The Pirate Dictionary

a sneak peek at Level 4
In movies and books, pirates have their very own dialect. In this activity, you’ll learn some words from pirate dialect and practice using a dictionary.

Instructions

1. Print pages 3-4 of this activity.

2. Cut apart the pages of the pirate dictionary, staple them together where indicated, and read the words with your student. Don’t hesitate to tell your student how to pronounce unfamiliar words.

3. Give the completed dictionary to your student and ask the questions below. The student should refer to the dictionary for answers. For each question, have your student read the word and the definition.

Questions

1. What is a landlubber?

2. What word comes before scurvy in the dictionary?

3. What two pirate punishments are defined on the last page of the dictionary?

4. Guide words appear at the top of every dictionary page. They tell you what the first and last words are on the page. What are the guide words on the second page of the dictionary? What do they mean?

5. Look at the first page of the dictionary and find three things you might have for lunch if you were a pirate.

6. Would you rather be a swashbuckler or a rapscallion? Look up the words to find out!

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Arr!  an exclamation

bilge rats  the rats that live in the lowest part of a ship; used as an insult

blight  a flaw; used as an insult

blimey  an exclamation of surprise

booty  treasure

briny deep  salty sea

burgoo  a spicy stew

cackle-fruit  hens’ eggs

hardtack  hard biscuit

eyepatch  a covering for the eye

goblet  a large drinking cup

fortnight  two weeks
hearties

hearties friends, mates

lad boy

landlubber a person who doesn’t know anything about the sea

lass girl

matey a friend, a way to greet someone

me my

peg leg a wooden leg

rapscallion a person who likes to get into mischief

scurvy a common disease on ships; used as an insult, as in “You scurvy dog!”

sea shanty a song that sailors sing about the sea

shake a leg an expression that means “Hurry up!”

shiver me timbers an expression of surprise or strong emotion

swab the decks to mop the floors of the ship

swashbuckler a daring adventurer

the drink another name for the sea

walk the plank a punishment in which a person is walks off a board and into the sea

ye you

swab the decks
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