

Island of the Blue Dolphins, Chapter 6
Maritime Travel in the Channel Islands

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, 5.SL.1, 5.RL.1

Background Information

The islanders use canoes instead of sailing ships. Because canoes are small, they can be dangerous to use on the open ocean and cannot be used to travel long distances. The limitations of canoes may partially account for the islanders' decision to stay on the island after losing most of the men in the fight with Captain Orlov and his men. However, canoes also have advantages. For example, they are easier to build than ships, and their small size means that they can be more easily transported and hidden. Additionally, a canoe might pass unnoticed when a ship would be seen. Access to different types of transportation greatly shapes the lives and experiences of the characters. Karana, for example, has never left the waters surrounding her island, but Captain Orlov has traveled the world.

Study, share, and synthesize: This is a graphic organizer-based strategy that requires students to study a topic, share their findings with another student, and then synthesize what they have learned.

Materials

- Copy of activity sheet for each student (provided)
- Class set of *Island of the Blue Dolphins*
- Additional research materials of your choosing

Procedure

1. Give each student a copy of the activity.
2. Assign one half of the class to study the characteristics of canoes and the other half to study the characteristics of ships.
3. Study: Allow students time to use the novel and any other resources that you have approved, such as library books or Internet sites. Decide the minimum number of facts to be found and enter that number on the activity sheet.
4. Share: Put students in pairs and give them time to share what they learned with their partners.
5. Synthesize: Ask students to make connections between what they learned about canoes and ships and *Island of the Blue Dolphins*. Focus the discussion on how access to transportation shapes the worlds of the characters.

6. To shorten this activity: Give students a pre-selected article or website to use as the basis of their research.
7. To lengthen this activity: Have students first share their findings with another student who studied the same topic, adding additional information to their activity sheet. Then, pair students with a partner from the other group.

Enrichment Activities

Class discussion: Ask students to share any experiences that they have had with ships, canoes, or other types of boats.