

<http://phrontistery.info/nautical.html>

## Nautical Terms

Ahoy, mateys! This be a fair and true listing of words having to do with ships and sailing, 225 of them in all. These terms come mainly from the great age of sailing ships, the 16th to 18th centuries, and almost all hail from the two great seafaring peoples of the day, those being the brave English and the most hated Dutch. Be fairly warned: I, being a landlubber of the most scurvy sort, know little of such nautical matters aside from what my word-books tell me, so if there are any sea-dogs out there who would deign to correct me on matters of seaman's cant and jargon, ye should holler from atop the crow's nest of your vessels. Ahoy!

<b>Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
abaft	toward or at the stern of a ship; further aft
affreightment	hiring of a vessel
afterdeck	deck behind a ship's bridge
afterguard	men who work the aft sails on the quarterdeck and poop deck
ahull	with sails furled and helm lashed to the lee-side
amidships	midway between the bow and stern of a ship
astern	at the stern of a ship
backstay	stay extending from ship's mastheads to the side of the ship
ballaster	one who supplies ships with ballast
bargemaster	owner of a barge
bee	hardwood on either side of bowsprit through which forestays are reeved
belay	to secure a rope by winding on a pin or cleat
bilge	lower point of inner hull of a ship
binnacle	case in which a ship's compass is kept
bitts	posts mounted on a ship for fastening ropes
bluepeter	blue flag with white square in centre used as ship's signal
boatswain	ship's crewmember in charge of equipment and maintenance
bobstay	rope used on ships to steady the bowsprit
bollard	short post on a wharf or ship to which ropes are tied
boltrope	strong rope stitched to edges of a sail
bosun	boatswain
bottomry	using the ship as collateral to finance a sea voyage
bow	front of a ship
bower	anchor carried at bow of a ship
bowline	rope used to keep weather edge of a sail taut
bowsprit	spar that extends at bows of a ship
brails	ropes on edge of sail for hauling up

bream	to clean a ship's bottom by burning off seaweed
bulwark	the side of a ship above the deck
bumpkin	spar projecting from stern of ship
bunt	middle of sail, fish-net or cloth when slack
buntline	rope attached to middle of square sail to haul it up to the yard
burgee	small ship's flag used for identification or signalling
cable	heavy rope or chain for mooring a ship
cabotage	shipping and sailing between points in the same country
camber	slight arch or convexity to a beam or deck of a ship
capstan	upright device for winding in heavy ropes or cables
careen	to turn a ship on its side in order to clean or repair it
cathead	projection near the bow of a ship to which anchor is secured
chine	the intersection of the middle and sides of a boat
chock	metal casting with curved arms for passing ropes for mooring ship
clew	corner of sail with hole to attach ropes
coaming	raised edge around ship's hatches to keep water out
cocket	official shipping seal; customs clearance form
cofferdam	narrow vacant space between two bulkheads of a ship
cog	single-masted, square-sailed ship with raised stern
companionway	stairs from upper deck of ship to lower deck
cordage	ropes in the rigging of a ship
cringle	loop at corner of sail to which a line is attached
crosstrees	horizontal crosspieces at a masthead used to support ship's mast
davit	device for hoisting and lowering a boat
deadeye	rounded wooden block with hole used to set up ship's stays
deadwood	timbers built into ends of ship when too narrow to permit framing
demurrage	delay of vessel's departure or loading with cargo
dodger	shield against rain or spray on a ship's bridge
dogwatch	a short, evening period of watch duty on a ship
downhaul	rope for holding down or hauling down a sail or spar
dromond	large single-sailed ship powered by rowers
dyogram	ship's chart indicating compass deflection due to ship's iron
earing	line for fastening corner of a sail to the gaff or yard
ensign	large naval flag
escutcheon	part of ship's stern where name is displayed
fairlead	ring through which rope is led to change its direction without friction
fardage	wood placed in bottom of ship to keep cargo dry
fiddley	iron framework around hatchway opening

figurehead	ornament or (usually female) bust attached to the bow of a ship
flagstaff	flag pole at stern of a ship
fluke	part of an anchor that fastens in the ground
forebitt	post for fastening cables at a ship's foremast
forecabin	cabin in fore part of ship
forecastle	short raised deck at fore end of ship; fore of ship under main deck
forefoot	foremost end of ship's keel
foremast	mast nearest the bow of a ship
foresail	lowest sail set on the foremast of square-rigged ship
forestay	stay leading from the foremast to the bow of a ship
frap	to draw a sail tight with ropes or cables
freeboard	distance between waterline and main deck of a ship
futtock	rib of a ship
gaff	spar on which head of fore-and-aft sail is extended
gaff-topsail	triangular topsail with its foot extended upon the gaff
gangway	either of the sides of the upper deck of a ship
garboard	plank on a ship's bottom next to the keel
genoa	large jib that overlaps the mainsail
grapnel	small anchor used for dragging or grappling
groundage	a charge on a ship in port
gudgeon	metal socket into which the pintle of a boat's rudder fits
gunnage	number of guns carried on a warship
gunwale	upper edge of the side of a ship
gybe	to swing a sail from one side to another
halyard	rope or tackle for hoisting and lowering sails
hank	series of rings or clips for attaching a jib or staysail to a stay
hawse	distance between ship's bow and its anchor
hawsehole	hole for ship's cable
hawser	large rope for mooring or towing a ship
headsail	sail set forward of the foremast of a ship
helm	ship's steering wheel
holystone	sandstone material used to scrape ships' decks
inboard	inside the line of a ship's bulwarks or hull
jack	ship's flag flown from jack-staff at bow of vessel
jack-block	pulley system for raising topgallant masts
jack-cross-tree	single iron cross-tree at head of a topgallant mast
jackstaff	short staff at ship's bow from which the jack is hoisted
jackstay	iron or wooden bar running along yard of ship to which sails fastened

jackyard	spar used to spread the foot of a gaff-topsail
jib	small triangular sail extending from the head of the foremast
jibboom	spar forming an extension of the bowsprit
jibe	to change a ship's course to make the boom shift sides
jurymast	mast erected on ship in place of one lost
kedge	small anchor to keep a ship steady
keelhaul	to punish by dragging under keel of ship
keelson	lengthwise wooden or steel beam in ship for bearing stress
kentledge	pig-iron used as ballast in ship's hold
lagan	cargo jettisoned from ship but marked by buoys for recovery
lanyard	rope or line for fastening something in a ship
larboard	left side of a ship
lastage	room for stowing goods in a ship
lateen	triangular sail rigged on ship's spar
laveer	to sail against the wind
lazaret	space in ship between decks used for storage
leeboard	wood or metal planes attached to hull to prevent leeway
leech	a vertical edge of a square sail
loxodograph	device used to record ship's travels
luff	windward side of a ship; forward edge of fore-and-aft sail
lugsail	four-sided sail bent to an obliquely hanging yard
lutchet	fitting on ship's deck to allow mast to pivot to pass under bridges
mainmast	sailing ship's principal mast
mainsail	principal sail on a ship's mainmast
mainsheet	rope by which mainsail is trimmed and secured
mainstay	stay that extends from the main-top to the foot of the foremast
manrope	rope used as a handrail on a ship
martingale	lower stay of rope used to sustain strain of the forestays
mizzen	three-masted vessel; aft sail of such a vessel
mizzenmast	mast aft or next aft of the mainmast in a ship
moonraker	topmost sail of a ship, above the skyscraper
oakum	old ropes untwisted for caulking the seams of ships
orlop	lowest deck in a ship having four or more decks
outhaul	rope used to haul a sail taut along a spar
outrigger	spar extended from side of ship to help secure mast
painter	rope attached to bow of a boat to attach it to a ship or a post
pallograph	instrument measuring ship's vibration
parrel	band by which a yard is fastened to a mast

patroon	captain of a ship; coxswain of a longboat
poop	enclosed structure at stern of ship above main deck
port	when facing forward, the left side of a ship
primage	fee paid to loaders for loading ship
purser	ship's officer in charge of finances and passengers
quarterdeck	part of ship's deck set aside by captain for ceremonial functions
quartering	sailing nearly before the wind
rake	the inclination of a mast or another part of a ship
ratline	small rope forming a rung of a rope ladder on a ship
reef	to reduce area of a sail by rolling or folding part of it
reeve	to pass a rope through a ring
roach	curved cut in edge of sail for preventing chafing
roband	piece of yarn used to fasten a sail to a spar
rostrum	spike on prow of warship for ramming
rowlock	contrivance serving as a fulcrum for an oar
royal	small sail on royal mast just above topgallant sail
scud	to sail swiftly before a gale
scupper	hole allowing water to drain from ship's deck
scuttlebutt	cask of drinking water aboard a ship; rumour, idle gossip
scuttles	portholes on a ship
sheer	fore-and-aft curvature of a ship from bow to stern
shrouds	ropes supporting the mast of a ship
sidelight	coloured lights on side of a ship under way at night
skeg	part of ship connecting the keel with the bottom of the rudderpost
skysail	sail above the royal sail
skyscraper	triangular sail on a ship above the royal
slipway	ramp sloping into water for supporting a ship
snotty	naval midshipman
spanker	sail on the mast nearest the stern of a square-rigged ship
spar	any ship's mast, boom, yard, or gaff
spinnaker	large triangular sail opposite the mainsail
spircketting	inside planking between ports and waterways of a ship
sponson	platform jutting from ship's deck for gun or wheel
sprit	spar crossing a fore-and-aft sail diagonally
spritsail	sail extended by a sprit
starboard	when facing forward, the right side of a ship
starbolins	sailors of the starboard watch
stay	large rope used to support a mast

staysail	fore-and-aft sail hoisted on a stay
steeve	to set a ship's bowsprit at an upward inclination
stemson	supporting timber of a ship
stern	back part of a ship
sternpost	main member at stern of a ship extending from keel to deck
sternway	movement of a ship backwards
stevedore	dock worker who loads and unloads ships
stokehold	ship's furnace chamber
strake	continuous band of plates on side of a ship
stunsail	light auxiliary sail to the side of principal sails
supercargo	ship's official in charge of business affairs
taffrail	rail round the stern of a ship
thole	pin in the side of a boat to keep oar in place
tiller	handle or lever for turning a ship's rudder
timberhead	top end of ship's timber used above the gunwale
timenoguy	rope stretched from place to place in a ship
topgallant	mast or sail above the topmast and below the royal mast
topmast	ship's mast above the lower mast
topsail	ship's sail above the lowermost sail
tranship	to transfer from one ship to another
transire	ship's customs warrant for clearing goods
transom	transverse timbers attached to ship's sternpost
treenail	long wooden pin used to fix planks of ship to the timbers
trice	to haul in and lash secure a sail with a small rope
trunnel	wooden shipbuilding peg used for fastening timbers
trysail	ship's sail bent to a gaff and hoisted on a lower mast
tuck	part of ship where ends of lower planks meet under the stern
turtleback	structure over ship's bows or stern
unreeve	to withdraw a rope from an opening
walty	inclined to tip over or lean
wardroom	quarters for ship's officers
washboard	broad thin plank along ship's gunwale to keep out sea water
watching	fully afloat
waveson	goods floating on the sea after a shipwreck
wear	to turn a ship's stern to windward to alter its course
weatherboard	weather side of a ship
weatherly	able to sail close to the wind with little leeway
wheelhouse	shelter where ship's steering wheel kept

whipstaff	vertical lever controlling ship's rudder
windbound	hindered from sailing by contrary winds
windlass	winch used to raise a ship's anchor
xebec	small three-masted pirate ship
yard	tapering spar attached to ship's mast to spread the head of a square sail
yardarm	either end of the yard of a square-rigged ship
yawl	ship's small boat; sailboat carrying mainsail and one or more jibs
zabra	small Spanish sailing vessel