

Island of the Blue Dolphins, Chapter 1
What's Fair?

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

People from different cultures often have different ideas of ownership, property, and fairness. In chapter 1 all of these issues arise in the conversation between Captain Orlov and Chief Chowig during their negotiation about who is entitled to the profits earned from hunting sea otters around the island.

Think-Pair-Share: This learning strategy positions the teacher as a facilitator and allows students to learn through peer collaboration. First, the teacher asks the class a question and gives the students a certain period of time to think about how they would answer that question. Then, the students talk about their answers with a partner (either chosen or assigned). Once students have concluded their one-on-one conversations, they participate in a whole-class discussion about the questions raised.

Materials

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

Procedure

1. Decide on how you will divide students into pairs and how much time you will allow for thinking, partner discussion, and class discussion. For this activity, one to two minutes of thinking time and two to three minutes of partner talking time should be sufficient.
2. Give each student a copy of the activity sheet and assign pairs.
3. If needed, explain the steps of Think-Pair-Share to students and tell them how much time they will have to think about and discuss each question. Encourage students to refer to the text as they think and talk about the questions.
4. Pose the first question.
5. Give students time to think.
6. Give students time to discuss their thoughts with their partners.
7. Repeat steps 5–7 until you have covered all the questions.
8. Invite students to share what they have learned with the whole class.
9. To shorten this activity: Give students fewer questions or less time to think and talk.

10. To lengthen this activity: Have students write their answers before discussing their thoughts with their partners (step 6). Students could also be asked to write about what they have learned before joining in a wider class discussion.

Enrichment Activities

1. Group brainstorm: Why were otter pelts considered so valuable?
2. Show students images of apparel and accessories made from otter skins.

Name _____

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What's Fair? Question List

1. What does it mean to own something? Try to think of examples.
2. Do you think anyone can own the ocean and its animals? Why or why not?
3. "Why do you think Chief Chowig says the sea that surrounds the Island of the Blue Dolphins belongs to his people?"
4. Do you agree with Captain Orlov that he and his men should get two-thirds of the otter-hunting profit and that the islanders should get one-third of the profit? Why or why not?
5. Do you believe Captain Orlov when he agrees to give the islanders half of the profit instead of one-third? Do you think he has really changed his mind? Why or why not?
6. What do you think would happen if Chief Chowig refused Captain Orlov's request to hunt otters and camp on the island? Why do you think that?