

Adventure at sea

School Session Overview October 2025

Key information

Length of session: 90 mins

Key Stage: KS1

Location(s) of session: Cutty Sark

Learning objectives

Learners will:

- Develop and order their ideas and vocabulary through playing roles and improvising scenes in various settings on the ship
- Know where Cutty Sark fits in a chronological framework of Britain's past
- Ask and answer questions to show understanding of past events and some of the ways in which we find out about the past
- Understand historical concepts and use them to make connections, draw contrasts, frame historically-valid questions and create their own structured accounts

Curriculum links

History KS1:

- Develop an awareness of the past
- Identify similarities and differences between ways of life in different periods.
- Use a wide vocabulary of everyday historical terms.
- Ask and answer questions, choosing and using parts of stories and other sources to show that they know and understand key features of events.
- Understand some of the ways in which we find out about the past and identify different ways in which it is represented

Key words

Cargo, trade, sailing, transporting, masts, ropes, rigging, galley, deck, sails, anchor

Overview of the session

Enquiry question: What was life on board Cutty Sark like 150 years ago?

Dry dock introduction

Learners discuss basic information about the ship and then go on a journey of discovery as if they were sailors aboard 150yrs ago.

Lower hold & Tween deck

Using investigation skills, learners find out what *Cutty Sark*'s purpose was as well as aspects of life onboard a Victorian sailing ship.

Main deck

Learners take part in imaginative drama where they reenact some of the sailor's jobs and see where the sailors in the past would have lived and worked.

Dry dock plenary

Learners handle objects and, using what they have learned, work out how the objects connect to *Cutty Sark*.



Suggested pre visit knowledge/ activities

This session works best for learners if they have been introduced to the different roles on an historic sailing ship to spark curiosity about life at sea (e.g. captain, sailor, cook, and carpenter). Encourage them to think about what skills they would need and what challenges they might face.

Suggested post visit activities

Invite learners to write a letter from the perspective of a young sailor on board *Cutty Sark*. What were their daily duties? How did they feel during the long voyage and what challenges did they face? What did they miss most about home and what incredible things did they see? To support empathy, historical understanding and creative writing.

Links to useful resources

Stories from the Sea: Shipwrecks resource | Royal Museums Greenwich
Cutty Sark KS1 Literacy activity: A day in the life of a sailor | Royal Museums Greenwich
Stories from the Sea: Exploration resource | Royal Museums Greenwich
Cutty Sark learning resources | Royal Museums Greenwich
Nautical terms and everyday phrases | National Maritime Museum