

*Island of the Blue Dolphins*, Chapter 19  
**Discovering the Devilfish**

**Grade Level**

Upper Elementary: Third Grade through Fifth Grade

**Subject**

Literacy and Language Arts, Science

**Common Core Standards**

W.4.1

**Next Generation Science Standards**

4-LS1-1

**Background Information**

The animal we classify as a giant Pacific octopus is known to Karana and her people as the “devilfish,” a name with quite negative connotations. From reading chapter 19, we can see why Karana’s people might have associated the octopus with a devil.

The purpose of this activity is to provide students with an opportunity to integrate new information about octopuses into their evaluation of the maritime animal. Students will learn about the octopus by watching several video clips and consulting print sources, and then recording eight facts they learned while listening and reading. They will be challenged to use this information when expressing their opinion about these ocean animals.

**Materials**

- Copy of activity sheet for each student (provided)
- Computer and display to show video clips (links provided)
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Tcnq2iYJJo>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dpgJEdOs>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CyK2i2tR7qU>
  - <https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals-and-exhibits/animal-guide/octopuses-and-kin/giant-pacific-octopus>
- Class set of *Island of the Blue Dolphins*

**Procedure**

1. Introduce the lesson by reading a passage from *Island of the Blue Dolphins* describing the devilfish. Start a conversation about whether this is a positive or negative depiction of the animal.
2. Give each student a copy of the activity sheet.
3. Give students explicit instructions about the activity, including the kind of information they should be looking and listening for while reading and watching the video clips.
4. Monitor the students as they complete their activity sheets.

5. To lengthen this activity: Divide the class into two groups. Each group will watch the video clips focusing either on positive views of octopuses (for example, why humans might admire them) or more negative views (for example, how they might be dangerous to humans or their prey). Have students fill out their activity sheets and then match students from different groups into teams. With their partner, students should create a Venn diagram to compare and contrast their findings.

**Enrichment Activities**

Use this activity to lead to a discussion about other animals for which humans have negative connotations.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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**Directions:** Using the octopus picture below, write one thing you learned through your reading and research on each of the octopus' tentacles.



Now that you have more information about octopuses, why do you think some people may have negative feelings about them?

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Using a selection of the facts you've list on the tentacles as evidence, explain why the octopus is a beneficial animal.

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