

Pirate Vocabulary List Cheat Sheet



Name: _____ Date: _____

Study the words and phrases below to become familiar with the vocabulary used by pirates and sailors. When you are done, you will be completing two crossword puzzles. One is for the words and the other is for the phrases.

Words

Squall - storm
Messmate - sailor on your ship, someone you share meals with
Mess - the place where meals are eaten
Shipmate - sailor on your ship, a friend
Lad - a boy, aka laddy
Me - my
Aye - yes (aye aye = yes sir)
Arrr - yes, I agree, hmmm
Square - fair, honest
Lubber - land lover, not a sailor, a wimpy person
Seafaring - working or traveling on the sea
Swing - hang by the neck
Seaman - a sailor
Gallows - framework with a rope noose to hang criminals
Barbecue - ship's cook
Bloody - damned or very good
Dog - bad man
Chart - map
Magistrate - local officer or judge
Sealegs - ability to walk steadily on the deck of a moving ship
Bearings - location, to find where you are
Gig - small rowboat used to go back and forth from ship to dock or shore
Gunner - sailor who fires the cannons
Parley - discussion between enemies
Irons - handcuffs and shackles
Blighter - a bad, gross person
Buccaneer - pirate
Articles - legal binding agreement, list of rules
Maroon - abandon on a deserted island, a person who was abandoned
Mutiny - when members of a crew or army overthrow their officers
Swab - a sailor, usually one of low rank
Matey - aka mate, another sailor on your ship who is your friend
Blockhouse - wooden fort with holes to shoot from
Hands - sailors
Blaggards - aka blackguards, a scoundrel or jerk
Roundshot - bullets or musketballs, shot
Musket - gun or rifle which requires loading after every shot, uses gunpowder and shot
Affidavit - sworn oath to be truth, aka Affy Davey
Bungling - messing up, making mistakes
Sauce - back talk



Keelhauling - to drag a person across or along the keel of a ship, often fatal
Heave - pull
Overboard - to all over the rail of a ship into the water
Quartermaster - officer in charge of assigning rooms and supplies
Saber - cavalry sword with a curved blade
Cutlass - short sword with a slightly curved blade
Doubloon - Spanish gold coin
Guinea - English gold coin
Sequin - Italian gold coin

Phrases

Shiver My Timbers - Scary, makes my bones shake
Batten Down the Hatches - tie down the hatches, shut your mouth
Honest Air - sweet, pure air or not swampy
Cry Havoc - from Shakespeare, meaning to start a war
Davy Jones Locker - bottom of the sea, death, Jones is evil spirit that preys upon sailors
Dog Watch - late afternoon or early evening work shift
Bite the Bullet - be brave
Smart as Paint - smart, fresh, new, honest
Tall Ship - any ship with tall masts
Spanish Main - Caribbean Sea, area controlled by Spain
Black Spot - summons to a meeting, usually deadly
Bar Silver - silver bars, usually weighing several pounds each
Pieces of Eight - Spanish silver coin
Make Terms - agree to rules
By Thunder - also By the Powers, swearing by something, usually God
French Leave - sneak off and abandon your shipmates, cowardly
Have the Wind of - to be in a better position than another person
Swivel Gun - small cannon whose aim can be changed easily
Jolly Roger - pirate flag, usually has a skull and crossed bones
Execution Dock - where the gallows are located in a sea port
Trim Sail - adjust the sails
Make Sail - unroll and put sails down
Weigh anchor - lift the anchor from the water so a ship can move
Reef - to tie part of a sail to the yardarms
Hand - to tie sails to the yardarms
Steer - to guide a ship by using its rudder and ship's wheel
Leeward - aka lee shore, the wind blows toward this side, bad position

Extra Phrases:

Life or death on a lee shore Dead men tell no tales

*Created by
Jan Anderson*

