

Pirates



A pirate is a person who attacks and robs ships or ports.

Pirates have been around since ancient times but most piracy happened during the 1600s and 1700s. This is called the Golden Age of Piracy.

Pirate Ships

Pirate ships were often ships which had been captured during raids. Some pirate captains would start with a small ship and crew and would capture larger ships then persuade more crew members to join them. Although larger ships could hold more people, small ships could sail quicker and travel more easily into narrow or shallow waters.



Pirate Dress

Pirates of this time usually wore short, buttoned jackets, shirts and trousers or breeches (short trousers fastened just below the knee). Headscarves and bandanas were also common. The captain might have worn a tricorne hat.

Pirates Today

Most people think pirates only existed long ago, but pirates still exist today in places like Somalia, Africa. They don't dress like Blackbeard but have attacked many ships in the Indian Ocean.

Famous Pirates of the Golden Age

Captain Blackbeard captured a ship, added 40 cannons and renamed it 'Queen Anne's Revenge'. He and his crew sailed the Atlantic and Caribbean seas. People were very frightened of him.

John 'Jack' Rackham was an English pirate captain who is famous for the design of the Jolly Roger flag. He raided ships in the Bahamas and Cuba.



Bartholomew Roberts was a famous Welsh pirate who is believed to have captured 400 ships in four years. He raided ships near West Africa and North and South America.



Other Pirate Facts

- They stole useful items such as medicine, weapons and soap, as well as gold and silver.
- It was thought to be bad luck to have women on a pirate ship.
- Pirates believed whistling on a ship could cause a storm.
- They had rules about behaviour on the ship and how stolen goods would be shared out.
- As far as we know, pirates never used treasure maps. This could have been an idea which was made up for pirate stories. Also, no famous pirate ever had a wooden peg leg or a hook for a hand.