

The Jolly Roger:  
the pirate flag

Gunwales:  
the top-  
deck rail

## THE CAPTAIN

Some pirate captains rule their crew by fear and cruelty, but most are only in charge by agreement with their men. If they become unpopular, or treat

the crew badly, the pirates will happily remove them, and appoint someone else as their leader instead. The captain usually shares his duties with his second in command, the quartermaster.

Swivel gun

Musketoons

Cutlass

The poop deck: an open raised deck at the stern

The rear end of the ship is called the stern.

## STEERING THE SHIP

The ship is steered by the rudder, a large wooden paddle at the stern. It is controlled by wooden rods, called the tiller and whipstaff, by the helmsman on the gun deck. On some ships the rudder is controlled by a wheel on the main deck instead of a whipstaff.

Rudder

Window of the  
captain's  
Great Cabin

Preparing to  
fire a small  
cannon at the  
enemy

## SHIP'S GUNS

The pirate ship has several cannon. These are simple guns mounted on a wheeled carriage. This makes them easy to roll back for loading with gunpowder and shot. This ship also has swivel guns mounted on the gunwales. These can be turned from side to side to aim.

Mainsail

Ratlines

Main  
mast

The pirate  
crew show  
off their  
weapons.

Rigging

Sailors usually go  
barefoot to help  
prevent them  
slipping on wet  
wooden decks.

## RIGGING AND RATLINES

The rigging is the ropes and chains that support and control the masts, yards and sails. Ratlines are the rope ladders fixed to the rigging. Sailors use these to climb up to the sails. Men hanging from the ratlines can also attack invaders on the deck below with their guns and cutlasses.

## CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

The captain has use of the Great Cabin, the largest room on the ship. This is where he entertains guests. The Great Cabin also serves both as a dining

room for the captain and his senior crew members, and as a map room, where the captain can spread out navigational charts on the large table. Next door a crewman is tidying the captain's bedchamber.



## The ship's stern

Welcome aboard! This pirate ship is a brigantine, a fast, medium-sized ship favoured by pirates. It was captured by its lawless crew in the Caribbean Sea. Not only are they fast, but brigantines can also sail into shallow waters where heavier warships cannot follow. The stern, or rear, of

the ship, has four decks

and houses the captain's quarters and some of the stores.

The Jolly Roger is flown from the stern.

Each pirate captain has his own flag design, but skulls and cutlasses are always popular

On the lower deck prisoners, including a priest, share space with stores and captured treasure.

Heavy rocks provide ballast in the bilges to help stabilize the ship.

Dolphins love to swim along the side of the ship. They entertain the sailors with their spectacular leaps.