

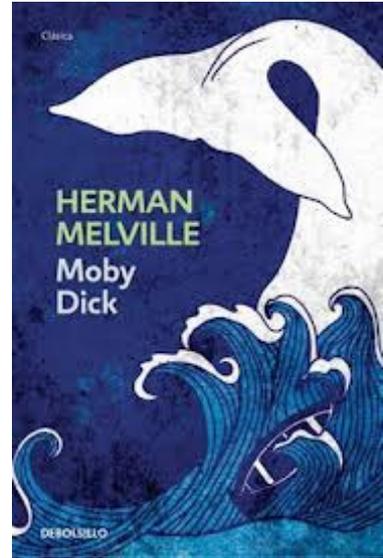
MOBY DICK,

by Herman Melville

OBJECTIVES

Students will understand the following:

1. *Moby-Dick* is grounded in facts that Melville acquired in his own experience at sea.
2. New England was the center of a prospering whaling industry in the 19th century.
3. Journal keeping was not uncommon among 19th-century Americans.



INTRODUCTION

We will watch the following video together: <http://www.whalevideo.com/>

Imagine life before electricity, a time before a flick of the switch would turn on the lights. What would provide light after the sun set? If you knew that oil from whales would give you light, would you go out to sea to catch these creatures? If you could earn money and see the world, or much of it, would you go whaling? For hundreds of years, the answer to these questions was resounding “Yes.”



Think about it

During one entire day, record every time you use electricity. Include things made specifically to give light, as well as those made not primarily for light (i.e., television, computer, microwave, etc.). Without electricity how would your life be different? What would you have to do without?

PRE-READING TASKS

Before we start reading, in groups of four or five people you will have the opportunity of finding out about *who Herman Melville was, how did he get the inspiration for Moby Dick, what the whaling industry was like in America at the time of Herman Melville, what was it like to sign up on a whaling ship, all you want to know about Whales...*

Every group will be responsible for providing the rest of the class with the most relevant information about each of the topics.

You will have the chance of choosing the presentation form (Wall poster, a digital poster, a canvas, a video, a play, a story...)

The criteria that will be considered to mark your work:

- Knowledge: The content is clear, relevant and interesting. Accuracy.
- Display: original, creative, visual aids
- Presentation: tone of voice, pronunciation, intonation. Dynamism and catching audience's interest. Interactive

Resources:

- For those who will be preparing about the **Life of Herman Melville:**

<http://www.biography.com/people/herman-melville-9405239?page=1>

<http://www.famousauthors.org/herman-melville>

<http://www.melville.org/>

- **Moby-Dick** is grounded in facts that Melville acquired in his own experience at sea.

<http://www.melville.org/>

- For those who will be giving facts about **Sperm Whales:**

<http://whales.org/en/species-guide/sperm-whale-cachalot>

- For those presenting on the **Whaling Industry in the 19th century in New England:**

<http://www.mylearning.org/voyage-to-the-arctic-a-whalers-tale/p-2740/>

<http://www.pbs.org/odyssey/class/nantucket.html>

- **Life and work on a whaling ship:**

<http://www.mylearning.org/voyage-to-the-arctic-a-whalers-tale/p-2641/>

<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/whaling.htm>

- Location of Nantucket, **Bedford** and political-economic situation of America at the time of Moby Dick

WHILE READING TASKS: Discussion Questions

Character Templates/silhouettes

As you read the book in groups you will draw the template of the different characters abroad of the *Pequod* and include inside what you are discovering about them while the story goes...

You are on your way....

As you follow the adventure mark the route followed by the *Pequod* on the map attached at the end of the Study Guide

READ AND RESPOND

The Watery Part of the World

1. What's the effect that the beginning produces on the reader?
2. Who is the narrator? What do we find about him according to personality? What type of the narrator do you think is going to be?
3. Analyse the verbal tenses used
4. What does the *sea/ocean* mean to him?
5. When and where does this story take place?
6. What's the meaning of a "stowaway on a boat"? Do people try to sneak into your country like that? What reasons do you think move people to do so?
7. Why does Ishmael say "*There was a window in one corner of the room and I think I would have thrown myself through it if we hadn't been two floors up*".?



My Pagan Friend

8. What do you think is the wooden figure Queequeg had?
9. Do you have some sort of amulet? When and why do you have one?
10. With whom does Ishmael decide to sail? What's the name of the ship?
11. What would you prepare to take if you were going to sign up to sail for three years? And what would you do before embarking?

12. What reasons would move you to go whaling? What reasons move Ishmael?
13. How do you feel at the end of this chapter

How was the whaling voyage organized?

Ships setting out on long voyages had to be completely outfitted before they left port. The managing owner or agent of a whaleship oversaw this job. In Chapter 20 of *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael comments on the need for “three-years’ housekeeping upon the wide ocean, far from all grocers, costermongers, doctors, bakers and bankers....of all ships, whaling vessels are the most exposed to accidents of all kinds...the destruction and loss of the very things upon which the success of the voyage most depends. Hence, the spare boats, spare spars, and spare lines and harpoons, and spare everything, almost, but a spare Captain and a duplicate ship.”

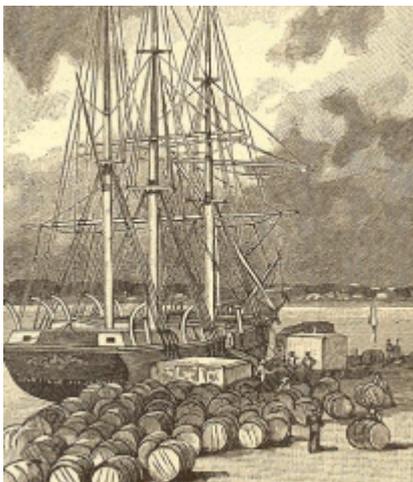
The agent of a whaleship was also responsible for signing on officers and crew for each voyage. Instead of receiving regular wages, whalers were paid an agreed-upon share of the profits of the voyage. This share was known as a “lay.” If the voyage turned out to be a financial failure, the lay system protected the ship owners from having to pay the crew. The captain, mates and harpooners usually received lays ranging from 1/8 to 1/120. Experienced seamen received about 1/175. Inexperienced green hands

received much less, and some lays were as small as 1/250 to 1/350.

Before setting sail, crewmembers had to purchase all the supplies and clothing they would need for the voyage. A typical list of goods included one or two jackets, a waterproof oil suit, an assortment of

heavy and light trousers, shirts, underwear, shoes and socks. A sea chest containing needles, extra buttons, a tin spoon and tin plate, a knife and belt, soap, a razor for shaving, blankets, a bedtick (a light mattress), and a pillow filled with hay would complete the seaman’s supply. Since most of the men shipping out on a whaleship did not have the money to pay for their supplies, the ship’s agent often covered the cost and subtracted it from the lay at the end of the voyage.

The life of a whaleman involved danger, hardship, discomfort, boredom and loneliness. Yet many men were attracted by what they imagined as the excitement and rewards of life at sea. Seeking jobs, they came to New Bedford from all over the world. They dreamed of wealth and great adventure, but all too often life aboard a whaleship was not what they expected.



FACT: Many trades and businesses were connected with the whaling industry. Some of them--baker, banker, boat builder--are easy to imagine. Others-- agent, caulker, chandler, cooper, costermonger, rigger--are less familiar.

ACTIVITY: Choose one of the unusual sounding jobs and find out what skills, products, or services it involved

To sea

14. How would you feel if you were about to embark for three years?

Meet the crew.

The **captain** of a whaleship was a skillful mariner and had absolute authority over the ship, the men and the voyage. At sea, the captain's word was law. He navigated the seldom traveled and poorly charted seas. Using his experience at sea and his knowledge of ocean currents and whale migration routes, he anticipated where whales would be at certain times of the year.

The **first mate** carried out the captain's orders and made sure that all the ship's rigging and gear was in working order. He also kept the logbook and navigated when necessary. The other mates supervised the seamen's work, stood watches, and were responsible for maintaining the crew's discipline and efficiency. During the pursuit of a whale, each mate or **boatheader** commanded a boat, directed the chase and lanced the whale.

The crew of some whaleships included a **shipkeeper**, who took

charge of the ship while the whaleboats and most of the men

were chasing a whale. If there was no shipkeeper, the blacksmith, the cooper, the carpenter or a few other men handled the ship.

The **cooper** assembled and repaired the casks used for storing whale oil. The **carpenter, blacksmith, cook** and **harpooners** (boatsteerers) did the jobs their names imply. The **steward** was the captain's personal servant. In addition, he waited on the officers' table during meals and took care of their provisions. Sometimes a **cabin boy** would also be aboard to assist the steward.

The rest of the crew were called **foremast hands** and were divided into **seamen** and **green hands**. Seamen were experienced sailors while green hands had never gone whaling. In fact, some green hands had not even set foot on a ship before. At first the green hands did simple, routine jobs, but they learned quickly and soon became part of one efficient crew.



The crew of a typical 19th century whaleship represented practically every race, nationality, type and temperament.

Packing for the Voyage: Imagine you are a whaler preparing for a voyage that could last three or four years. You can take only those things that will fit into a sea chest. Use a Venn diagram to show (1) what things you would take on your voyage, (2) what you would take today, and (3) which of these items would have the same function now as in the nineteenth century.

15. “Each time I enquired after **him** I was told **he** would be along shortly”.

To whom do the personal pronouns “him” and “he” refer to? Why do you think there was no sign of him yet? Would you have found that suspicious?

What type of syntactic structures are the clauses underlined?

16. Why did the harpooners get a much greater lay than the common sailors?

What do you think?

FACT: Crewmembers on a whaleship received no pay until the voyage was over, and then the amount received depended on the financial success of the voyage. Do you think this practice was fair or unfair?

ACTIVITY: Write a short paragraph in which you defend the lay system. Then switch sides of the argument and write another short paragraph attacking the lay system. To make this activity more fun, you might pretend you are an owner, agent or crewman and give his point of view, then have someone else reply.



17. “It must have been difficult to wear”. What does the pronoun “it” refer to? How do you form the modal verbs in the past? Add some more examples of modal verbs with the same construction.

Ahab's Rage

18. “The mate blinked in surprise”. In what situations do you blink? What do you do when you are surprised?

19. “Ahab gripped his teeth”. What does this gesture mean?

20. Why does Starbuck think it makes no sense? What does it compare it with?

Five Phantoms



How do you catch a whale?

“I suppose you all know what you came a whaling for. If you don’t, I’ll tell you. You didn’t come to play; no, you came for oil; you came to work. Now the sooner you get a cargo of oil, the sooner you’ll get home.”

- *The American Whaleman*, E. P. Hohman

The purpose of a whaling voyage was to locate, catch and process whales.

1. Capturing the Whale

- The whale was sighted by a whaleman stationed at the masthead.
- Whaleboats with six men each were lowered from the ship to pursue the whale. When the whale was reached, a harpooneer darted his weapon forcefully into the whale. Usually the whale dove deep and took out many feet of the line attached to the harpoon.
- On surfacing to breathe, the whale would then swim rapidly, pulling the whaleboat behind; this was called a “Nantucket Sleigh-Ride.” Eventually he tired and when the boat crew pulled in close, there was a chance to kill the whale with a lance.

Thought question

“It is the harpooneer that makes the voyage.” *Moby-Dick*, Chapter 62.

What do you think this statement means? Do you agree? Disagree? Explain.

Strange Sightings

21. Why would Ahab make send all future letters for the Pequod to the Pacific?
22. What are the bristles of the whales used for?

Letters home

Letter writing was a way to “talk” directly to those at home. Experiences and adventures would be described. A letter would allow a person to complain about work, food or fellow crewmembers. Loneliness and love for those at home would be expressed.

If a crewmember did not know how to write, he usually found someone with schooling enough to put his thoughts on paper.

“I am safe as yet...”

Alfred Hall was born in Poughkeepsie, NY. He traveled to New York City, planning to purchase a ticket to California, but went instead on a four-year whaling voyage. At age 28, he sailed aboard the *Lagoda* of New Bedford on July 16, 1856. The vessel returned June 27, 1860. Alfred Hall was listed as a carpenter.

“My Dear Mother: I suppose you have traced me as far as New Bedford and lost further clue of me but I am safe as yet but in a different situation from that which I expected to be. So dear Mother, I will give you an explanation....I came across some old acquaintances from New Haven. They came down to New York to go awwhaling.... We went down to the shipping office on Saturday and the fellows I was with signed the papers. The agent told them they wanted a carpenter also. The thought struck me that I might go in that capacity. I told them I was a carpenter and wanted to ship. [He said] I was just the man he wanted so I signed the papers also and on Saturday night we took the steamer Metropolis for Fall River. We then [traveled] twenty miles to New Bedford which we reached on Sunday morning...They sent us to a boarding house for which we paid \$4.00 per week. We had good board. We stayed some three weeks before the ship was ready for us.... On the 16th of July the ship was ready to go to sea. I went to the ship owner’s office and told them that I was the carpenter that was going on their ship [Lagoda]. Mr. J. [Bourne], the owner wanted to see if I could qualify so he told me to go to work and build a chest. If I could build a good chest he said I could do anything about a ship. I built to his satisfaction....I then signed the ship’s articles to live in the steerage which is next to the cabin and also get[s] better food than the sailors before the mast, but we have to eat hard bread and salt junk....We are just in port [Maui], one of the islands. We are surrounded on all sides by islands. You will see by the heading that I wrote part of this letter at sea and the rest in port. We have taken but one sperm whale....We have good officers. They are very kind. I calculate to do as well this voyage as I would in California, if we have any kind of luck.

Although this life is attended with some danger and hardship, I will be in no danger for I do not go in the boats. I am shipkeeper when the boats are off. My health [has] never been better than now. I am stronger and heavier. The old salt junk and hard bread goes first rate now. For a month or two when we first came out I was seasick. Everything aboard the ship I was disgusted with, but after getting around Cape Horn, I got my sea legs on and have seen Old Neptune as the sailors phrase it.... We will get our liberty in a day or two. We will lay here about one or two weeks to repair and paint ship and [replenish] our supply of water and then shape our course to the Ocod Sea.

"I must now close my letter.... This will let you know that I am safe and well. This ship will be in this port again in eight months from now, so if you write you must direct your letters to

*Your affectionate son,
A. Hall*

Honolulu...

Wahoo, Sandwich I.

Ship Lagoda

in care of Capt. John Willard

"P.S. Your letter in order to reach me will go to California, then in a packet to the I[s]land of Wahoo [Oahu], then Honolulu....You will pay postage to California and I will have to pay from there. Address c/o Ship Lagoda or it will not reach me."

Drawing What You See:

When you read the letter on the preceding pages, your "mind's eye" pictures the events. How do you imagine the scenes aboard ship? On deck? Below deck? In the whaleboats? What about coming into port? Show some of these images in a drawing of your own.



The Shark Massacre and a Barrel of Oil



How do you catch a whale?

2. Cutting In

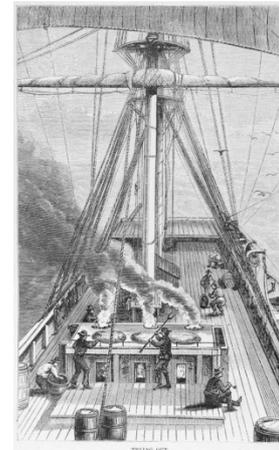
- The men would row back to the ship dragging the whale behind the boat. Once the whale was made fast to the ship and the plank platform called the cutting-in stage was in place, the processing would begin. With sharp cutting spades the crew separated the whale's blubber from the body and brought it aboard.

- The blubber was then cut into smaller sections called "horse pieces" and again into smaller pieces called "bible leaves" because they were sliced nearly through in many places and resembled the leaves of a book.

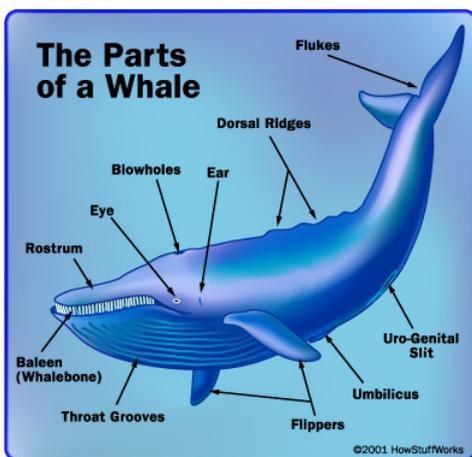
3. Trying Out

• Aboard the whaleship there were two iron pots set in a brick foundation with a place for fire underneath. These tryworks received the “bible leaves.” The heat of the fire soon melted the blubber into oil, which was then cooled and placed in casks.

When the ship returned to homeport, the oil was sent to a refinery for straining and bleaching in preparation for sale.



The Grand Armada and Ambergris



- 23. Whaleswater from
- (Add it to the drawing)
- 24. What’s the most dangerous part of the whale? Why?
- 25. Can you draw the fins in the photo?
- 26. What is Ambergris? Where is it extracted from? What is it valuable?

COLLECTIVE NOUNS

Collective nouns are used to describe a **group of items**, such as “a bunch of bananas” or “a flock of sheep”. Can you match these collective nouns to the things they collect?

Flowers people players ships cattle whales sailors
 Birds/sheep bees hay books

- 1. A school of
- 2. A herd of
- 3. A bunch of
- 4. A crowd of
- 5. A crew of
- 6. A team of
- 7. A stack of

8. A swarm of
9. A flock of
10. A pile of
11. A fleet of

On the Samuel Enderby

23. Had the captain of the *Enderby* encountered Moby Dick? What does he have in common with Ahab? And what is the difference between the two?



Engraving illustrating the text of Gabriel de la Landelle, on sailors' ring dances (1844)

ARE YOU BORED? Imagine you've been on the ship for months, perhaps for years. Day after day there are no whales. There is no wind. The sails hang loose on the spars. What do you do to pass the hours?

Quequeg orders a Coffin

24. Why does he order a coffin?

The Forge

25. What would be the job of a blacksmith in the ship?
26. Look up the words of his description in the dictionary and draw his face
Bloodshot eyes matted beard blistered and scarred
27. Substitute the words in italics by a synonym:
 - "That is the one I cannot *mend*"
 - "They don't *scorch* you"
 - Can you make it *smooth* again?
 - Ahab *glanced* over the side ...
 - "It is", *roared* Ahab

Four Prophecies

"...the Pequod was soon busy catching whales. I had never worked so hard in all my life. For hours on end I was out in the boats, rowing until my hands were so stiff that I couldn't straighten my fingers..."

ARE YOU TIRED? Imagine spending three years or more at sea as an ordinary seaman. What is the longest number of uninterrupted hours you will be able to sleep if there are no whales to pursue or process, no storms, and no other excitement?

28. What are these four prophecies? Who were they made by?

The Rachel and the Delight

29. Why did Ahab want to prevent his men from seeing the burial?
 30. What do you think of Ahab after refusing to help Captain Gardner to try and find his son?
 31. What do you think of Ahab after Starbuck hear the story of his life?
 32. How many whaling ships have they encountered on their hunt for Moby Dick?
 In groups, Dramatize one of these encounters.

The Chase Begins. Second Day. Moby Dick

At the end of the first day some had sprained wrists or ankles. A few were badly bruised. But none of them were fatally wounded.

ARE YOU INJURED? What happens if a seaman is injured or sick? Where does he rest? Who takes care of him? Who takes over his responsibilities while he is unable to work?



WORD FORMATION

We can change nouns to verbs by adding suffixes "ify", "ise", "ate", or "en".

Now we are going to focus on those with **-en**

weaken soften sharpen strengthen deepen widen frighten
lengthen shorten tighten straighten

➤ Jot down a sample sentence for each one and add some more verbs to your list



33. After the second day who has disappeared?

34. What did Ahab feel when he saw Fedallah's body tightened on the whale's skin?

35. How did the hunt finish? Is that what you expected?

36. Who was the only survivor?

37. Do you know other stories of sinking ships? Give some details

38. What is a **tall tale**? Have you read or heard any? Is *Moby Dick* a tall tale?

Tall tales:

POST-READING TASK

Write two journal entries from the point of view of Starbuck, Stubb, or Flask.

Include in your made-up journal entries not merely facts of a fictional voyage but the feelings of the journal keeper as well, especially shifts in emotions over long periods at sea.

You can decorate the journal entries with designs sailors may have created—sketches of ships, boats, whales—during their voyages.

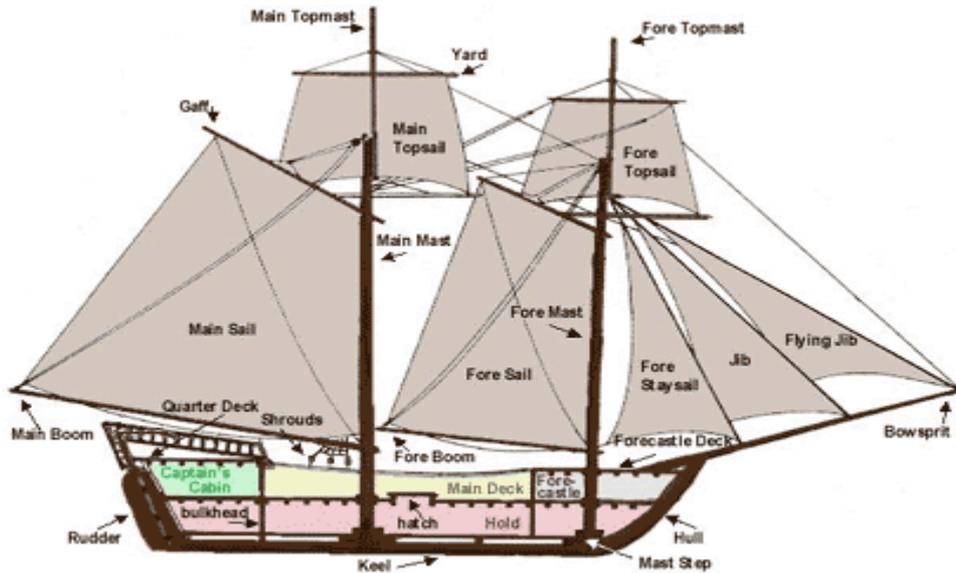
Evaluation on the Journal Entries:

Three points: meets the minimum of at least five entries; includes many historical facts appropriate to the time and place of the written pieces; shows correct grammar, usage, and mechanics

Two points: meets the minimum of at least five entries; includes some historical facts appropriate to the time and place of the written pieces; shows mostly correct grammar, usage, and mechanics

One point: does not meet the minimum of at least five entries; does not include historical facts; shows significant errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics

Glossary of *Moby Dick* terms



Agent: The person who managed some of the shore-side affairs of a whaleship. He was usually a part owner of the ship.

Aft: In the direction of the stern, or back, of a ship.

Barrel: A barrel existed aboard a whaleship only as a unit of measurement for oil: 31 1/2 U.S. gallons. Oil was stored in casks. When whalers said they caught a whale that gave “50 barrels,” that didn’t mean they had 50 separate containers stored in the ship.

Before the mast: Ordinary seamen bunked in the part of the ship forward of the foremast (in the fore-castle); hence they sailed “before the mast,” a term differentiating seamen and officers.

Blubber: Thick, oily outer casing of the whale, which serves as protection and insulation against pressure and cold.

Bow: The front of a ship or boat; opposite of stern.

Bunk: A sailor’s bed.

Deck: the outside top part of a ship that you can walk on

on deck: *A lot of passengers were sitting up on deck*

Dock: [countable noun] an enclosed area of water in a port, where ships stay while goods are taken on or off, passengers get on or off, or repairs are done. (*See also Quay, port, harbour, wharf*)

Quay: A wharf or reinforced bank where ships are loaded or unloaded.

Port: A place on a waterway with facilities for loading and unloading ships.

Harbour: A sheltered part of a body of water deep enough to provide anchorage for ships.

Wharf: A landing place or pier where ships may tie up and load or unload.

Fo'c'sle or Forecastle: The area in the bow of a ship beneath the top deck where seamen slept, ate, and stored personal belongings.

Foremast: The mast at the front of the whaleship.

Forge: [transitive] to heat metal until it is soft, then hit it with a hammer or pour it into a mould to form different shapes

Gam: A visit between whaleships at sea.

Gruff: [Adjective] rude and unfriendly.

Harpoon: An iron or steel instrument with a barbed head for fastening to whales. It is mounted on a pole and is commonly called an "iron."

Hearse: a large car used for carrying a dead person in a coffin

Hold: The space below deck to store equipment, supplies and cargo.

Lay: The whaleman's share of the profits of a whaling voyage.

Log: A book in which the speed and position of the ship as well as events of importance were recorded daily.

Lookout: The men stationed in the hoops atop the masts to look for whales.

Mast: The long upright post of timber on the ship to support the sails.

Masthead: The area at the top of each mast where the lookout stood to watch for whales.

Rigging: the ropes and chains used for supporting a ship's sails and masts

Sea chest: A small, sturdy container in which a sailor's personal items were stored.

Shipping a crew: Enlisting men aboard, signing them on for a voyage.

Shore: [countable noun] the land that is on the edge of a lake, river, or sea: *Three of the sailors managed to swim to the shore.*

Sign on: To agree to a contract, employment, etc.

Starboard: The right side of the ship. Port is the left side. You can remember which is which by remembering that starboard is a longer word than port, just as right is a longer word than left.

Try: To melt or separate. The whale oil was "tried out" from the blubber in "trypots." The "trypots" were set in the "tryworks."

****Voyage:**[Countable Noun] The entire whaling trip from homeport to homeport.

a long journey, especially by boat or into space

See also Journey, travel, rip, cruise

***Journey:** [Countable Noun] an occasion when you travel from one place to another, especially when there is a long distance between the places

We had a long journey ahead of us.

Our parents wished us a safe journey as we drove away.

***Travel:** ₁[intransitive/transitive] to go on a journey or visit different places, especially places that are far away from where you live or work

I wish I didn't have to travel so much.

