

Island of The Blue Dolphins



By
Scott O'Dell

**A Novel Study
by Nat Reed**

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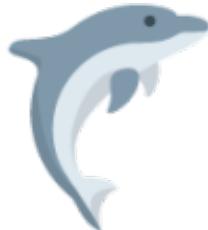


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About the author: Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit novelstudies.org.

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Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit is meant to be used in a variety of ways. Each chapter of the novel study focuses on two or three chapters of Island of the Blue Dolphins and is comprised of five different activities:

1. Before You Read
2. Vocabulary Building
3. Comprehension Questions
4. Language and Extension Activities

A **portfolio cover** (p.7) as well as a **Checklist** (p.6) are included so that students may track of their completed work.

Every activity need not be completed by all students.

Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases... including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story ... **and many others.**

Themes which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include the wilderness and wilderness survival, individual perseverance when facing difficult circumstances, flora and fauna of the California region, Aleuts, aboriginal peoples and cultures of pre-European North America, sailing ships of the 19th century.

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List of Skills

Vocabulary Development

1. Using content clues
2. Locating descriptive words/phrases
3. Listing synonyms, antonyms
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Determining root words
7. Determining alphabetical order
8. Use of singular / plural nouns
9. Developing dictionary skills
10. Identifying parts of speech
11. Identify an *analogy*
12. Identifying *personification*
13. Identifying a *simile*
14. Identifying *alliteration*.

Setting Activities

1. Identify the details of a setting
2. Investigating regional flora and fauna

Plot Activities

1. Identify *conflict* in the story
2. Identify the climax of a novel
3. Identifying personal growth
4. Develop a Storyboard
5. Determine the purpose of *foreshadowing*
6. Create a synopsis
7. Identify a *cliffhanger*

Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Compare two characters
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Understand concepts: *perseverance*

Creative and Critical Thinking

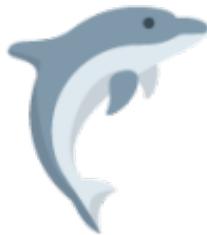
1. Research
2. Complete Observation Chart
3. Write a journal entry
4. Conduct an interview
5. Create a film review
6. Write a description of personal feelings

Art Activities

1. Design a collage
2. Design a cover for the novel
3. Develop a Storyboard

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Synopsis

Island of the Blue Dolphins is the classic novel based on a true story of the *Lone Woman of San Nicholas Island*. Karana, a 12 year old girl living on a small island off the coast of California is accidentally abandoned by the rest of her people when they leave the island following an Aleut raid. She is forced to survive on her own for several years. During this ordeal she learns many valuable lessons not only about survival, but about how best to conquer loneliness and adversity.

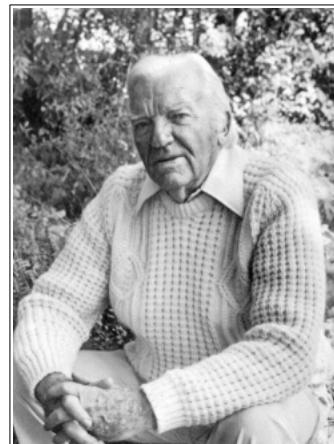
Many true-to-life experiences are described in rich detail by the author, Scott O'Dell. We learn not only how one might go about surviving in such an environment without any modern conveniences, but a great deal as well about the animal and plant life of the island.

This classic novel was voted one of the top 10 American children's books of the last 200 years by the *Children's Literature Association*. It won the 1961 Newbery Medal. In 1964 it was made into a movie starring Celia Kaye, Larry Domasin, Ann Daniel, and George Kennedy. (Summary courtesy of the publisher)

Author Biography

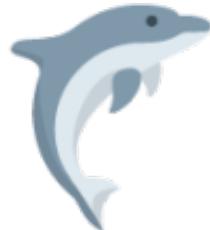
Scott O'Dell

Scott O'Dell (1898 – 1989), one of the most respected authors of historical fiction, received the Newbery Medal, three Newbery Honor Awards, and the Hans Christian Anderson Author Medal, the highest international recognition for a body of work by an author of books for young readers. His many books include *Island of the Blue Dolphins*; *Black Star, Bright Dawn*; *Streams in the River, River to the Sea*; and *The Black Pearl*. He was born O'Dell Gabriel Scott in Los Angeles, but when his name appeared incorrectly on a book, he decided to keep the name Scott O'Dell. He served in the air force during World War I. Before becoming a full-time writer he was a cameraman and technical director. (Biography adapted from the publisher)



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Student Checklist

Student Name

Island of The Blue Dolphins



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Name: _____

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Chapters 1 - 2



Before you read the chapters:

Karana's father is the leader of the people on San Nicholas Island. Someone once said, "Real leaders are ordinary people with extraordinary determination". What do you think are two characteristics of a good leader (someone you would like to follow during a difficult time).

1.	
2.	



Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

parley	cease	companion	enclose	grasp
conceal	lapping	intruder	ravine	profit

1. We were startled to discover an _____ in the house.
2. When we are finished building the fence, it will _____ the entire yard.
3. My brother almost toppled into the _____ when he rode his bicycle too close to the edge.
4. How did you expect to _____ the truth from Principal Smithers?
5. "Please don't expect to make much of a _____ from your sales during the first month," she advised.
6. The ocean waves were _____ on the shore.
7. The big German Shepherd was the old man's only _____.
8. The leader of the Aleuts came ashore to _____ with the islanders.
9. You will have to _____ from making all that noise if I am to concentrate.
10. I have the feeling that my little sister still does not _____ that concept.

Part B

The Island of the Blue Dolphins makes mention of a number of things from that particular environment which many readers may not be familiar with. With a straight line, match each item on the left with the proper description or meaning on the right.

cormorant	<i>Large seaweed plants.</i>
kelp	<i>An elevated area of land with a flat top and sides that are usually steep cliffs.</i>
lizard	<i>A type of fish.</i>
toyon	<i>A very large and widespread group of squamate reptiles.</i>
mesa	<i>A seabird.</i>
white bass	<i>A common perennial shrub.</i>

Questions



1. **A league** is a measurement mentioned several times in the novel. Investigate the length of a league and fill in the blanks below.

A league = _____ miles or _____ kilometers

- b. How far away was the coast of Santa Barbara? _____

2. In the chart below fill in the correct ages for the three characters.

Character	Age
Karana	
Ramo	
Ulapé	

3. The **setting** of a novel includes not only the place where the story takes place, but the approximate time as well. From what you know to this point, describe the setting of the novel.

4. Why had Captain Orlov and the Aleuts come to the island?

5. What is your impression of Captain Orlov? Do you think the people of Ghalas-at should trust him? Why or why not?

6. Why was Karana shocked that her father told Captain Orlov his secret name?

b. Why do you think he did this?

7. What did Ulape discover that caused so much excitement in the village?

8. What excuse did the Aleuts give for wanting Karana's father to share in Ulape's find? Why did Chief Chowig refuse?

Good to Know ~ The Aleuts

The Aleut people (also referred to as the *Unangan*) are the indigenous people of the Aleutian Islands of Alaska and Kamchatka, Russia. Presently they number between 17,000 and 18,000 people. The Aleut survived by hunting and gathering. They fished for salmon, crabs, shellfish, and cod, as well as harvesting sea mammals such as seal, walrus and whales. Caribou, musk oxen, deer, moose, whale and other types of game were also eaten roasted or preserved for later use.



Language Activities



A. Investigations

Investigate one of the following three topics from Chapters 1-2. Research three interesting facts about your choice.

San Nicolas Island (<i>The Island of the Blue Dolphins</i>)	
Kelp	
Santa Catalina Island (<i>A neighboring island</i>)	

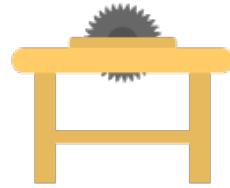
B. Assemble the word parts below into ten compound words found in Chapters 1-2.

out	west	some	shell	four
thing	ship	wise	my	every
times	fish	set	with	other
self	teen	friend	sun	north

1		6	
2		7	
3		8	
4		9	
5		10	

C. Anagrams

An **anagram** is a word that is formed by changing the order of the letters of another word. For example, the letters in the word **WAS** can also form the word **SAW**. Follow these directions to form the anagrams:



- a) read the clue in the right-hand column.
- b) Using the word in the left-hand column move the letters around in any order, but you must use all the letters. All of the words in the left-hand column can be found in the first two chapters of *Island of the Blue Dolphins*.

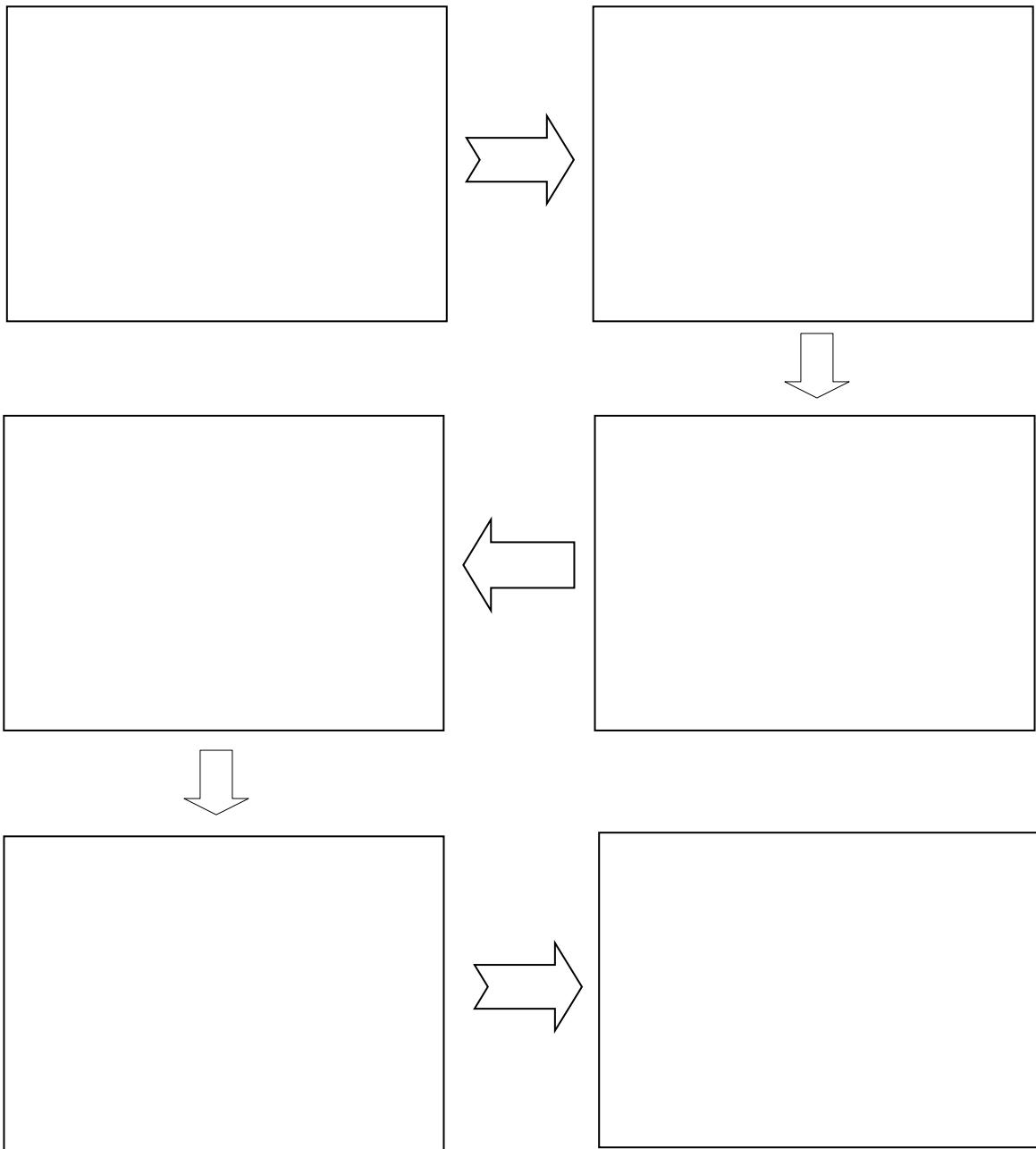
Word	Anagram	Clue
brush		A woody plant smaller than a tree.
ship		Projections of the pelvis and upper thigh bones.
earth		A vital bodily organ.
stones		Beginnings.
part		A tarpaulin sheet or cover.
warned		Rove.
reefs		Liberates.

Now find two additional words from the first two chapters which have interesting anagrams to see if you can stump a classmate.

Word	Anagram	Clue

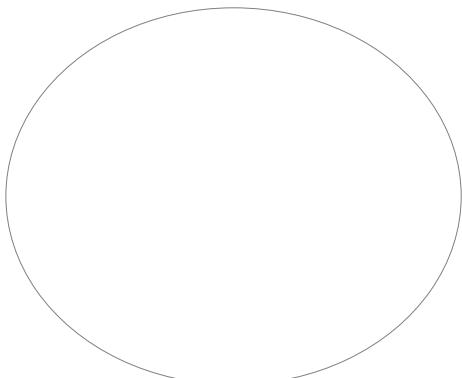
D. Sequence Chart

Choose what you consider to be the six most important events in these chapters. In each of the six boxes below list the six events that you have chosen, describing what happened and telling why you consider this to be an essential part of the story.

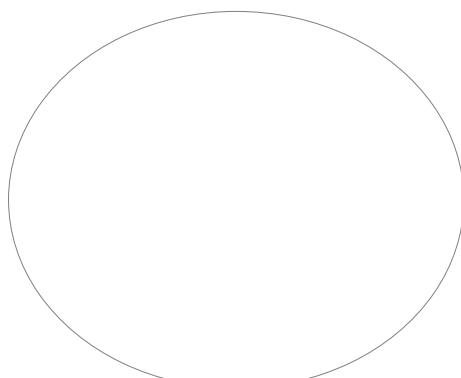


E. 5 Ws and an H.

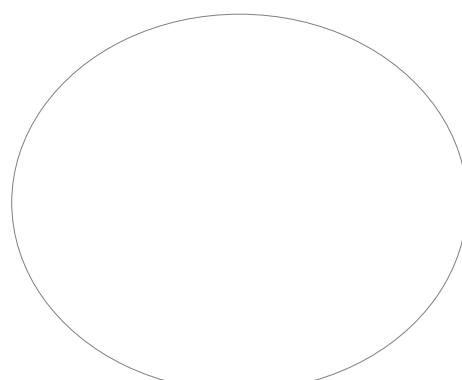
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



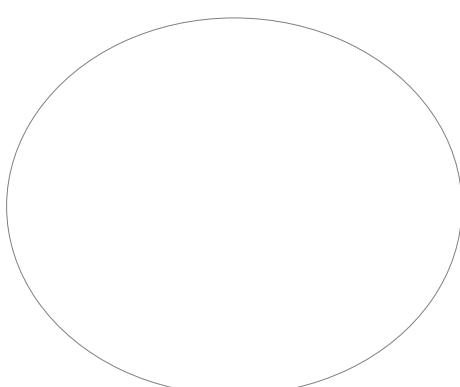
WHO?



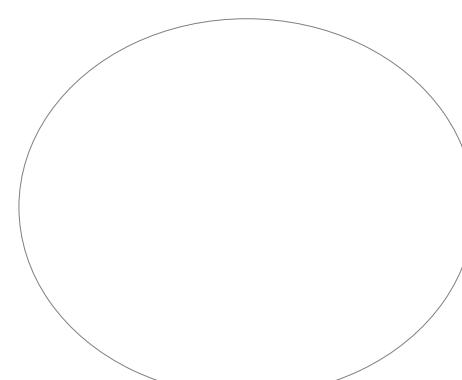
WHAT?



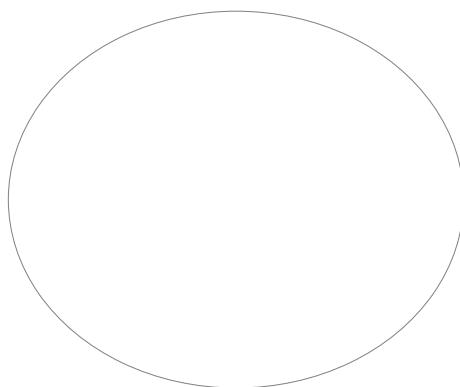
WHEN?



WHERE?



WHY?



HOW?

Extension Activity



Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A story-board can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel. Complete the story-board below illustrating the events described in the first two chapters of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.



1	2
3	4
5	6