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ACTIVITY : 20 MINS

Sailing Through History

Students compare objects that would have been aboard a 17th century ship with modern counterparts and match each object to its correct time period. They describe conditions aboard a 17th century ship and a ship today.

GRADES

K, 1, 2

SUBJECTS

Geography, Human Geography, Physical Geography

CONTENTS

2 PDFs

OVERVIEW

Students compare objects that would have been aboard a 17th century ship with modern counterparts and match each object to its correct time period. They describe conditions aboard a 17th century ship and a ship today.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:
http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/sailing-through-history/

DIRECTIONS

1. Ask students to imagine life on a colonial ship sailing from Europe to America.
Remind students that the colonial period took place from 1600-1799. Have them imagine what it would have been like on a colonial ship sailing from Europe to America. Use the following questions to prompt students:

- *What did travelers eat in the 1600s and 1700s?*

- *What did they wear?*
- *How long did it take them to cross the Atlantic Ocean?*

Draw a simple T-chart on the board with heads Colonial Period and Today. List students' ideas in the left column. Then ask students to brainstorm what the same voyage would be like today on a modern ocean liner. List those ideas in the right column. Tell students that when Henry Hudson, a Dutch colonial explorer, sailed from Amsterdam to New York City in 1609, the voyage lasted over two months. Today, the voyage across the Atlantic Ocean by ship takes seven days.

2. Have students complete the worksheet Sailing Through History.
Give each student a copy of the worksheet. Point out the colonial ship and its modern counterpart. Then explain to students that the objects below the ships are items that would have been common on a 17th century ship and objects that might be aboard a ship today. As a class, look at the picture of each object and discuss briefly what students think it might be and what it is. Read aloud the directions to students. Then have them complete the worksheet independently.

3. Have a whole-class discussion about the worksheet.
As a class, compare and contrast each 17th century object and its modern equivalent. Ask students to think about the pros and cons of each as you discuss them. Use the information below to help guide the discussion.

- *Food Storage: barrel versus refrigerator*—Colonial ships carried food and goods in large wooden barrels. Foods carried in barrels might spoil, and food in refrigerators will keep much longer. But refrigerators require electricity that has to be produced on the ship. This takes fuel and equipment. If electricity were lost, refrigerated food would go bad very quickly. Foods stored in barrels were able to last for many weeks.
- *Clothing: colonial versus modern*—Colonial boys and girls wore many more layers of clothing than children today. Girls wore stockings, a long undershirt called a shift, one or more petticoats at a time, a shirtdress-like outer garment called a waistcoat, a hat, and an apron. Boys wore stockings, a shirt similar to the girls' shift, knee breeches, and a long-sleeved jacket called a doublet. All this clothing would be useful if it was cold outside. But it was more complicated to get dressed and put on all those layers every day.
- *Navigation: map versus global positioning system (GPS)*—Navigating by colonial map could be imprecise, as many places were still unexplored and mapmakers had to rely on observation and basic methods of estimating distance. GPS navigation is very accurate and

is updated very quickly by satellite. A GPS requires electricity or batteries, however, and can have difficulty reaching satellites in certain locations or when there are lots of clouds in the sky.

- *Time-Keeping: sand glass versus clock*—A sand or hourglass measures time. A sand glass on a colonial ship might hold just enough sand to flow from one end of the glass to the other in 30 minutes. It was an important job on the ship to make sure the glass was turned every half hour. Modern clocks keep time very accurately without needing much maintenance or attention; however, they rely on power to work. Most run on batteries, electricity, or solar energy.
- *Breakfast: herring & groats versus cereal & fruit*—Breakfast served on a colonial ship might include groats and pickled herring. Groats are rolled grain such as oats, and similar to oatmeal. Pickled herring is a fish preserved in spices and vinegar. Groats were stored dry, so they kept for a long time. Pickled herring was also preserved so that it would last a long time. Modern breakfast foods such as cereal will keep as long as they are kept dry, but milk and fresh fruit need refrigeration, so they won't keep as long.
- *Games: Jack Straws versus computer games*—Students will be familiar with hand-held computer games. If the batteries in a computer game run down on a voyage, the game won't work. Students may play Jack Straws, or "pick-up sticks," today, just like kids did in colonial times. This game doesn't take up much room, and it doesn't require batteries.

Modification

If students struggle with the worksheet Sailing Through History, cut out objects from the worksheet. Present them two at a time and discuss what the images depict as a whole class.

Alternative Assessment

Distribute the worksheet A Sailing Ship in the 1600s. Read aloud the directions and have students complete the worksheet independently. Assess students' drawings based on how well they incorporate the appropriate colonial-era elements.

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

Geography

- Human Geography
- Physical Geography

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- describe life on a colonial ship sailing from Europe to America
- explain how long it took to cross the Atlantic Ocean then and now
- describe colonial-era objects and their uses
- identify the appropriate time period objects belong to
- compare and contrast objects on a colonial-era sailing vessel and on a modern ship

Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

Teaching Methods

- Brainstorming
- Discussions
- Hands-on learning

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- Critical Thinking Skills
  - Analyzing
  - Understanding
- Geographic Skills
  - Acquiring Geographic Information
  - Analyzing Geographic Information
  - Organizing Geographic Information

National Standards, Principles, and Practices

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS

• **Standard 17:**
How to apply geography to interpret the past
• **Standard 9:**
The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth's surface

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HISTORY

• **Living and Working Together in Families and Communities, Now and Long Ago (K-4) Standard 1:**
Family Life Now and in the Recent Past; Family Life in Various Places Long Ago

Preparation

What You'll Need

MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE

- Crayons
- Paper
- Pencils

PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

GROUPING

- Large-group instruction

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

Life aboard a ship traveling from Europe to America during the colonial period was very different from the same trip today. Comparing common objects from a 17th century ship and a modern ship helps to illustrate these differences.

Prior Knowledge

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Recommended Prior Activities

- Crossing the Atlantic: Then and Now
- Time Period Clues

Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
Atlantic Ocean	*noun*	one of Earth's four oceans, separating Europe and Africa from North and South America.
explorer	*noun*	person who studies unknown areas.
Global Positioning System (GPS)	*noun*	system of satellites and receiving devices used to determine the location of something on Earth.
good	*noun*	object or service that serves a human need or want.
satellite	*noun*	object that orbits around something else. Satellites can be natural, like moons, or artificial.

For Further Exploration

Books

- Cleary, Elaine Hansen. *History: Hands On! Mayflower.* Teaching & Learning Company: Carthage, IL, 2002.

Interactives

- The Hudson: The River That Defined America

Websites

- Plimoth Plantation: The Mayflower and the Mayflower Compact
- Hudson River Maritime Museum

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