



ACTIVITY #3 - Life at Sea

Lesson Essential Question: Why was life difficult on-board sailing vessels?

Objective: Students will make inferences regarding the reasons for a sailor's difficult journey with respect to food, medical treatment (sickness & disease) malnutrition, boredom, hard work, and unsanitary conditions. Students will evaluate situations by using context clues to understand vocabulary terms. Students will reflect upon how these reasons can have biological or psychological effects.

Materials:

- Background Information
- Student scenarios
- Images / descriptions of artifacts
- Vocabulary list and definitions
- Frayer Diagram
- Context Clues

Vocabulary: scurvy, hard tack, rigging, hull, deck, tedium, cauterize, hallucinate, roiling, fester.

S.T.E.M. Connections: Science- Biological effects on the body, psychological effects on the mind, medical knowledge of the day (or lack thereof.)

Instructions:

1. Students view images of different Treasure Seekers artifacts at the History Center that have been salvaged from shipwrecks. Students must ascertain what they all may have in common as it relates to being on board a ship (Pipes, lice comb, cannon shot, wine jug, onion bottle, hard tack, dice, peg chess piece - These images all represent personal items that sailors carried on board that would have been useful on a long voyage. Possible reasons were boredom, sickness, unsanitary conditions, danger.)

2. Divide the ship scenarios among the students. Each describes a given situation they are in. Students will read the scenarios to understand the problems a sailor would face in each. Each scenario contains 2 highlighted words they may be unfamiliar with. Introduce to students how to use the Context Clues to determine the meaning of the highlighted words in their scenario. Students can then use the Frayer Diagram to assist in this process by noting by: Definition in Their Own Words, Drawing, Use in a Sentence, and What it is Not. Have the students rotate through each scenario.

3. Students create their own diary entry as a sailor describing conditions and how they affected sailors and explorers biologically or psychologically. Students will also use at least three words that they have learned.





1. Hard Tack

This is a type of biscuit made mostly of flour, water, and perhaps salt. It lasted for a long time and served its purpose when other food was scarce, but was not nutritious or flavorful, and often was contaminated with worms on long voyages.



2. Playing Dice

This game of chance has been around since ancient times and was played for gambling. Made from many materials including bone, ivory, or wood.



3. Onion Bottle

This ceramic bottle may have store wine or rum. It was shape this so that it would not tip over on a rocking ship. Drinking alcohol was a popular activity but it was also more sanitary than drinking contaminated water. *Image courtesy of the Tampa Bay History Center collection.*



4. Lice Comb

This lice comb was made from tortoise shell and the thin spaced tines were used to pull lice or their eggs from a sailor's hair. Hygiene was limited aboard a ship and it needed to be practiced under horribly unclean conditions. Insects like fleas, mites, and other vermin such as lice and rats were common below deck.

Image courtesy of the Tampa Bay History Center collection.



5. Pipe

This clay pipe was found among the shipwrecked items from the Spanish Tierra Firme Fleet that was lost in 1622 off the Florida Keys due to a hurricane. This was a common item among sailors. *Image courtesy of the Tampa Bay History Center collection.*



6. Crucifix

This gold crucifix was found among shipwrecked items from the Spanish Tierra Firme Fleet that was lost in 1622 off the Florida Keys due to a hurricane. The Spanish sailors practiced Catholicism as their religion and was likely used in daily prayer. *Image courtesy of the Tampa Bay History Center collection.*



Ship Scenarios

https://fcit.usf.edu/florida/lessons/de_soto/de_soto1.htm

SCENARIO #1

You have developed a bad infection in the skin on your legs. You ask for them to be “bled” again. The open sore on your thigh seems to have gotten worse since the doctor bandaged it and it is starting to **fester**. You’re afraid the wound may have to be **cauterized** with the iron. You have also lost another tooth.

SCENARIO #2

The weather has been terrible. You have not slept in days due to the sea sickness and having to sleep outside on the **deck** among the chain and **rigging** in the rain and cold. Just as you become exhausted enough to sleep, it’s time for your shift. You are irritable, you have trouble concentrating and you are beginning to make mistakes in your work.

SCENARIO #3

The journey has been long, uneventful, and the **tedium** of every day makes you feel like you will go mad. You often **hallucinate**, and you can’t tell what is real and what is not anymore.

SCENARIO #4

You enter the lower deck of the ship for food rations only to find the **hard tack** and meat to be covered in maggots, and there are rat droppings on the floor. There simply is not enough healthy food and you are feeling sick and weak. Your shipmates are already coming down with **scurvy**.

SCENARIO #5

Your ship survived a recent battle but took damage. Because of your carpentry skills, you have been chosen for the dangerous task to repair the hole in the lower side of the ship’s **hull** above the **roiling** water and nailing lead sheets to patch it.





Frayer's Model

https://fcit.usf.edu/florida/lessons/de_soto/de_soto1.htm

Definition in own words	Word	Use it in a sentence
What it is NOT (opposite)		Picture



Context Clues

https://fcit.usf.edu/florida/lessons/de_soto/de_soto1.htm



When you use clues in a story
to figure out the meaning of a new word you are using

context clues!

Clues are in the same sentence as the new word and the sentences around it too.

Clues can be found by thinking about how the word is used in the sentence.

Clues can also be found by thinking about the main idea and details of the story.



Vocabulary List

https://fcit.usf.edu/florida/lessons/de_soto/de_soto1.htm

1. **Scurvy:** A disease caused by the lack of Vitamin C, resulting in swollen, bleeding gums and the opening of wounds.
2. **Hard Tack:** A hard biscuit formerly used aboard ships
3. **Rigging:** Lines and chains used aboard a ship especially in working sail and supporting masts.
4. **Hull:** The frame or body of a ship or boat, not including the masts, yards, sails, or rigging.
5. **Deck:** A platform in a ship serving usually as a structural element and forming the floor for its compartments.
6. **Tedium:** The state of being tiresome because of length or dullness – boredom.
7. **Cauterize:** To burn, sear or destroy infected tissue.
8. **Hallucinate:** To affect with visions or imaginary perceptions.
9. **Roiling:** To be stirred up or moving turbulently.
10. **Fester:** To rot.

