

THE
USBORNE
OFFICIAL

Pirates' HANDBOOK

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CHAPTER ONE

ALL ABOARD



6

A hoy there! You look a likely sort of cove. Do you know your stern from your starboard? Do you like to stand on the quarterdeck, feeling the waves rolling beneath you and tasting the salt on that sea air? If you want to fill your pockets with gold and leave your dreary sailor's life behind, then step aboard a different kind of ship. Because life's too short not to be a pirate.



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HOW NOT TO BE A PIRATE

So you think you know about pirates, eh? If you're going to be a first-class cutlass-rattler, you'd better get it into your head that most of the tales you've heard are wrong. Myth number one: all pirates have a wooden leg...



He's stealing the pieces of eight. Pieces of eight!

Give us the treasure...

You'll have to catch me first!

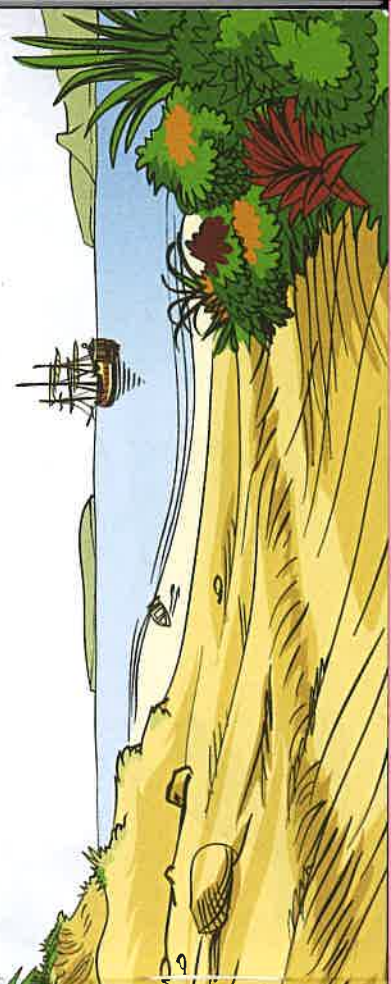


WOODEN LEGS AND EYE PATCHES

It's true that some pirates have the odd leg or eye missing – piracy is a risky business. But to read the stories, you'd think a pirate ship hardly had a single man on board who still had most of his body parts. Don't you believe it – you can't run a tight ship without plenty of able-bodied seamen.

BURIED TREASURE?

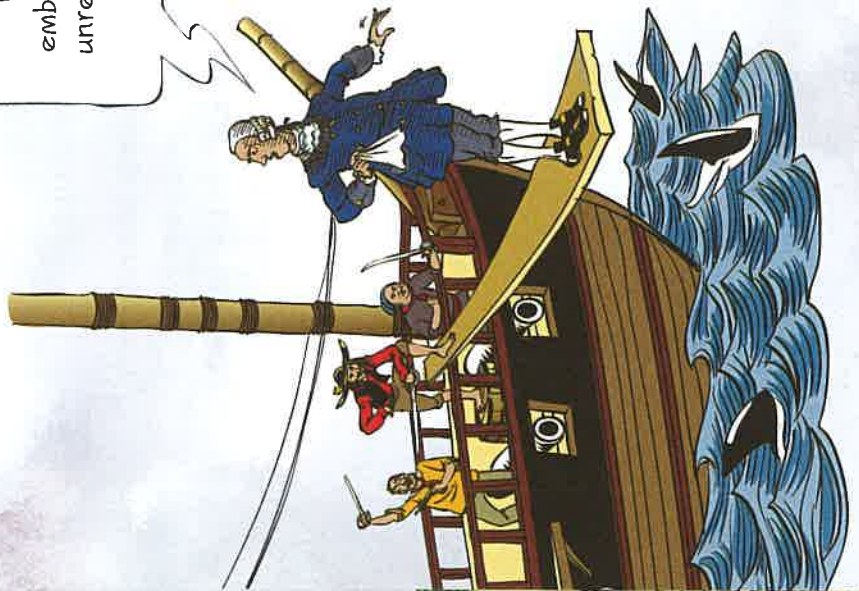
Why would any self-respecting sea robber stick all his lovely treasure in a rusty old box and throw it down a hole in the ground? A few pirates have been stupid enough to do that, but most sea dogs have a far better idea – blow it all on drink and gambling, then steal some more.



WALKING THE PLANK?

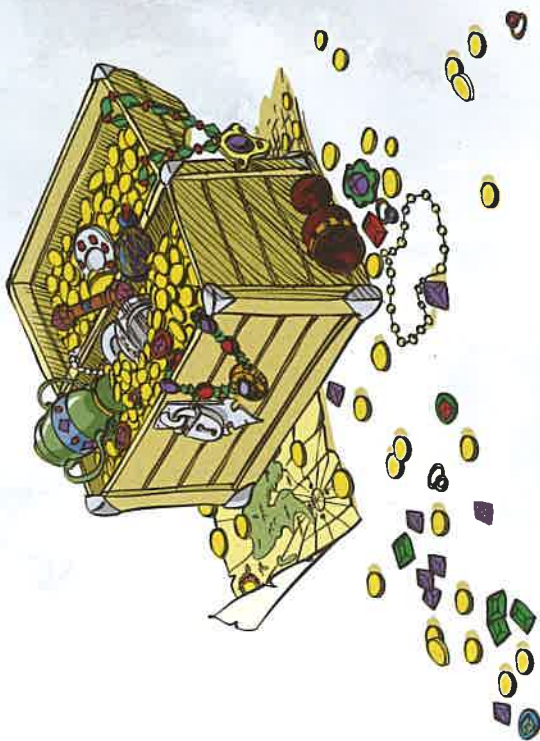
This is another silly idea that people seem to have. Your average pirate would snort into his beard at the thought of killing people by making them walk off the end of a plank into the sea. There are dozens of more entertaining ways to get rid of your enemies. (We'll come to them later.)

What an
embarrassingly
unrealistic way
to go...



THE REAL THING

Well, that's enough tall tales – what do we pirates really do? And why become one?



PIRATICAL PERKS

Right now (early 1700s) there are two great reasons for a sailor to turn pirate. The first, of course, is LOOT. There are lots of merchant ships crammed with riches out there, and robbing them is as easy as falling off a whale.



The other big advantage is freedom. Many a sunburned seaman works punishing hours under a cruel captain for a pittance. But as a pirate you'll be treated fairly and get time off.

...O, I once knew a
lobster that danced
like a dream...



PIRATICAL PERILS

There's only one small problem with a pirate's life – it doesn't last long. You'll be hurling yourself into the teeth of danger at regular intervals, and if those navy boys get hold of you it might be a pain in the neck: captured pirates often end up hanged.

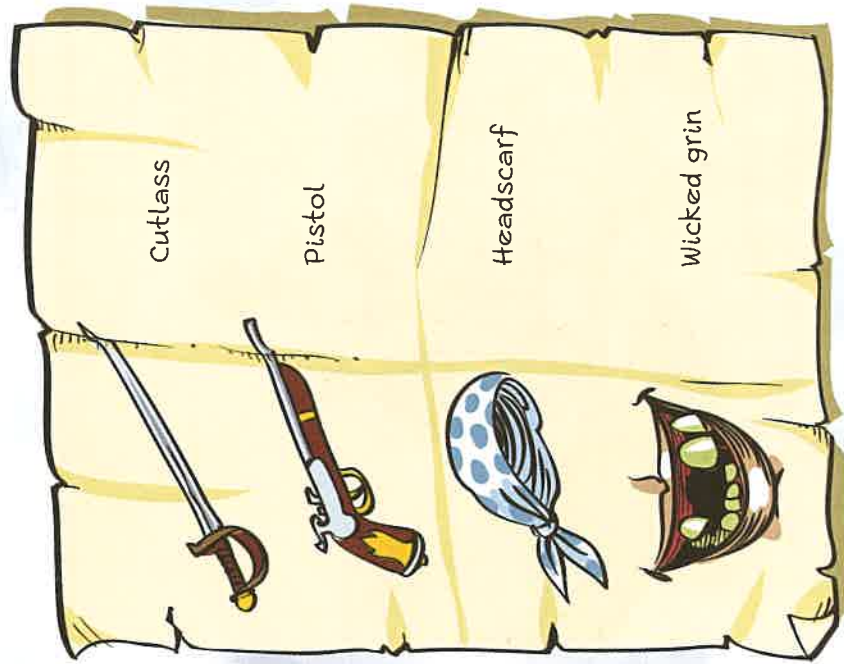
And that's your
retirement plan...



Oh, and
you'll also have
starvation, drowning,
whizzing cannonballs, bloodthirsty rivals
and rare diseases to cope with. (But you'd be
a lily-livered landlubber to let that put you off.)

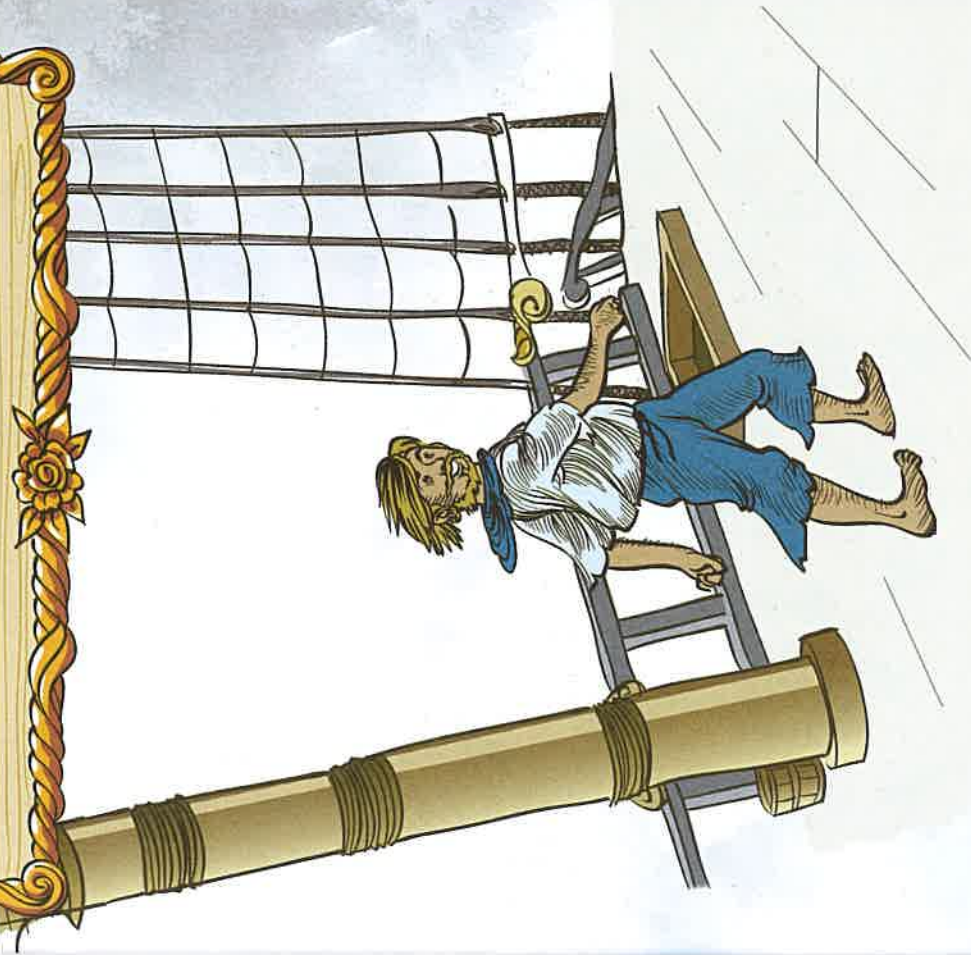
WHAT YOU'LL NEED

If you want to last longer than five minutes, make sure you have these:

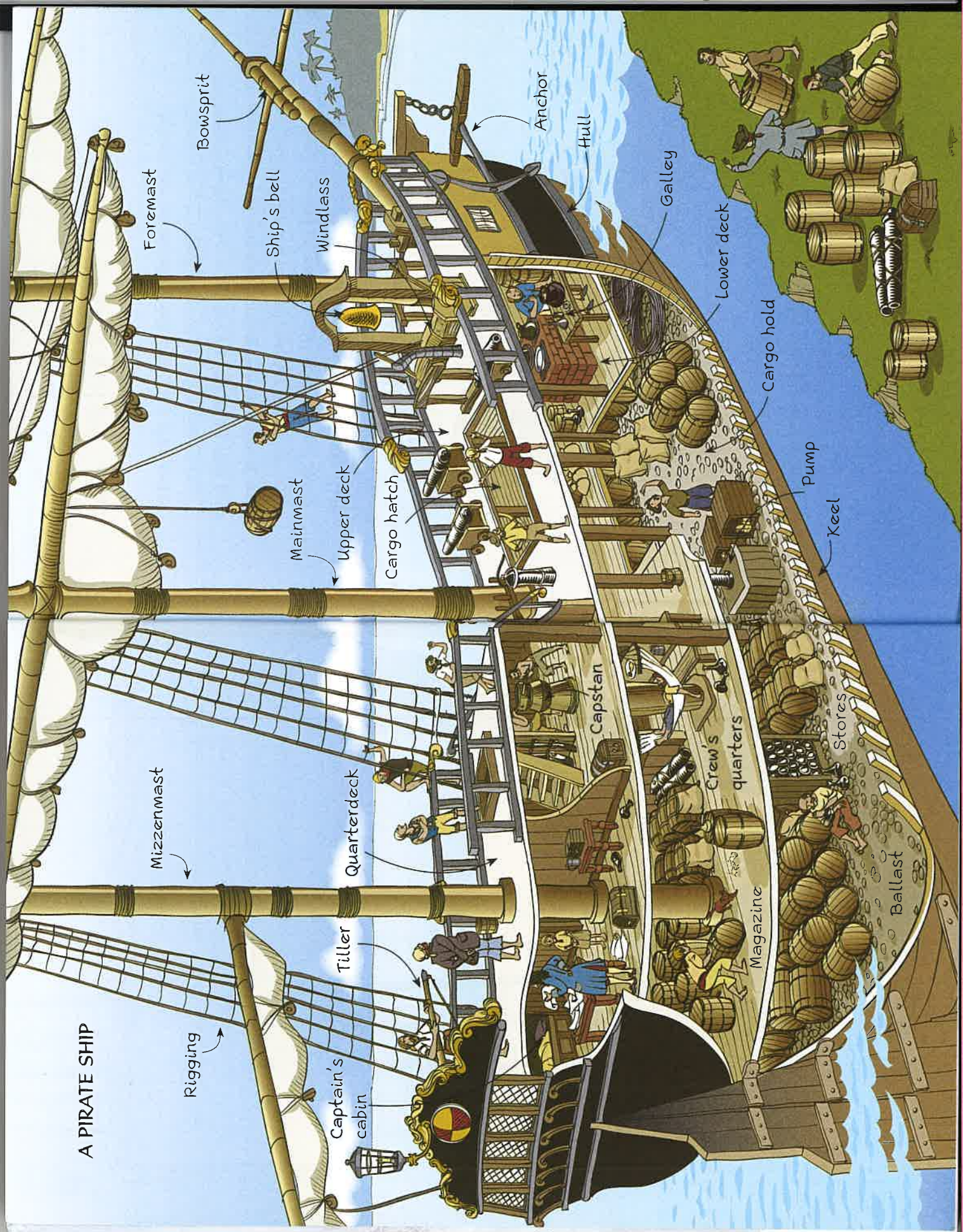


A WOODEN WORLD

So all that hasn't scared you away, matey? Then you'd better step on board. This swaying world of wood and rope will be your home for months on end - take a stroll along her deck...



A PIRATE SHIP



Bowsprit

Anchor

Hull

Foremast

Ship's bell

Windlass

Galley

Lower deck

Cargo hold

Pump

Keel

Mainmast

Upper deck

Cargo hatch

Capstan

Crew's quarters

Stores

Ballast

Magazine

Mizzenmast

Quarterdeck

Tiller

Captain's cabin

Rigging



THE SHIP'S RULES



Attention all hands! Just because this here vessel is a pirate ship, doesn't mean you can behave like a lawless scallywag. We can only spread chaos across the oceans if we're a disciplined lot ourselves. So we have a whole barrel of rules, and you're less likely to be thrown to the sharks if you obey them.



NO THIEVING

We may spend our lives robbing every other soul on the seven seas, but only a scurvy rogue would steal from a shipmate. Hands off.



LIGHTS OUT AT EIGHT O'CLOCK

If we stay up too late, we'll be useless dogs in the morning, and easy pickings for any enemy ships who happen to pass our way. Get your beauty sleep, matey.



NO GAMBLING

There's nothing like losing money at cards to put pirates in a filthy temper. We can't be fighting each other, so no betting.



KEEP YOUR WEAPONS CLEAN

A seaman's cutlass and pistols are his pride and joy – and the best way to keep himself in one piece. Make sure yours are gleaming and ready for action at any moment.



Flintlock
pistol



Cut-throat
cutlass



NO WOMEN ON BOARD

Beautiful ladies are a worse distraction than gangrene. Keep your mind on the job, lads.



STICK TOGETHER

We live or die together. If things get ugly during a battle, heaven help the squeamish lubber who abandons his shipmates or shirks his duties.



TALK LIKE A SEA DOG



Having read this far, you'll realize that pirates don't really speak English. Instead, we speak our own language – Pirate. It's time for a quick lesson. Try saying each phrase while looking piratical.

Avast ye there!

Let's all splice the mainbrace, me hearties!

The powder monkey has gone to Davy Jones's locker!

?!?



TRANSLATION:
Kindly stop what you're doing and pay attention.

TRANSLATION:
Shall we all have a drink together?

TRANSLATION:
A junior member of the crew has sadly drowned.

Shiver me timbers, you old bilge rat!

Ahoy there, landlubber!

Batten down the hatches, lads! Arr! It's a big 'un.

Belay! Belay! She's bilged on her anchor!

Aaaargh! Swab me with a dampened plank if me cockles aren't all swung abaft!

...no, I'm sorry – I didn't catch a word of that.



TRANSLATION:
What a surprise to see you here, dear friend.

TRANSLATION:
How do you do, you who have never been to sea.

TRANSLATION:
Prepare yourselves. I fear a mighty storm is on its way.

TRANSLATION:
Please stop at once! The ship has sailed over the anchor.