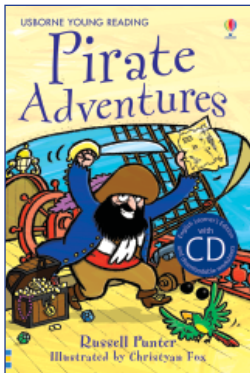


Pirate Adventures • Teacher's notes



Author: Russell Punter

Reader level: Upper Intermediate

Word count: 1826

Lexile level: 610L

Text type: Fiction - adventure

About the story

Ever since *Treasure Island*, children have loved the drama and atmosphere of pirate stories. These three tales feature both mean pirates and good-hearted pirates – and the villains always get their comeuppance.

In the first story, Captain Spike is in the pirate prison of Rotters' Isle, where he steals from even his fellow prisoners. However, a bogus treasure map and a failed escape attempt may yet teach him a lesson.

In the second, Billy Booty and his crew are competing against sneaky Captain Blackheart for the title of Pirate of the Year. Blackheart cheats with impunity and seems to be winning every round – until one false step lands him in deep trouble and in need of Billy's help.

Finally, plucky Harriet Hill goes to find work and save her parents' farm. Disguising herself as a cabin boy, she joins what she soon realises is a pirate ship. When her shipmates attack a merchant vessel, Harriet unexpectedly discovers the sheep stolen from her parents' farm, and becomes the hero of the hour.

About the author

Russell Punter was born in Bedfordshire, England. When he was young, he enjoyed making up and illustrating his own stories. His ambition as a boy was to become a cartoonist. When he grew up, he studied art at college before becoming a graphic designer and writer. He has written over twenty children's books.

Key words

Your students might not be familiar with some of these words in the story.

p3 fortress	bushy	p16 tumbled	p22 rival	p29 routes	cargo
dungeons	p10 brass	settled	within	p30 grizzly	steer
p4 scurvy	matey	stared	view	p31 grab	p42 whooshed
sneaky	p11 sneaking	disbelief	p23 plunged	gloopy	swamped
p5 locket	dock	p18 contest	depths	p32 bonus	snarled
p6 cell mate	crept	gathered	tucked	p33 cabin boy	rescue
mighty	p11 spoof	p19 chest	p24 struggle	run [meaning p43	slid
[meaning	p12 strode	scoreboard	surfaced	“manage”]	bolt
“very”]	paces	cheating	bait	p34 stern	p44 hissed
creeping	quicksands	p20 boom	snorted	stomped	crate
p7 jail	p14 shovel	cannon	p25 trudged	bellowed	peeked
boomed	loot	anchors	slimy	p35 scarlet	barmy
whelks	booty	crew	p26 ahoy	ruined	alerted
jeered	double-	p21 ragged	scoffed	sobbed	p45 fumed
p8 treasure	crossing	lads	opponent	p37 barrels	furious
sparkled	plunged	weapons	p27 declared	p38 gruffly	p46 scoundrel
p9 inn	p15 gasped	flaps	poked	skinny	folk
grin	thrust	oars	p28 buried	p39 blasting	trial
stroked	slammed	rowing	hesitate	p40 crow's nest	p47 begged

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Key phrases

p4	Out of my way to go missing	p20	to take a lead to be way ahead	p27	You may as well...
p6	to show off	p21	to have a trick up your sleeve	p35	to storm off
p10	So long		to shoot out	p39	to walk the plank
p11	[Spike] couldn't wait	p25	to come after	p44	Hands off!
p17	to fall for Rats! [= exclamation of annoyance]	p26	Pieces of eight me hearties	p45	Suffering sea snakes! [= made-up expression of surprise]
				p46	Shame on you!

Before reading

Find a picture of the skull and crossbones flag. Most students will recognize it instantly. Together, brainstorm some of the things you know about pirates, and if possible introduce words such as “ship”, “sail”, “crew” and “treasure”. You could write up the names of some famous pirates, real and fictional, from *Treasure Island* to *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

Try brainstorming some pirate adjectives. These might be positive (brave, adventurous) and negative (greedy, cruel). Ask students if they think there can be “good” pirates and “bad” pirates.

Reading or listening

You can listen to the story on CD or read it aloud to the students, take turns to read or read together silently. Each double page spread in the book is one track on the CD, so that you can pause between tracks or repeat tracks if your students need it. The first reading is in a British English accent, and it is followed by an American English reading. The words are exactly the same. After the story, there is a short selection of key phrases that can be used for pronunciation practice.

During reading: you might like to ask some of these questions.

p4	What is Captain Spike doing in the picture?	p30	What has Blackheart not spotted? What is quicksand?
p6	What has Bobby Bones realized?	p32	What does “ungrateful” mean?
p11	Spoof Island... what does that tell you about the treasure map?	p35	What do you think has happened to the sheep?
p17	How does Spike feel now? How about the other pirates?	p38	What do you think Captain Cutlass is? What are the clues? [His name – you may need to explain what a cutlass is – and eyepatch.]
p19	Can you guess which is Blackheart and which is Billy in the picture on p18? Which do you think will win the contest?	p45	How do you think the people in the picture feel – Sir Rollo, Harriet, her shipmates?
p22	What was rule one?	p47	Do you think Harriet will stay with the pirates or go home to her parents? [Find the answer in the picture on p48.]
p23	That's very kind of Blackheart – do you think he is just being friendly?		
p28	Can you see a problem with Billy's map?		

After reading

Ask students: which story did you like best? Why?

Would you like to be a pirate? What are some of the good things? How about bad things? (Even if you don't examine this too literally, you might think about: long periods at sea, nasty food, danger of shipwreck or being arrested.) You'll find a good guide to (real) pirate life in the Usborne *Pirate's Handbook*.

You might enjoy doing pirate-themed activities with your class, such as making treasure maps, cutlasses, parrot pictures, eyepatches and treasure chests (use gold and silver paper to make coins). As a special treat, you could even get them to dress up and bring in snacks for a pirate party.