

Discover Maritime History – Maritime Skills and Navigation (lesson 5)

Lesson	Lesson Title	Resources
5	Maritime Skills and Navigation	Lesson plan PowerPoint Internet access
Learning objectives		
All:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be able to list the primary skills needed by a mariner to undertake a voyage - Understand that these primary skills changed depending on the length of the voyage and the nature of the waters they needed to navigate 	
Most:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be able to specifically describe the nature of those skills - Be able to explain briefly how those skills were acquired: learning on the job, apprenticeship etc. 	
Some:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand the socio-economic difference between mariners that were taken on as apprentices vs those that started at the bottom and learned on the job 	
Activity		Timing
<p>Starter:</p> <p>Slide 1: Note lesson objectives</p> <p>Slide 2: <u>Recap</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We briefly touched on the idea last week that John Holford had the necessary skills and knowledge to undertake both his usual fishing activity and to engage in coastal transportation of goods - This lesson will look in more detail at what those skills were across the full spectrum of types of trade - And, briefly, how they were acquired <p>Main:</p> <p>Slide 3: <u>Types of crew</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Holford was a shipmaster on these voyages and these are the only members of crew that appear in the Medieval and Tudor Ships Database. Therefore, we will specifically look at the skills required for shipmasters. - However, we also need to note the other roles present on board. - The titles occupied on a specific voyage varied depending on the size of the ship and the nature of the voyage undertaken, but in almost all cases there was at least the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A shipmaster – the shipmaster oversaw everything. On exceptionally large voyages he could be outranked by a captain, he was duty-bound to take the advice of his crew on board and in some cases he had to obey merchants carrying cargo on board, but he was basically in charge of all aspects of the voyage. ○ A boatswain – the boatswain was under the shipmaster and was responsible for the practical sailing of the ship, ensuring the sails and rigging were correct and ensuring orders were being followed. He was also responsible for disciplining the men in some cases. ○ Mariners – the bulk of the crew were mariners who handled the practical sailing of the ship, under the orders of the boatswain and the shipmaster. 		<p>2/3 mins</p> <p>5/10 mins</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Master’s boys – this role was specifically for children (usually c. 13-16) and they undertook menial tasks for the senior crew. Many used this as a starting point for a maritime career. 	
<p>Slide 4: <u>Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The skills required of a shipmaster can be divided into three main types <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Skills relating to the practical means of sailing a vessel ○ Skills to correctly navigate and follow a route ○ Knowledge and understanding of the legal obligations and requirements upon himself, his crew, the merchant, and the voyage as a whole 	2/3 mins
<p>Slide 5: <u>Practical skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Could rely on boatswain to some extent to oversee practical elements, but was also full trained himself and very, very knowledgeable - Varied slightly ship-to-ship and some would not have enough knowledge to command exceptionally large ships - But all had decent general knowledge of all elements of sailing - And all could take full command of the vessel if needed – such as in a storm or upon sustaining damage – boatswain could consult with shipmaster to determine best course of action - Maritime law did not govern the training required but did govern the performance of shipmasters at sea – an ill-trained shipmaster would be very open to the possibility of breaking maritime law and ending up in the High Court Admiralty, and would be incredibly undesirable for potential clients – reputation was key 	5 mins
<p>Slide 6: <u>Navigation skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Navigation skills much more varied from voyage to voyage - Some could undertake complex navigation – like described in this video... (click on still of video – step 2) 	10/15 mins
<p>Slide 7:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The video is embedded into slide 6, but there is a link at the bottom in case that fails. **note once you move to the slide with the video, give it 5-10 seconds to load and for the play button to appear!** 	
<p>Slide 8:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - But those that stayed close to the coast and didn’t go overseas only needed to follow the coastline to stay on course. - And for short distance overseas voyages, more basic knowledge and skill could be utilised - Having advanced navigation skills was not necessary for every voyage, but did make a shipmaster more desirable to hire - And it became much more necessary as England expanded into more distant waters 	
<p>Slide 9: <u>Legal knowledge</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shipmasters did have specific laws they had to adhere to - So being a shipmaster meant being knowledgeable in those laws 	5 mins

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">- In particular, immediately knowing during periods of crisis how the law said you should respond- For example, when it's OK to go off course, when it's OK to "jettison" cargo (i.e. throw it overboard to reduce weight)- This also applied to keeping charge of the crew – the shipmaster may have had to make tough decisions about punishment (sometimes even capital punishment) and know they were on the right side of the law- They might also have to weigh up the potential risk of mutiny against the sentencing of punishments – shipmaster needed to remain in control – be firm but fair. <p>Plenary:</p> <p>Slide 10:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Finally, how did men train?- Two routes:<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Formal apprenticeship (see powerpoint)o Progression through the ranks from the very bottom (see powerpoint)- Those who had formal training could demand the highest paying jobs, commanding long-distance, high-value voyages- Those without had to put up with whatever work they could get, or, like John Holford, only work as a shipmaster as an aside to his primary career- Men like Holford unlikely to have been formally apprenticed and he may have even learned his skills through training as a fisherman- He appears to have largely commanded on a fishing vessel that he likely owned = did not need transferable practical skills- He only travelled very short distances close to the shore = didn't need any real navigational skills- And he travelled short distances with very small quantities of cargo = not immensely concerned with crises – he can just pull into the nearest dock if he needs to = not really concern with maritime law. - So goes to show to spectrum of individuals engaged in trade – not all highly-skilled, highly-paid, and seeking adventure overseas!	10 mins
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