

# 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*

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