PIRATES

"The average man will bristle if you say his father was dishonest, but he will brag a little if he discovers that his great-grandfather was a pirate."

Bernard Williams (1929 – 2003), British moral philosopher

1. Pirates Discussion

1. What do you think of when you hear the word "pirate"?
2. What did the pirates get up to? Why did they go to the Caribbean?
3. Which famous pirates have you heard of?
4. Have you seen any films or read any books about pirates? What happened in them?
5. Do you think it would have been exciting to have been a pirate? Why or why not?
6. Would you have liked to be a pirate? Why or why not?
7. Were pirates heroes or villains? Adventurers or criminals? Why might there be a difference of opinion?
8. Do pirates still exist? If so, where might you find them?

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2. Pirates Vocabulary

- **to pirate** (verb), **piracy** (noun) – *to rob a ship; to use intellectual property without permission.*
- **privateer** (noun) – *a person with a privately owned ship authorised by a national government to attack that government's enemies at sea.*
- **mutiny** (verb, noun) – *a rebellion against authorised power, especially in the military or on a ship.*
- **landlubber** (noun) – *a person who has little experience of the ocean.*
- **treasure** (noun) – *a quantity of valuable items, especially precious metals or stones.*
- **ghost ship** (noun) – *a ship with no crew on board that sails the sea.*

Using the vocabulary words above, complete the following sentences (remember to use the correct form of the word, e.g. verb conjugation or plural noun)

1. After 10 days without food, the sailors staged a _____ and threw the captain overboard.
2. Nobody knows what happened to the crew of the Mary Celeste, a famous _____.
3. If you find an "x" under a palm tree on a beach, there might be buried _____ under it!
4. The music industry is estimated to have lost over $2 billion due to _____.
5. These _____ don't understand the beauty of sailing for two months across the ocean.
6. Although Sir Frances Drake is considered by many to be a murderous pirate, as he was acting with the permission of the British government, he was actually a _____.

Pirates vocabulary comprehension questions

1. Would you ever watch a pirated film or download pirated music? Why or why not?
2. If pirates were in fact privateers, does that in any way justify their actions? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think some pirates mutinied against their captains?
4. Are you a landlubber?
5. Where would you bury your treasure if you had some?
6. Do you think there are ghost ships sailing the seas?

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3. Video: Madam Zheng

You are going to watch a TED Ed video called "The Most Successful Pirate Of All Time".

Watch the video here: https://yourenglishpal.com/blog/esl-conversation-lesson-plan-pirates/

While you watch the video, answer the following questions:

Multiple choice

1. How many vessels did Madam Zheng command?
   a) 180 *b) 1,800* *c) 18,000*

2. When did Madam Zheng capture the attention of her future husband?
   a) 1800 *b) 1801* *c) 1802*

3. Where was there a peasant uprising?
   a) Vietnam *b) China* *c) Japan*

4. What did the pirates lose in 1802?
   a) their ships *b) their treasure* *c) their harbours*

Sentence completion

5. At its strongest, the pirate confederation included _____ sailors.
6. Zheng Yi died in _____.
7. The most powerful squadron in Madam Zheng's fleet sailed under _____ flags.
8. Madam Zheng consolidated her power with military discipline and a progressive code of _____.

Short answer

9. How many military vessels from Guangdong Province did Madam Zheng destroy?
10. What did Madam Zheng establish in cities and villages?
11. When did tension occur between the Red and Black Flag Fleets?
12. At what age did Madam Zheng die?

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4. Modern Day Piracy Conversation Questions

1. Why do pirates still exist today?
2. What are some socio-economic reasons that convince people to become pirates?
3. What kind of activities are they involved in?
4. What is the difference between modern-day pirates and those of the past? How do you imagine the life of a modern-day pirate to be?
5. Do you think people felt the same about pirates in the past as we feel about modern-day pirates? Why do we romanticise about the pirates of the past in the modern day? How will these modern-day pirates be considered by future generations?
6. What other types of maritime crimes can you think of?
7. How can we protect against modern day piracy?
8. Do you think sea piracy will increase or decrease in the future? Why?

5. Pirates Writing Task

Write about a real-life pirate. Try to use some of the vocabulary you learned earlier in this lesson. In your answer, you could include the following topics:

- Why they became a pirate.
- What this pirate did.
- Whether you consider this person to be a criminal or hero.

Alternative exam practice question:

In some cultures, those considered pirates are revered as national heroes and often feature as the main characters in books and films. In other cultures, however, these pirates are considered nothing more than violent criminals. Write about why some people consider pirates heroes, and others consider them criminals.

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