

Shipboard Directions

Aft - (Afterward or abaft) In rear to, or towards the stern.

Fore - (Foreword) In front of, or towards the bow, as in before the mast.

Port - The left side of a vessel, as one stands facing the forward.

Starboard - The right side of a vessel, as one stands facing forward.

Bow - The whole forward end of a ship or boat.

Stern - The backward end of a ship or boat.

General Terminology

Aloft - Above the deck, in the rigging.

Amidships - In the middle of the ship (main deck).

Avast - Stop, quit what you are doing, hold your work and await further instructions.

Aye - Yes.

Aye, Aye - "Yes, I understand your orders and yes, I will carry out your orders."

Bight - A bend or loop in a rope.

Bilge - The lowest internal part of the hull where ballast is kept and bilge water collects.

Bitter End - The very end of a piece of rope.

Block - A pulley. A wood or metal case for one sheave (wheel) or more.

"Carry On" - Indication that an order is finished being given and must be carried out.

Chantey (Chanty, Shanty, Shantie) - Song sung by sailors to coordinate work.

"Doctor" - Nickname for the ship's cook because he has the knives.

Forecastle - The crew's quarters in the bow, also called fo'c'sle.

Furl - To raise or roll up a sail.

Galley - The ship's kitchen.

Greenhand - Inexperienced hand on a vessel.

Hatch - An opening in the deck, provided with a hatch cover and a box trim built around it.

Halyard - Any line used for hoisting (raising) sails, cargo, flags, etc. Short for haul to the yard.

Hold - Cargo storage area of the ship.

Kanaka - Hawaiian word for man.

Leeward - Downwind. Pronounced "lou-ward."

Line - A sailor's word for rope that has a purpose.

Mast - A vertical spar for supporting sails and rigging.

Quarter Deck - Raised aft deck on ship; place from where the Captain commands.

Reeve - To pass a line through a hole, as in a block and tackle system.

"Salt" - An experienced seaman on a vessel.

Sheave - The grooved pulley wheel in a block.

"Slack away" - To let out line, hand over hand, without losing control of the line.

Spar - Any support for sails or rigging - a mast, yard, boom, or gaff.

Stow - To put away in its proper place; applied to anything loose.

Tackle - Line rigged through and around pulleys (blocks) to increase the effect of pull applied.

Windward - Towards or into the wind. Synonymous with "to weather."

Yard - Horizontal spar that holds the sails.