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Opening extract from

Pirateology Handbook

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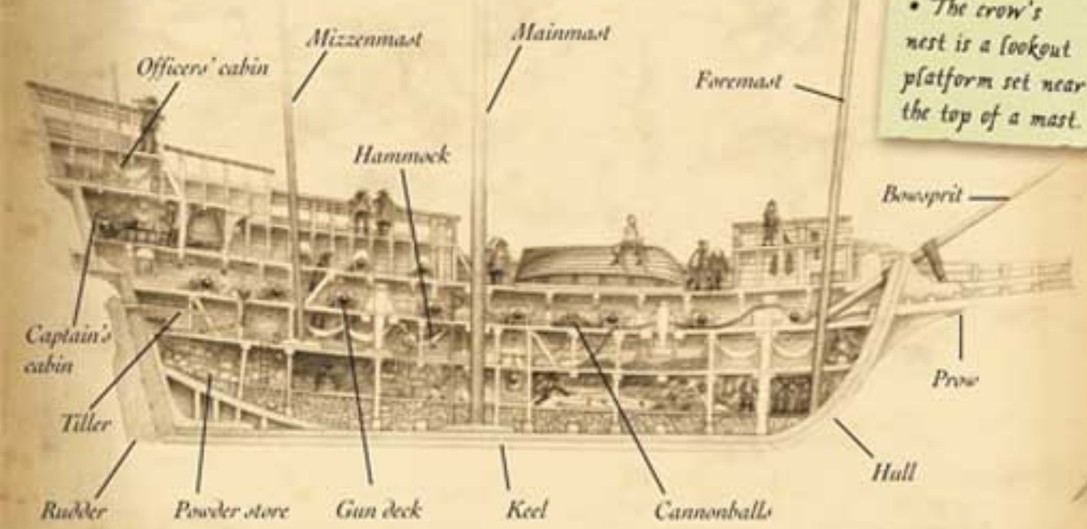
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Lesson 3:
The Parts of a Ship

Do not start feeling too pleased with yourself until you have learned the name of every part of a ship. It is absolutely vital that you can tell fore from aft and port from starboard. This is not mere book learning for book learning's sake—in stormy conditions, when the sails are being torn to shreds overhead, knowing the difference could well be a matter of life or death.

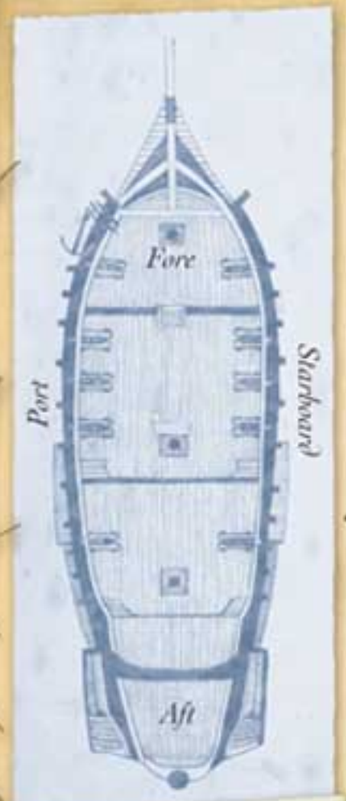
All sailing ships, whether merchant, naval or pirate, are built in the same way and have the same general features. Pirates often remove some of the upper decks fore and aft to give themselves a flat, open space for fighting. They also strip away the safety rails and add as many extra cannon as they can get their thieving hands upon.



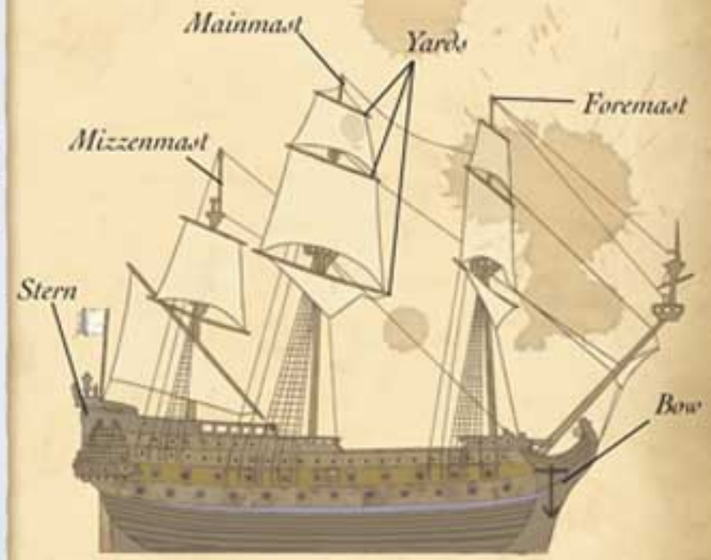


• The crow's nest is a lookout platform set near the top of a mast.

Compass directions are used when plotting the ship's course, but the crew use a different set of directions when passing on instructions. Commit this to memory: 'fore' means towards the front (bow) of the ship, while 'aft' means towards the back (stern). When facing the bow, 'port' is to your left-hand side and 'starboard' is to your right.



The canvas sails are hoisted from long timbers known as yards that are attached across the masts at right angles. This ship is steered by means of a lever called a tiller that moves the rudder from side to side. Most modern ships have a ship's wheel instead of a tiller.





The capstan is a type of winch or windlass that is used to raise the anchor.



The ship's bell is rung to mark each half hour of a four-hour watch.



A heavy iron anchor keeps the ship moored to the sea bed.

OFF-WATCH ACTIVITY Test your knowledge of directions aboard a ship—and no cheating! If you face aft, which is the port side—left or right? If you face starboard, which way to the bow? If you are standing on deck, in which direction is the keel?

Lesson 13:
Identifying Ships at Sea

It is no good you acting as lookout up there in the crow's nest if you cannot tell the captain what you see, so you must pay special attention to learning your flags. All law-abiding ships are proud to bear their nation's flag, and some pirates have the same attitude about the filthy rags that flutter from their masts. Be wary, as pirates often keep a stock of different flags on board purposefully to pretend that they are on an innocent mission.



These are the flags you are likely to see in this the year of our Lord 1724, flying from the mastheads of merchant or naval ships or fluttering above official buildings. Every able seaman should note that flags are always changing, so you must be alert to development.

Pirate Flags

You have already learned these pirate flags—all of which bear some part of the human skeleton—but there are almost as many different flags as there are pirates. On one of his flags, Bart Roberts chose to portray himself brandishing a sword while standing on two skulls to represent Barbados and Martinique. The Indian Ocean pirate Thomas Tew bore on his flag a single arm brandishing a curved scimitar. Many other pirates make use of an hourglass, symbolising that their victims' time is all but run out.



Off-Watch Activity You should now be able to recognise all of these pirate flags, which you learned when you were a cabin boy (page 8). Can you remember who they belong to? Fill in these names next to the appropriate flags: Arabella Drummond, Blackbeard, Edward Low, Edward England, Stede Bonnet, Henry Every, Bartholomew Roberts. Now design your own flag using any of the following symbols: skeleton, sword, hourglass, heart, spear, dagger, drinking cup. Use only black, white, yellow and red.

Lesson 20:
Pirate Weapons

Pirate ships may bristle with cannon of every size, but these are largely for bluster rather than bombardment. No sailor likes to see a ship lost to the ocean depths, and pirates have even more reason to keep their prizes afloat. They want to capture their victim and its cargo intact, so that it will be of the greatest benefit to them—no pirate profits if his prize lies at the bottom of the ocean.

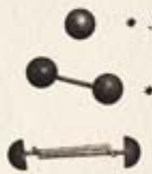
- A cannon



- A swivel gun



- Solid shot
- Bar shot



- Hinged bar shot

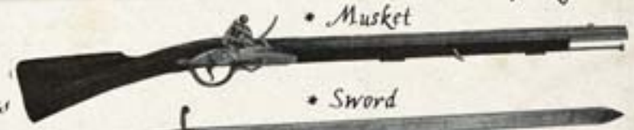




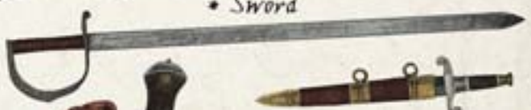
- Grapeshot does not damage a ship very much, but the small balls are deadly to anyone in the firing line.

The main guns are mounted on wheeled platforms so their recoil does not shake the ship's timbers apart. Swivel guns are located fore and aft so they can fire over the bow or stern. A solid shot can punch a hole through both sides of a ship. To avoid damaging a prize, pirate gunners often use bar shot, with two projectiles joined together, to bring down masts and rigging.

- Musket



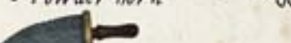
- Sword



- Powder horn



- Dagger



- Boarding axe

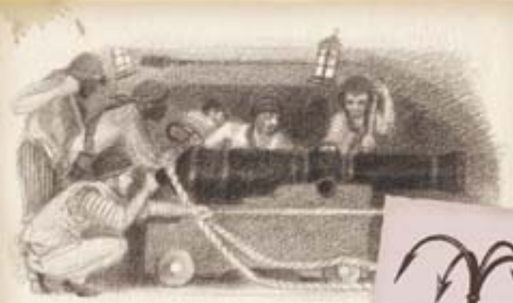
- Pistols

Muskets and pistols are stored loaded and ready for use, while knives, swords and boarding axes are kept razor sharp.



Firing a Broadside

If all the guns on one side of a ship are used at once this is called a broadside. Pirate gunners must take special care about their aim—if they aim too low they will hit the target below the water line and it may sink.



Once at close quarters, pirates swarm aboard their unfortunate prey using boat hooks and grappling irons.



Master the Maze



Off-Watch Activity *A bo'sun must be a skilled navigator to keep the ship out of trouble. Can you complete the maze above and sail your ship safely through pirate-infested waters to recover the treasure, skirting around both cannon fire from forts and ships, and dangerous rocky islands?*