

# Lesson Plan: Become a Pirate Captain!

**Subject Areas:** Language Arts, Math, Art, Social Studies

**Grade Level:** 4th-5th Grade (Approx. age 10)

**Time Allotment:** 90-120 minutes

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## Materials Needed

- Paper (white and assorted colors)
  - Pencils, markers, and colored pencils
  - Scissors
  - Glue or tape
  - Ruler
  - An old cardboard box (optional, for a "treasure chest")
  - Coins (play money or real) or other small items to count (beads, buttons)
  - A large piece of paper or poster board for a map
  - Access to the internet for brief, optional research (e.g., looking up real pirate flags)
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## Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to:

- Design a unique pirate flag (Jolly Roger) that symbolically represents their personal identity or values.
  - Write a "Pirate's Code of Conduct" that establishes fair rules for a ship's crew, demonstrating an understanding of rules and consequences.
  - Solve a multi-step math word problem to calculate the value of a treasure haul.
  - Create a treasure map that includes key geographical features and a logical path, distinguishing between historical fact and fiction about pirates.
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## Lesson Procedure

### Part 1: The Hook - A Call to Adventure (10 minutes)

1. **Introduction:** Present the lesson as a "Pirate Captain's Training." Explain that to become a captain, a pirate needs more than just a ship—they need an identity, a set of rules for their crew, sharp math skills to manage treasure, and a secret map.
  2. **Pirate Name:** The first task is to choose a pirate name! The student can create their own or use an online pirate name generator for fun. They should write their new captain name at the top of a piece of paper. This sheet will be their "Captain's Log" where they complete their work.
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## Part 2: The Captain's Challenges (60-80 minutes)

These can be completed in any order, like visiting different islands to complete quests.

### Challenge 1: Hoist the Colors! (Art & Symbolism)

- **Task:** Design and create your own personal Jolly Roger (pirate flag).
- **Instructions:** "Every captain needs a flag to identify their ship. The skull and crossbones is famous, but many captains had their own designs. Black flags meant you would give quarter (show mercy), while red flags meant no mercy! Your flag should represent YOU."
- **Process:**
  1. Brainstorm symbols that represent your personality. Are you clever (a fox)? Brave (a lion)? Fast (lightning)? Love books (a book symbol)?
  2. Sketch a few ideas in your Captain's Log.
  3. Create the final flag using paper, markers, and scissors. Explain that the symbols, colors, and design should tell a story about Captain [Student's Pirate Name].
- **Discussion Question:** "What does your flag tell other ships about you before they even meet you?"

### Challenge 2: The Pirate's Code (Language Arts & Critical Thinking)

- **Task:** Write a "Pirate's Code of Conduct" with 5-7 rules for your crew.
- **Instructions:** "A pirate ship was a democracy, and everyone had to agree to the rules, called the 'Articles.' This kept the crew from fighting. Now, write the rules for your ship."
- **Process:**
  1. Brainstorm what could go wrong on a long voyage (e.g., fighting over food, not doing chores, being sneaky with treasure).
  2. Write at least five rules in the Captain's Log. Each rule should be clear and have a fair consequence. Examples:
    - *Rule:* All treasure shall be shared fairly. *Consequence:* Anyone caught hiding treasure will get no share at all.
    - *Rule:* Every crewmate must keep their weapons clean and ready. *Consequence:* Anyone with a rusty sword has to peel potatoes for a week.
- **Discussion Question:** "Why is it important for a group of people working together to have clear rules?"

### Challenge 3: Splitting the Booty! (Math)

- **Task:** Solve a math problem to calculate and distribute treasure.
- **Instructions:** "You've found a treasure chest! But you must calculate its worth before you can share it. Use the treasure items (coins, beads, etc.) or just solve on paper."
- **The Problem (written in the Captain's Log):**

"Inside the chest, ye find: 157 gold doubloons, 342 silver pieces, and 12 ruby rings.  
Each gold doubloon is worth \$5.  
Each silver piece is worth \$2.  
Each ruby ring is worth \$50.

**1. What is the total value of the treasure?**

**2. According to your code, the captain gets two shares and your 10 crewmates each get one share (12 shares total). How much money does a single crewmate get?"**

- **Differentiation:**

- **For Support:** Simplify the numbers (e.g., 50 doubloons, 100 silver pieces) and use easier values (e.g., rings worth \$10). Use a calculator after attempting by hand.
- **For a Challenge:** Add a percentage-based "captain's tax" of 15% that must be calculated \*before\* the treasure is divided.

#### Challenge 4: X Marks the Spot (Geography & History)

- **Task:** Create a treasure map for your next voyage.
- **Instructions:** "Most stories about pirates and buried treasure maps are myths. Pirates usually spent their money right away! But a good captain still needs a map to navigate the seas. Create a map to your secret island hideout."
- **Process:**
  1. On the large piece of paper, draw an imaginary island or group of islands.
  2. Include key map features: a compass rose, a scale (e.g., 1 inch = 5 miles), and a key/legend for symbols.
  3. Add at least five geographical features, such as "Whispering Waterfall," "Jagged Rocks," "Mutineer's Bay," or "The Serpent's Pass."
  4. Draw a dotted line showing the safe route from a starting point (like Port Royal) to your secret hideout.
- **Discussion Question:** "If pirate treasure maps weren't really common, why do we love stories about them so much?"

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### Conclusion & Assessment (15 minutes)

1. **Show and Tell:** The student presents their work as the "New Pirate Captain." They will:
  - Unfurl their flag and explain its symbolism.
  - Read their Pirate's Code aloud.
  - Explain how they calculated the total treasure.
  - Show their map and describe the journey to their secret hideout.
2. **Reflection:** Ask questions like, "What part of being a pirate captain seems the most fun? What seems the hardest? What was one surprising thing you learned about pirates today?"
3. **Assessment:** Review the student's completed "Captain's Log" and creative projects.
  - **Flag:** Did the student use symbols creatively to represent their identity?
  - **Code:** Are the rules clear and the consequences logical?
  - **Math:** Were the calculations correct? Was the process shown?
  - **Map:** Does the map include the required elements (compass rose, key, features)?