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Literature
Teaching Unit
Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



Island of the
Blue Dolphins

by Scott O'bell

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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Island of the Blue Dolphins

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. define and give examples of
 - simile
 - metaphor
 - foreshadowing
 - inference
2. identify the novel's central themes, which concern survival, loneliness, courage, family relationships, and cultural differences.
3. recognize and appreciate the use of first-person narrative style.
4. identify examples from the book that illustrate character traits such as courage, determination, ingenuity, and resourcefulness.
5. recognize and appreciate the use of imagery in a work of literature.
6. find topics of interest for further research.

Island of the Blue Dolphins

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. One of the major themes of this book concerns survival. How does Karana use the various resources around her to help her survive?
2. What does Karana's reaction to her brother's being left behind on the island reveal about her sense of family relationships?
3. Karana displays much courage, honor, and resourcefulness living alone on the island. Find examples from the book that describe how these traits aid in her struggle to survive.
4. There are many different kinds of plant and animal life, both from the land and the sea, described in this novel. Discuss several ways in which the life on the island provides Karana with shelter, clothing, food, tools, weapons, and even medicine.
5. Another major theme of this book deals with loneliness. How does Karana cope with being the only person on the island?
6. Karana interacts with many animals during her long years alone. How do they aid her in coping with loneliness?
7. How does the division of labor between the men and women of the tribe affect Karana once she is alone on the island?
8. Several life-threatening events happen during Karana's time on the island. Find three such events, and describe how Karana survives.
9. Often, Karana feels happy and content living alone. Find passages from the novel that reflect this happiness. How do these passages make you feel?
10. Later in the novel, Karana shares a unique experience with an Aleut girl. How does their interaction differ from the interactions described earlier between Karana's tribe and the Aleuts?

Island of the Blue Dolphins

Chapter 1

VOCABULARY

parley – to confer with an enemy
mesa – flat, open grasslands

1. As the opening scene of the book unfolds, what is occurring?

2. What literary devices does O'Dell employ in his descriptions of the ship and the boy?

3. What is the young girl's reaction upon seeing the ship approach her island?

4. Who are the people who have arrived on the ship, and how are they described?

5. What is Karana’s response to seeing her father’s dead body along the shoreline?

Chapter 5

VOCABULARY

shirkers – those who avoid their obligations

1. How many adult males were alive before the battle? How many men died?

2. How do the villagers handle the dead after the battle?

3. Who is Kimki? What does he tell the tribe?

4. What is the job that Karana is given?

8. The patched canoe does not leak again, and this is Karana’s “first good fortune.” What is the second?

9. How do the dolphins make Karana feel?

10. Karana is successful in returning to the island. Describe her feelings upon her return.

Chapter 11

VOCABULARY

lair – the resting place of a wild animal
brackish – somewhat salty water

1. What type of mixed emotions does Karana feel as this chapter begins?

2. What is Karana’s first decision upon her return to the island?
