

Island of the Blue Dolphins

by Scott O'Dell

1961 Newbery Medal Winner



A Teaching Guide

by Margaret Whisnant

***Objective Tests
Think, Write, Create Activities
and Answer Keys***

for

**Island of the
Blue Dolphins**

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A Teaching Guide

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1 Pages 1-8
2 Pages 9-14



Write either **True** or **False** in the blank before each statement.

- _____ 1. Karana and her brother were gathering roots in Coral Cove when they saw the Aleut ship sailing for the island.
- _____ 2. When the story began, Karana was twelve years old.
- _____ 3. Before the coming of the Aleut vessel, Karana had never seen a ship.
- _____ 4. As they waited on shore for the ship to enter the harbor, the men from the village were carrying weapons.
- _____ 5. Karana was standing on the beach with the rest of the villagers when the boat carrying the Russian came to shore.
- _____ 6. When the Russian jumped out of the boat and began shouting, Karana was certain he was one of the men from the north whom her people feared.
- _____ 7. Karana's father was the chief of Ghalas-at.
- _____ 8. Karana's people kept their real names a secret because they believed they would become worn out and lose their magic with use.
- _____ 9. The Russian, Captain Orlov, came to the island with forty men to hunt sea otter.

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3 Pages 15-18

4 Pages 19-24

Write either **Yes** or **No** in the blank before each question.

- _____ 1. Did the Aleuts hunt in the deep kelp beds that surrounded three sides of the island?
- _____ 2. Did the Aleuts hunt sea otter for the meat?
- _____ 3. Did Karana think of the beads and other things she would receive as she counted the dead otter the Aleuts brought back from the sea?
- _____ 4. One morning, did Karana tell her father there would be no otter left when the hunters were finished?
- _____ 5. Did Karana's people make canoes from trees that grew on the other side of the island?
- _____ 6. Did the islanders keep a close eye on the Aleuts because they thought Captain Orlov might try to sail away without paying for the otter?
- _____ 7. When the Aleut woman spent a whole afternoon cleaning her skin apron, was this a clue that the hunters were preparing to leave?
- _____ 8. Each night as the Aleuts made their preparations to leave, did Karana's father work on the new spear he was making?
- _____ 9. When the Aleuts took down their tents and carried them to the beach, had Captain Orlov paid the villagers for the sea otter they had killed?
- _____ 10. The morning the Aleuts left, did the whole tribe leave the village and go to Coral Cove?
- _____ 11. Were Karana and her sister standing on the beach when they saw Captain Orlov open the chest of beads?



- _____ 12. Did Karana's father think one chest full of beads was a fair price for the otter the Aleuts had taken?

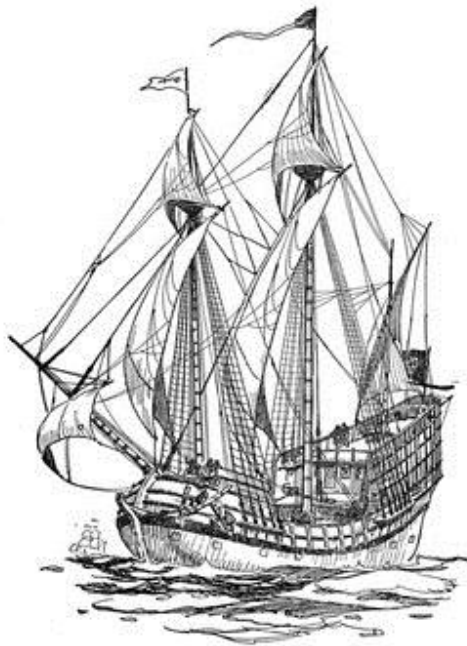
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7 Pages 35-40 8 Pages 41-48

Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank before each question.

- _____ 1. Which of the following was **not** one of the items in the basket Karana packed?
(A) a stone knife, (B) the fine needles made of whalebone, (C) a stone spearhead.
- _____ 2. The thin mark that Ulape drew with blue clay across her nose and cheekbones meant she was (A) saying good-bye to her ancestors, (B) unmarried, (C) asking the spirits for protection.
- _____ 3. As the tribe left the village, the wind (A) blew in fierce gusts, (B) was calm, (C) blew white clouds across the horizon.
- _____ 4. Both Nanko and the white men encouraged the villagers to (A) pack as many possessions as they could, (B) hurry to the waiting ship, (C) be happy about leaving the island.
- _____ 5. Nanko said Karana's brother Ramo (A) had jumped into the first boat that left for the ship, (B) could not go back after his fishing spear, (C) would have to ride in the boat with the men.
- _____ 6. From the ship, Karana saw Ramo (A) standing behind the young white man with blue eyes and a black beard, (B) on the island running along the cliff, (C) in one of the boats being dashed about by high winds.



- _____ 7. The ship had to leave the island or (A) lose the tide, (B) wait several days for another strong wind to take it out to sea, (C) be driven onto the rocks.
- _____ 8. Realizing the ship was not turning back, Karana (A) screamed into the howling wind, (B) flung herself into the sea, (C) tried to attack the white captain.
- _____ 9. Karana allowed her basket to sink because (A) the wind pulled it from her hands, (B) the things in it weren't important, (C) she realized she could not swim with it in her arms.

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9 Pages 49-58

the village
the wild dogs
the Aleuts
Coral Cove
a spring

the fog
the otters
the chest
a tree root
the leader of the pack

the surf
weapons
on the rock
trees
dry seaweed

a large rock and two stunted trees
the canoes
the beads
a bow and arrows

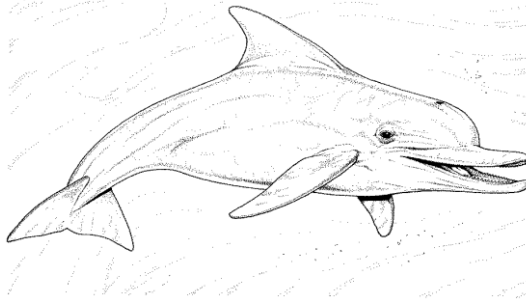


From the list above, choose the word or phrase that fits each of the clues below and write it in the blank. **All** answers will be **used at least once**. **Some** answers will be **used more than once**.

- _____ 1. These were on the headland where Karana decided to live.
- _____ 2. The laws of Ghalas-at forbade the making of these by women.
- _____ 3. In the chest they left, Karana found beads, bracelets, and earrings.
- _____ 4. There was one of these in a ravine near the headland where Karana decided to live.
- _____ 5. Regardless of the consequences, Karana decided to make weapons to protect herself from them.
- _____ 6. They were very scarce on the Island of the Blue Dolphins.
- _____ 7. Karana was safe from the wild dogs when she slept here.
- _____ 8. Karana burned it, house by house.
- _____ 9. Even though she had seen her father make weapons, Karana had a difficult time making these.
- _____ 10. The shapes it made reminded Karana of all the islanders who were dead and of the ones who had left.

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Whole Book Test

Write either **True** or **False** in the blank before each statement.

- _____ 1. Karana was twelve years old when she and Ramo saw the Aleut ship sailing toward the island.
- _____ 2. Although it was located far out in the sea, the Island of the Blue Dolphins was visited often by ships from far away lands.
- _____ 3. In the past, the village of Ghalas-at had gained great wealth by allowing the Aleuts to hunt on their island.
- _____ 4. The Aleuts came to the Island of the Blue Dolphins to hunt otter for their skins.
- _____ 5. Karana's father was Chief of Ghalas-at.
- _____ 6. Karana's people kept their real names a secret for fear they would be worn out with use and lose their magic.
- _____ 7. The islanders had no idea how many otter Captain Orlov and the group of Aleut hunters killed.
- _____ 8. The Island of the Blue Dolphins was located off the coast of Florida.
- _____ 9. From the top of one of the hills rising in the middle of it, Karana's island looked like a dolphin lying on its side.
- _____ 10. Wind blew almost every day on the Island of the Blue Dolphins.
- _____ 11. The battle between the Aleuts and the islanders began when the hunters tried to leave without paying the price named by Karana's father.
- _____ 12. Most of the men on the island, including Karana's father, were killed by the Aleut hunters.
- _____ 13. Dozens of dogs left the village of Ghalas-at after their masters died and joined the wild packs that roamed the island.
- _____ 14. The people of Ghalas-at decided to leave the island because, without the men, survival was impossible.

Think, Write, Create

(Chapter Activities)

Chapter 1—Chapter 2

Some of the activities and behaviors that were common-place in Karana's village might seem strange to us. Explain how each of the following would be out of place in our society. Then explain why they were a necessity for Karana and her people.

- Kara used a pointed stick to dig roots.
- Half the men from the village stood at the water's edge where the men from the ship came ashore while the rest were concealed among the rocks at the foot of the trail.
- Everyone in the tribe had two names—a common name and a secret name, which was seldom used.
- Karana's village claimed ownership of the sea which surrounded the Island of the Blue Dolphins.

Research to find answers to the following questions about kelp:

1. What is kelp?
2. Why is it important to sea life?
3. How is kelp important to people?
4. Where would you find the type of kelp known as *Macrocystis*?
5. How is *Macrocystis* unique?

Captain Orlov and the Aleuts wanted to camp on the Island of the Blue Dolphins while they hunted sea otter. Captain Orlov was a Russian, one of the men from the north whom Karana's people feared.

- Use clues from the story to construct your version of what you imagine happened on the previous hunt led by Captain Mitriff.
- What evidence can you offer to prove that Captain Orlov is not an honorable man?
- Based on what you know of him so far, would you describe Karana's father as a *brave man* or a *foolish man*? Do you suppose he inherited the position of chief or was the honor bestowed upon him by the other villagers? Add details to support your answers.

Research to find answers to the following questions about the Aleuts:

- (1) Where do the Aleuts live?
- (2) What are *barabaras*?
- (3) What are the two dominant languages spoken by the Aleuts? Explain why these two particular languages have become part of Aleut life. Is the Aleut language still spoken?
- (4) What artistic abilities are the Aleut famous for?
- (5) The Aleuts did, in fact, travel to the island of San Nicholas in 1811 to hunt. What was the actual result of their voyage?
- (6) What was the purpose of the Aleut Restitution Act of 1988?
- (7) Before they were subjected to outside influences, about how many Aleuts were there? What has happened to their population numbers?

About Your Teaching Guide . . .

Objective Tests

The objective tests have multiple functions. In addition to their obvious application, they also serve as tools that can *improve **comprehension skills** by providing practice in understanding plot structure and recognizing important story elements.*

Rationale:

Focus on the Plot. . .

Whether they are aware of their ability or not, all good readers sense the **rhythm** of the **connected** events that compose the plot of a novel, and consequently **comprehend** the story. They are in tune with cause and effect, behavior and consequence, sequence—the heartbeat of the narrative.

This “plot rhythm” forms the framework for the objective tests. The chain of events that tell the story have been pulled from the novel and reformatted into a series of sequential questions, none of which require **interpretation**. They are intended to **draw student attention to the fact that something happened**, not to what the incident means. That comes later.

In addition to their testing function, teachers may use the pages to strengthen their students’ ability to **Summarize**: With only the questions as a guide, have students write a summary of the chapter. For a set of ten questions, limit the number of sentences they may write to seven or fewer. When they work with twenty or more questions, allow no more than twelve sentences.

Report the News: Ask your students to write a newspaper article based on the events identified in a set of questions and the *who, what, when, where, why* elements. Some information needed to complete this assignment may be located in previous chapters.

Twist the Plot: Choose one or two questions from each chapter and change its answer—true to false, no to yes, etc.—to demonstrate how changing a single (or several) events would (or would not) change the story. This process can be used to help students become proficient in distinguishing major plot movers from minor story details.

The Characters. . .

Questions that identify a character’s personality and/or motivation are purposely and carefully included with the plot movers. Again, the questions do not require **interpretation**. They simply establish that someone did or said something—knowledge that is invaluable when character analysis is required.

Implied Meaning and Story Clues. . .

The objective tests include items that establish the existence of story components carrying **implied meaning**. **Story clues** that tantalize the reader with hints of future events also appear as question. At this point in the novel study, as before, **interpretation** is not the goal. **Awareness** of the **facts** is the target.

Developing/Improving Listening Skills. . .

Listening skills are rightfully included on every list of state competency requirements. Rather than always requiring students to answer test questions on a printed page, why not surprise them occasionally by doing the test orally and meeting competency goals at the same time?

Discussion Guide Capability. . .

The objective tests are helpful discussion guides. Use individual items on these pages to draw student attention to sequence, cause and effect, story clues (foreshadowing), character traits, recognizing and interpreting implied meanings, etc. These “thinking out loud” sessions are an **important building block** for the next learning phase.

Think, Write, Create

In this section, students pack up what they already know about the novel and go exploring into its every nook and cranny. Some activities require the simplest interpretation or application, while others will challenge the most proficient thinkers. There is a high probability that young scholars, even reluctant ones, will label some of the selections as **fun**.

Rationale:

Guidelines. . .

Most of the items in this section are based on the skills presented in the ***Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Bloom's Taxonomy)***. There are two reasons for this choice. First, it mirrors the Novel Teaching Pack's primary purpose of building a variety of sophisticated thinking skills on a foundation of basic knowledge. Second, in following the taxonomy guidelines, activities that correlate with many state educational standards emerge automatically.

Levels of Difficulty. . .

A variety **difficulty levels** to accommodate the needs of individual students, including the gifted, is an integral part of this component. However, **all** items from this section are intended to **challenge** and **sharpen** thinking abilities.

Activities. . .

Something to Think About/Something to Write About includes activities that require students to choose and use precise, appropriate, and meaningful **vocabulary**. These exercises involve choosing a word or a group of words to describe a character's personality or behavior. The following example is from ***Because of Winn-Dixie***.

Opal comforted Winn-Dixie during thunderstorms, holding on to him tight so that he wouldn't run away. She decided that the best way to comfort Gloria was to read a book to her, loud enough to keep the ghosts away.

From the list of words below, all of which can correctly describe Opal's behavior, which *two* do you think are the best? Cite facts from the story and the words' definitions to support your choices.

| | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| <i>empathetic</i> | <i>compassionate</i> | <i>nurturing</i> | <i>warmhearted</i> |
| <i>sympathetic</i> | <i>loving</i> | <i>devoted</i> | <i>benevolent</i> |
| <i>unselfish</i> | <i>generous</i> | <i>thoughtful</i> | <i>considerate</i> |

In each case students work with a given collection of terms, all of which can be correctly applied to the character(s) in question. However, the individual words have varying strengths of meaning. It is the student's task to analyze both the character's behavior and the words, make choices, and then cite events from the story to support his/her selection.

Options. . .

| | |
|--|--|
| The items in this section give teachers pick-and-choose options for | |
| <i>individualizing assignments</i> | <i>homework</i> |
| <i>group work</i> | <i>short-term and long-term projects</i> |
| <i>whole class activities</i> | <i>differentiating assignments for two or more classes</i> |
| <i>capitalizing on student interest</i> | |

Final Note

This Teaching Guide is designed for use as supplementary material that supports a total reading program. It is my goal to provide busy teachers with a classroom-ready, practical resource loaded with motivational and learning opportunities for their students. It is my hope that your purchase will prove to be a hard-working instructional component for years to come. Thanks for choosing one of my products for your classroom.



Margaret Whisnant, Author