

Island of the Blue Dolphins, Chapter 29
Saying Goodbye to the Island of the Blue Dolphins

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

Authors make deliberate choices in crafting all parts of a novel, but they often think especially hard about how to begin and end their texts. Scott O’Dell chose to use similar imagery in the first and last chapters of *Island of the Blue Dolphins* to give the reader a sense of having come full circle. O’Dell begins *Island of the Blue Dolphins* with the image of a ship approaching San Nicolas Island. The ship bears the Aleuts, and ultimately, the changes that result in Karana living alone on the island for many years. Likewise, O’Dell ends the novel with a ship sailing away from the island. This final ship bears Karana to the mainland, where she will encounter another set of people who are foreign to her.

The details of the final chapter, such as the strangeness of the men’s language and the itchy new dress they make for her to wear, signal the changes that Karana is experiencing and will continue to experience as she embarks on this new adventure. But Karana does not leave everything familiar behind. Instead, she chooses to take several important items with her, including animal friends. She also “carries” feelings, memories, and traditions with her to the mainland. This lesson requires students to review the novel through the lens of these important objects, animals, and memories. It is designed to help students understand the way that Karana perceives the time that she has spent alone on the island.

Please note: The student activity sheet is divided into two parts. Part One focuses on tangible items, including animals, and should be relatively straightforward. However, Part Two focuses on intangible things like memories and feelings; therefore, students may require additional support.

Materials

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

Procedure:

1. Give each student a copy of the student activity sheet.
2. Review the directions and example given.
3. Give the students time to work.

4. Gather together as a class to discuss what students learned from this review and how it shapes their view of Karana's time alone on the island.
5. To shorten this activity: Complete only one part of the activity sheet, or complete only three entries in each section.

Enrichment Activities

1. Writing prompt: Imagine that you had to leave your home to go to a strange, new place and could only take a few belongings with you. What would you take? Why?
2. Research prompt: Use books and online resources to answer the following questions:
 - a. Who took the Lone Woman from San Nicolas Island to the mainland?
 - b. What items did the Lone Woman take with her when she left the island?
 - c. Where did the Lone Woman live after she arrived in Santa Barbara?
 - d. Was the Lone Woman reunited with her family and friends when she rejoined human society?