

72 - Pirates

A Pirate is one who attacks & robs at sea. But were real-life pirates anything like the version you see on TV and in the movies? Was it fun to be a pirate? And how did a bunch of ruthless criminals get their own Disney theme park ride?

Pirates have existed since ancient times. They sailed the Mediterranean, stealing from merchant ships, and getting into great battles with naval warships sent to prevent their pillaging. The first recorded instances of piracy date back to 14th century BC- about thirty four *thousand* years ago! Clay tablets were discovered bearing messages between the Egyptian Pharaoh Akhenaten and his allies in which they mention piracy -- and how two groups of pirates, the Lukka and Sherden, were disrupting trade and endangering citizens.

Piracy continued in the region through the height of the Roman Empire, when a young Julius Caesar was kidnapped by Cilician pirates and held for ransom on the island of Farmakonisi. After 38 days the ransom was paid, and Caesar was freed. He would later hunt down and imprison his captors!

As civilizations evolved and oceanic trade routes expanded - so did the pirate trade. Pirates were outlaw rebels who rejected the laws of their land, and took to the sea where rules did not apply. Nearly every culture has had pirates, from the Viking to the Chinese.

Most pirate captains were self-employed rebel seafarers, but some were employed... by their *government*! Throughout the 16th century, British ships led by Lady Mary Killigrew, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Sir Francis Drake, attacked Spanish merchant ships, and coastal settlements throughout the Caribbean, and across the Atlantic shipping routes between Europe and the Americas. Not only did these acts of piracy go unpunished by Britain's Queen Elizabeth I... it was she who gave them the financial support in order to plunder other ships to build wealth and gain naval supremacy (control of the seas).

Things You Will Learn

1. When was the Golden Age of Piracy?
2. What were the conditions like on a pirate ship?
3. Who are some of the most famous/infamous pirates in history?

Happy Children's Book Day! We want to make you aware of an amazing service called [Readeo](#) that has really impressed us with the way they use digital technology to create real-world connections with the littles in your life. [Readeo](#) provides a virtual story-time

platform—called BookChat—where you can read award-winning books over video chat with loved ones, no matter how far apart you are. With over 500 books on the site and new ones added weekly (and from major publishers) there's a story for everyone. We're excited that [Readeo](#) is a supporting sponsor of Who Smarted? and we share their love of connecting with a child in a shared reading experience. We have a special offer for Who Smarted? fans. You can try Readeo out for yourself with a 30-day free trial by using the code 'Smart' on [Readeo.com](#).

Activities

1. Pirates needed to be able to find treasure by sea or land! Grab your favorite adult and go find some kid treasure with [geocaching](#)! Geocaching is a great way to find some treasure, share some treasure of your own, and have an adventure.
2. Create your own pirate map! Make sure you mark any important landmarks like the backyard swings or the couch. How many steps do you need to take to get from one spot to the next? Are you going to hop there or fly like a bird? Don't forget to mark your treasure with a big 'X'!
3. Make your own pirate telescope! [Here](#) are some fun instructions. Don't like the gold telescope? No problem! A pirate can always create their own unique look for their telescope.

Additional Resources

Pirates needed to navigate on the open oceans using just a few, basic tools. Our navigation tools have come a long way but being able to read a map is still an important skill. Check out [National Geographic](#) and their age appropriate map activities.

Kid News

Rubik's cubes cause stress for many people but not for an eight year old living in India! Atharva R Bhat broke the Guinness world record by solving three 3x3 cubes at the same time, in just under 30 seconds! He credits having the time to practice on schools going online and the support of his family. Read more about Atharva [here](#).¹

¹ This activity guide is for the Who Smarted? podcast [www.WhoSmarted.com](#)