups to make a snare like the ones Karana used to try to catch Rontu-Aru. Remember that she wanted to make a snare that could catch the dog without injuring it.

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1. Which of the wild dogs does Karana want to capture? Describe him using details from the text.

2. Why do you think she wants this dog in particular?

3. What evidence is there that Karana is dedicated to catching the dog described in question one? (Hint: Think about all of the different methods she uses to try to catch him.)

4. Why do you think Karana decides to keep the young fox that she catches in her snare? Why does she eventually let the fox go? Be sure to use details from the text as you formulate your answers.

5. What does Karana name the dog she catches? Why is her choice of name significant? (Hint: Consider Karana's feelings, not merely the dog's appearance.)

6. Karana feels the presence of her sister and friend at the end of the novel. What imagery does O'Dell use to describe her feelings? Why is that imagery significant?
