

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Island of the Blue Dolphins, Day 1



Key Paragraph, pp. 6-7

"The parts must be equal,' my father said. Captain Orlov gazed off toward the sea.

'We can talk of that later when my supplies are safe ashore,' he replied...

'It is better to agree now,' said my father" (pp. 6-7).

Writing Prompt

Why do you think the Chief wanted to agree on an arrangement before letting the Captain and his men on the island? Is it helpful to agree to the terms of something before committing? What do you risk if you don't do this?

Think of a time you did not agree to certain terms with a friend or family member. Write a one-paragraph narrative (real or imagined) in which you share an experience where you did not agree to terms prior to an arrangement being made.

Engage your reader. Introduce your characters. Use narrative techniques to develop the experience. Use transitional words to convey sequence. Use precise words and phrases to capture action and convey your experience. Provide a conclusion that follows form and reflects on the experiences of the event.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Island of the Blue Dolphins, Day 2



Key Paragraph, p. 15

"The sea otter, when it is swimming, looks like a seal, but different. It has a shorter nose than a seal, small webbed feet instead of flippers, and fur that is thicker and much more beautiful...The otter likes to lie on its back in the kelp beds, floating up and down to the motion of the waves, sunning itself or sleeping. They are the most playful animals in the sea" (p. 15)

Writing Prompt

Is it still legal to hunt and kill sea otters? What laws exist to protect these animals now? Look to <http://oceanlink.com> website for further information (search sea otter).

What is your opinion about hunting these animals? Explain your answer. What have we learned about how to keep animals from becoming extinct?

Further information taken from:

The biology of animals that have been traditionally hunted is usually well known. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries *Enhydra lutris*, the sea otter, was heavily exploited by man, prized universally for its exceptionally warm, sleek and tremendously valuable pelt. Subsequently, in order to maximize harvest yield, the human predatory machine studied sea otter biology intently. This cute, furry, charismatic species was so well hunted that it was extirpated along most of its historical range in North America. A second wave of study in sea otter biology was initiated at the beginning of the twentieth century in efforts to prevent the animal's extinction. Recent studies of *E. lutris* appear to emerge from all areas of science. Currently, numerous scientific papers are being published on many different scales in the disciplines of physiology, ecology, behavior, pathology, and conservation of this animal. The resources utilized in the synthesis of this page represent a very minute fraction of the myriad of past and current publications dedicated to *Enhydra lutris*.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Island of the Blue Dolphins, Day 3



Key Paragraph, p. 35

"I filled my baskets with the things I wished to take. Three fine needles of whalebone, an awl for making holes, a good stone knife for scraping hides, two cooking pots, and a small box made from a shell with many earrings in it" (p. 35).

Writing Prompt

Think about a time you had to make a choice (real or imagined). It could be between something tangible or intangible.

Write a narrative in which you describe the choice you had to make and how it affected you. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. Use dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one frame to another. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events. Provide a conclusion that follows form and reflects on the narrated experience.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Island of the Blue Dolphins, Day 4



Key Paragraph, p. 47

“Ramo grew pale. He had seen the rites of manhood given in our tribe and remembered them. Quickly I said, ‘Since there are no men to give you the rites, perhaps you will not have to undergo the nettles and the ants, Chief Ramo’” (p. 47).

Writing Prompt

Ramo and the men of the tribe have to go through a rite of passage to show their worth and ability to become men. There are many different types of rites of passage. The ability to drive, to care for someone else, going from one level to another (boy or girl scouts or sports), significant birthday, get a job, graduate. Think of a rite of passage you have achieved or are close to passing.

Write a narrative in which you describe in detail the rite of passage you are about to experience or experienced. Orientate your reader by establishing context and point of view. Introduce your characters. Use narrative techniques such as dialog, pacing, and description. Use a variety of transition words. Use precise words and phrases. Capture action and convey your experiences. Provide a conclusion that follows form and reflects on the narrated experience.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Island of the Blue Dolphins, Day 5



Key Paragraph, p. 53

"One by one I took them off. I also took the rest of the beads from the chest. Then I walked through the waves and flung them all far away, out into the deep water" (p.53).

Writing Prompt

Karana found the treasure and liked the necklaces and beads. Then she threw them all in the ocean. Why did she discard these treasures? In what way did her actions show respect for those who died in the battle?

Think of a time you chose to show respect for the living or the dead by sacrificing your time or something significant to you. Write a narrative in which you introduce the situation and the characters. Organize the events in a logical manner. Use narrative techniques, dialog, pacing, and description of the situation and of the characters. Use precise words and phrases to convey sequence. Provide a conclusion, which reflects on your experience.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Island of the Blue Dolphins, Day 6



Key Paragraph, p. 61

“Yet I cannot say that I was really afraid as I stood there on the shore. I knew that my ancestors had crossed the sea in their canoes, coming from that place which lay beyond” (p. 61).

Writing Prompt

Karana has respect for the ocean but is not feeling fearful. She is taking responsibility for herself and thinks it is the right thing to leave the island in search for land. Later when she is at sea, she must make another decision that also requires that she make a responsible decision and act on it.

Think of a time you had to act responsibly. Write a one-paragraph narrative in which you describe a real or imagined experience. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. Use narrative techniques. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one frame to another. Use precise words and phrases. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Island of the Blue Dolphins, Day 7



Key Paragraph, p. 84

“How I would do this, I did not know. Yet the more I thought about it, the greater my determination to try” (p. 84).

Writing Prompt

Karana is determined to survive and to live at the same time. Think of a time you had determination to succeed. What was the situation? Who was involved? What occurred? How did it affect you?

Write a one paragraph narrative to introduce your reader to the situation and the characters involved. Organize the events in a logical manner. Use dialog, pacing, and description to develop the experiences of the characters. Use a variety of transition words to convey sequence of events. Provide a conclusion that follows form and reflects on the event.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Island of the Blue Dolphins, Day 8



Key Paragraph. p. 95

“A long time before this my ancestors had used the cave, why I do not know, and along the walls on each side they had cut figures in the stone. There were figures of pelicans floating on the water and flying, of dolphins, whales, sea elephants, gulls, ravens, dogs and foxes” (p. 95).

Writing Prompt

Why do native people may have carved things in stone? What do you think they were trying to communicate? If you were going to represent your life through petroglyphs what 3-5 items, events, or people would you choose and how would you depict them?

Write a narrative in which you describe in detail how you would represent your life. Would you represent you or your family? As you begin your writing establish context and your characters. Use dialog and description to develop your event. Use transition words and phrases to convey sequence. Use relevant descriptions, details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey your experiences. Provide a conclusion, which supports your experience.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Island of the Blue Dolphins, Day 9



Key Paragraph, p. 107

“Would he come back, I wondered, or had he gone to live with the wild dogs? Would he again be my enemy? If he were my enemy, I knew that I could never kill him, now that he had been my friend” (p. 107).

Writing Prompt

In what way does Karana exemplify the Responsibility requires Action theme in that she does not want to harm Rontu? Think of a time in your life recently when you did something that was the best for everybody, not just yourself.

Write a one-paragraph narrative in which you describe this experience. Introduce your experience and the characters. Organize the details so they unfold logically. Use narrative techniques to develop your experience, events, and characters. Use a variety of transition words to convey sequence. Use precise words and phrases, relevant details, and sensory language to convey your experience. Provide a conclusion that follows forms and reflects on your experience.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Island of the Blue Dolphins, Day 10



Key Paragraph. p. 124

“Rontu had a gash on his nose from the giant’s beak, and I had many cuts and bruises. I saw two more giant devilfish along the reef that summer, but I did not try to spear them” (p. 124)

Writing Prompt

Karana has to hunt things in order to eat. Some the animals she hunts take a lot more work to get. Why do you think she isn’t going to hunt for the devilfish again? How do you get your food?

Write 8-10 sentences in which you have a conversation (dialog) with another person to describe how you get your food. In your writing introduce who you are talking to (store keeper, checker, parent) and then have a conversation with them in which you talk about the food you are getting, its cost, and anything significant about it. Conclude your writing as you would conclude your conversation.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Island of the Blue Dolphins, Day 11



Key Paragraph, p. 131

'Most of the night I worked, making two trips to the cave. At dawn, when everything had been moved, I went back to the house for the last time. There I buried the ashes of my fires and threw sand over the shelves and the floor. I took down the shells I had put up to scare the gulls and tossed them and the abalones over the cliff. At last, with a pelican wing, I brushed away the marks of my feet. When I had finished, it looked as though no one had lived there for a long time' (p. 131).

Writing Prompt

Why do you think it was so important for Karana to cover her tracks? Do you think she did a good job?

Think of your younger self when you played hide and seek. Write a one-paragraph narrative about hiding from your friends. What did you do to make sure no one found you? Introduce your characters and form context/point of view. Give details and relevant facts in a logical order? Share this snippet with your readers. Conclude with a statement, which reflects on your introduction.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Island of the Blue Dolphins, Day 12



Key Paragraph, p. 146

“Below me, Rontu was running along the cliff, barking at the screaming gulls. Pelicans were chattering as they fished the blue water. Far off I could hear the bellow of a sea elephant. But suddenly, as I thought of Tutok, the island seemed very quiet” (p. 146).

Writing Prompt

Have you ever been separated from someone important to you? How did Karana cope with this? How did you cope?

Write a one-paragraph narrative in which you describe a time a friend or loved one left (real or imagined). Introduce the scenario and engage your reader by introducing the characters and the narrator. Organize your scenario so the events unfold logically. Use narrative techniques such as dialog, description, and experiences to develop your characters. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence. Use precise words, phrases, and language to give detail. Provide a conclusion, which reflects on the event.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Island of the Blue Dolphins, Day 13



Key Paragraph, p. 156

“After that summer, after being friends with Won-a-nee and her young, I never killed another otter. I had an otter cape for my shoulders, which I used until it wore out, but never again did I make a new one. Nor did I ever kill another cormorant for its beautiful feathers, though they have long thin necks and make ugly sounds when they talk to each other. Nor did I kill seals for their sinews, using instead kelp to bind the things that needed it. Nor did I kill another wild dog, nor did I try to spear another sea elephant” (p. 156).

Writing Prompt

Why is it important to be respectful and responsible in relation to animals, sea life, plants, and birds? What would happen if we were not?

Write a one-paragraph narrative in which you describe a time you chose to be responsible even though it changed or altered your life. Introduce this scenario and describe the situation. Who was involved? What contributed to your choice?

Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one frame to another. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Island of the Blue Dolphins, Day 14



Key Paragraph, p. 160

"I buried him on the headland. I dug a hole in the crevice of the rock, digging for two days from dawn until the going down of the sun, and put him there with some sand flowers and a stick he liked to chase when I threw it, and covered him with pebbles of many colors that I gathered on the shore" (p. 160).

Writing Prompt

In what way did Karana respect the life and spirit of Rontu?

Write a narrative describing a time when you gave someone else dignity and respect. Describe the situation and who was involved. Describe the situation using logical details and flow. Use narrative techniques such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one frame to another. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt
Island of the Blue Dolphins, Day 15



Key Paragraph, p. 181

“Dolphins rose out of the sea and swam before the ship. They swam for many leagues in the morning through the bright water, weaving their foamy patterns. The little birds were chirping in their cage and Rontu-Aru sat beside me” (p.181).

Writing Prompt

Think of a time when you had to leave something or someplace that was comfortable for you and travel into the unknown.

Write a one-paragraph narrative describing this event. Who was involved and what happened that was significant. Use narrative techniques and dialog to convey the situation. Use descriptive language. Write in a pattern that depicts a logical flow of events. Conclude with a statement, which reflects on the event.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Island of the Blue Dolphins, Final Writing Product



Major written product: Narrative Essay, the steps of the essay are embedded in the lesson plan so students can work progressively toward their final writing product. A general overview is listed below.

STEP 1: Autobiography/personal narrative:

- The *goal of this unit is for you to write a personal narrative about a specific event in your life.*
- Think of a memorable experience that happened over a short period of time.

STEP 2:

- Fill out a 5W's chart to help you collect your details.

STEP 3: Finish rough draft and review effective traits

- We are going to use this first personal narrative of the year to introduce the traits of effective writing.
- Note to teacher: Throughout this unit we will be revisiting the students' personal narratives and making revisions by examining different traits of effective writing. While a student and a teacher do not need to examine every trait in detail every time they write something, this initial writing activity provides us an opportunity to *slow things down and take a closer look at what makes good writing.*
- The object here is to focus on the *process of revision*- not just the product, or getting it turned in. For some of your students, this idea will take some getting used to.

STEP 4: Revising→Focus on Organization

- Today, take a closer look at how you have organized your paper. Jot down how you decided to tell your story. Did you start at the beginning and go to the end? Did you start with the ending and then cut to the beginning? When writing creatively, an author has choices to make. The choices he or she makes impact the reader's experience.
- Share your writing with a peer. Get feedback and make revisions. Do they think your story is well organized? How could it be clearer and stronger?

STEP 5: Revision and word choice

- Take a pencil and circle all the verbs in your paper.
- Then, go back and think about how you could make some of your choices more specific and colorful.
- Teachers, model what this could look like.

- Teachers, you may also want to put up a '**boring word graveyard**' on your wall. This is where you and the students decide on all the words that are 'dead' and that should not be used too often because they aren't specific enough. Examples: nice, pretty, beautiful etc. These can be verbs, nouns or modifiers.
- Also, start another word list on the wall that contains descriptive, creative, active verbs.
- Remember to remind students to use the thesaurus as necessary.
- After they have gone through and revised their verbs, have them do the same thing with **nouns**.

STEP 6: Revision with modifiers (specifically adverbs today)

- Take a look at your paper. By now you have added more colorful verbs.
- Circle any adverbs you already have in your paper.
- Can you revise any of these to make your writing clearer to your reader?
- Now go back and ask yourself if there are any additional adverbs you would like to add.
- Make those changes

STEP 7: Revision with modifiers (specifically adjectives today)

- Look at your paper. You have added more specific nouns.
- Circle any adjectives you already have in your paper.
- Can you revise any of these to make your writing clearer to your reader?
- Now go back and ask yourself if there are any additional adjectives you would like to add.
- Make those changes/additions.

STEP 8: Revision and voice

- Think of a song or singer that you think has a strong voice in his or her music.
- How would you describe that voice?
- You have the same thing. You are a unique individual with your own voice.
- Share your writing with someone who knows you and your voice-either a peer, teacher, aide, or parent. Ask them if you think your writing sounds like YOU.
- What could you add to make it sound more like you?
- Make revisions as necessary.

STEP 9: Revision and dialogue

- Add at least 1 series of dialogue to your story.

STEP 10: Revision and reflections

- Add reflections where you see appropriate.

STEP 11: Revision and sentence style

- Vary your sentence length and structure.
- Examine transitions.

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- Are your sentences easy to hear/listen to?
- Make appropriate revisions.

STEP 12: Editing and correct copy

- Have students correct punctuation, spelling, grammar and capitalization
- Tomorrow they will peer edit, so don't have them write their final copies yet.

STEP 13: GROUP/PEER ADVISING

- Students should practice being in the listener's role and give constructive feedback to a peer.

STEP 14: Response checklist

- Have students use the checklist to guide any last responses to their paper.
- Word process final drafts.