

Planning for Learning through Pirates

by Marianne Sargent. Illustrated by Cathy Hughes

Contents

Making plans 2-3

Using the 'Early Learning Goals' 4-6

EYFS Planning Chart 7

Theme 1: Ship Ahoy! 8-9

Theme 2: Flying the Jolly Roger flag 10-11

Theme 3: A pirate's life 12-13

Theme 4: 'X marks the spot' 14-15

Theme 5: Buried treasure 16-17

Theme 6: Sea shanties 18-19

Bringing it all together – 'Shipwrecked!' role play 20

Resources 21

Collecting evidence of children's learning 22

Activity overview 23

Home links 24

Family page Inside back cover



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Making plans

Child-friendly planning

The purpose of planning is to make sure that all children enjoy a broad and balanced experience of learning. Planning should be flexible, useful and child-friendly. It should reflect opportunities available both indoors and outside. Plans form part of a planning cycle in which practitioners make observations, assess and plan.

Children benefit from reflective planning that takes into account the children's current interests and abilities and also allows them to take the next steps in their learning. Plans should make provision for activity that promotes learning and a desire to imagine, observe, communicate, experiment, investigate and create.

Plans should include a variety of types of activity. Some will be adult-initiated or adult-led that focus on key skills or concepts. These should be balanced with opportunities for child-initiated activity where the children take a key role in the planning. In addition, there is a need to plan for the on-going continuous provision areas such as construction, sand and water, malleable materials, small world, listening area, book area, role play and mark-making. Thought also needs to be given to the enhanced provision whereby an extra resource or change may enable further exploration, development and learning.

Furthermore, the outdoor environment provides valuable opportunities for children's learning. It is vital that plans value the use of outdoor space.

The UK Frameworks

Within the UK a number of frameworks exist to outline the provision that children should be entitled to receive. Whilst a variety of terms and labels are used to describe the Areas of Learning, there are key principles which are common to each document. For example, they advocate that practitioners' planning should be personal, based on observations and knowledge of the specific children within a setting. They acknowledge that young children learn best when there is scope for child-initiated activity. In addition, it is accepted that young children's learning is holistic and although Areas of Learning are presented separately within each framework, in reality children's activities and explorations cross over and combine with different subject areas. Thus the Areas of

Learning are perhaps of most use for planning, assessment and recording to ensure that key areas are not overlooked.

Focused area plans

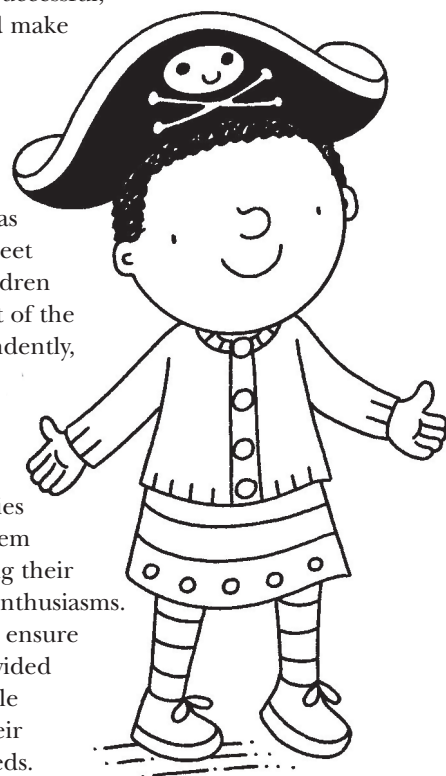
The plans you make for each day will outline areas of continuous provision and focused, adult-led activities. Plans for focused-area activities need to include aspects such as:

- Resources needed
- The way in which you might introduce activities
- Individual needs
- The organisation of adult help
- Size of the group
- Timing
- Safety
- Key vocabulary
- Key questions.

Identify the learning and the Early Learning Goals that each activity is intended to promote. Make a note of any assessments or observations that you are likely to carry out. After carrying out the activities, make notes on your plans to say what was particularly successful, or any changes you would make next time.

A final note

Planning should be seen as flexible. Not all groups meet every day, and not all children attend every day. Any part of the plan can be used independently, stretched over a longer period or condensed to meet the needs of any group. You will almost certainly adapt the activities as children respond to them in different ways and bring their own ideas, interests and enthusiasms. The important thing is to ensure that the children are provided with a varied and enjoyable curriculum that meets their individual developing needs.



Making plans

Using the book

Read the section which outlines links to the Early Learning Goals (pages 4-6) and explains the rationale for focusing on 'Pirates'.

The chart on page 7 gives an example format for weekly planning. It provides opportunity to plan for the on-going continuous provision, as well as more focused activities.

Use pages 8 to 19 to select from a wide range of themed, focused activities that recognise the importance of involving children in practical activities and giving them opportunities to follow their own interests.

For each 'Pirates' theme, two activities are described in detail as examples to help you in your planning and preparation. Key vocabulary, questions and learning opportunities are identified.

Use the activities as a basis to:

- Extend current and emerging interests and capabilities
- Engage in sustained conversations
- Stimulate new interests and skills.

Find out on page 20 how the 'Pirates' activities can be brought together with the 'Shipwrecked!' role play.

Use page 21 for ideas of resources to collect or prepare. Remember that the books listed are only suggestions. It is likely that you will already have within your setting a variety of other books that will be equally useful.

The activity overview chart on page 23 can be used either at the planning stage or after each theme has been completed. It will help you to see at a glance which aspects of children's development are being addressed and alert you to the areas which may need greater input in the future.

As children take part in the activities, their learning will progress. 'Collecting evidence' on page 22 explains how you might monitor each child's achievements.



There is additional material to support the working partnership of families and children in the form of a reproducible 'Family page' found inside the back cover.

It is important to appreciate that the ideas presented in this book will only be a part of your planning. Many activities that will be taking place as routine in your group may not be mentioned. For example, it is assumed that sand, dough, water, puzzles, role play, floor toys, technology and large scale apparatus are part of the ongoing early years experience. Role-play areas, stories, rhymes, singing, and group discussion times are similarly assumed to be happening in each week although they may not be a focus for described activities.

Using the ‘Early Learning Goals’

The principles that are common to each of the United Kingdom curriculum frameworks for the early years are described on page 2. It is vital that, when planning for children within a setting, practitioners are familiar with the relevant framework’s content and organisation for areas of learning. Regardless however, of whether a child attends a setting in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales they have a right to provision for all areas of learning. The children should experience activities which encourage them to develop their communication and language; personal, social, emotional, physical, mathematical and creative skills. They should have opportunities within literacy and be encouraged to understand and explore their world.

Within the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2014), Communication and Language; Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development are described as Prime Areas of Learning that are ‘particularly crucial for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive’ (page 7, DfE 2014). The Specific Areas of Learning are Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design.

For each area of learning, the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) describe what children are expected to be able to do by the time they enter Year 1. These goals, detailed on pages 4 to 6, have been used throughout this book to show how the activities relating to ‘Pirates’ aim to help children meet these expectations. For example, for Personal, Social and Emotional Development, one aspect relates to the development of children’s ‘self-confidence and self-awareness’. Activities aimed at helping children develop in this area have the reference PSE1. This will enable you to see which of the Early Learning Goals are covered for a given theme and to plan for areas to be revisited and developed.

In addition, an activity may be carried out to develop a range of areas of learning. For example, when the children build a role-play pirate ship they will use gross motor skills when moving and placing equipment, they will develop personal, social and emotional skills while working together, and they will develop their knowledge of expressive arts and design, during the build and later when using it during their play. Thus, whilst focused adult-led activities may have clearly defined goals at the planning stage, it must be remembered that as children take on ideas and initiate their own learning and activities, goals may change.

The Prime Areas of Learning

Communication and Language

Listening and attention: children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity. (CL1)

Understanding: children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events. (CL2)

Speaking: children express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners’ needs. They use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events. (CL3)

‘Pirates’ activities provide many opportunities for children to practice listening, understanding and speaking. By learning pirate language and sayings, children are extending their vocabulary, opening up more opportunities to use language when imagining and re-creating roles and experiences in their play. When playing the treasure hunt game in Theme 4 and flag action game in Theme 2, the children are required to listen to, understand and respond to instructions. They are also encouraged to use descriptive language during a treasure feely-bag game in Theme 5 and while making flags out of different materials in Theme 2. Furthermore, in Theme 6 they meet a ‘real’ pirate and use their communication skills to try to help him/her find his/her treasure by asking questions and sharing ideas.

Physical Development

Moving and handling: children show good control and coordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. They handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing. (PD1)

Health and self-care: children know the importance for good health of physical exercise, and a healthy diet, and talk about ways to keep healthy and safe. They manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs successfully, including dressing and going to the toilet independently. (PD2)

'Pirates' offers many opportunities for children to enjoy movement activities and handle tools and equipment. Making salt dough sea monsters in Theme 3 and threading jewels in Theme 5 improves fine motor control. Also, when making a real, working flag pole in Theme 2, children practice safely handling tools and construction materials. They gain physical confidence by walking the plank and climbing the ship's rigging in Theme 1 and improve their coordination through playing battleships and 'Capture the flag'. Children also experiment with ways of moving when playing a 'Treasure Island' game in Theme 4. Furthermore, they learn about becoming ill with scurvy at sea and find out why it is so important to eat a healthy diet that is rich in vitamin C.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Self-confidence and self-awareness: children are confident to try new activities, and say why they like some activities more than others. They are confident to speak in a familiar group, will talk about their ideas, and will choose the resources they need for their chosen activities. They say when they do or don't need help. (PSE1)

Managing feelings and behaviour: children talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable. They work as part of a group or class, and understand and follow the rules. They adjust their behaviour to different situations, and take changes of routine in their stride. (PSE2)

Making relationships: children play co-operatively, taking turns with others. They take account of one another's ideas about how to organise their activity. They show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings, and form positive relationships with adults and other children. (PSE3)

It is possible to use 'Pirates' as a gateway theme through which to explore personal, social and emotional issues. In Theme 2 children consider the nature of piracy and what it involves, opening up discussion about right and wrong. In Theme 5 they are asked to think about things they treasure in life and in Theme 2 they are encouraged to express their feelings using flags. Pirates are used as a springboard for discussion about being gentle in play and sharing with each other, as well as to express positive thoughts about friends and peers. Furthermore, the term 'peg leg' is explained in Theme 3 when the children are introduced to issues surrounding disability.

The Specific Areas of Learning

Literacy

Reading: children read and understand simple sentences. They use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common

irregular words. They demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read. (L1)

Writing: children use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible. (L2)

'Pirates' is an exciting theme, which helps practitioners to get children, and especially boys, excited about writing. Using classic story books, such as *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury in Theme 5, inspires children to make up their own stories and set up treasure hunts with written clues. In Theme 4 the children draw their own treasure maps, ascribing meaning to the marks they draw and write. They engage in shared writing in Theme 6 when they compose a sea shanty: an activity that builds their awareness of rhythm, rhyme and alliteration. In Theme 2 children draw on their knowledge of pirate behaviour and language to make up their own pirate mottos. All the time they are provided with purposeful reading and writing opportunities including building word banks, making and following maps, writing labels, drawing signs and naming ships. Finally, a geocaching activity in Theme 4 is used to inspire written communication as practitioners help children communicate with other early years settings via email.

Mathematics

Numbers: children count reliably with numbers from 1 to 20, place them in order and say which number is one more or one less than a given number. Using quantities and objects, they add and subtract two single-digit numbers and count on or back to find the answer. They solve problems, including doubling, halving and sharing. (M1)

Shape, space and measures: children use everyday language to talk about size, weight, capacity, position, distance, time and money to compare quantities and objects and to solve problems. They recognise, create and describe patterns. They explore characteristics of everyday objects and shapes and use mathematical language to describe them. (M2)

There are plenty of activities featuring 'Pirates' in this book that aim to help develop children's mathematical knowledge.



The activities in Theme 2 show how useful flags are for playing number, shape, size and colour games. In Theme 1, children count how many pirates it takes to sink a ship and in Theme 6 they practice counting with the use of die while playing a pirate version of snakes and ladders. Then, in Theme 3, they increase their understanding of number by firing cannon balls into numbered barrels and learn basic concepts underpinning addition and subtraction by ordering pirates to walk the plank. Children also take a closer look at real British coins in Theme 5 and become familiar with everyday language associated with monetary value. Furthermore, exploring pirate treasure is ideal for learning about colour, shape and pattern.



Understanding the World

People and communities: children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members. They know that other children don't always enjoy the same things, and are sensitive to this. They know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions. (UW1)

The world: children know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur, and talk about changes. (UW2)

Technology: children recognise that a range of technology is used in places such as homes and schools. They select and use technology for particular purposes. (UW3)

The topic of 'Pirates' opens up opportunities for learning about a diverse range of subjects. For instance, in Theme 1 children find out about the parts of a ship, the roles of different crew members and the type of food pirates ate. This is further explored in Theme 4 when the children learn about the different animals that lived on pirate ships, including unusual pets as well as productive farm animals. They find out about the reason why seamen sang shanties and the types of instruments pirates were most likely to play. Pirate flags are used as tools for recording wind direction in relation to the points of a compass and treasure hunting provides opportunities for children to learn about maps. In Theme 4, children learn about technological equipment and its uses for mapping and navigation when they use a GPS device to go geocaching and find some real treasure. All the time the children are using factual books and the Internet to gather information and find out more.

Expressive Arts and Design

Exploring and using media and materials: children sing songs, make music and dance and experiment with ways of changing

them. They safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function. (EAD1)

Being imaginative: children use what they have learnt about media and materials in original ways, thinking about uses and purposes. They represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through design and technology, art, music, dance, role play and stories. (EAD2)

Children explore a wide variety of materials, tools and techniques as they draw and paint pictures of ships and sea monsters, as well as make treasure chests, flags, treasure maps, hats, telescopes and models of sea monsters.

They work on a large scale to create a role-play pirate ship in Theme 1, carefully choosing from a variety of resources and assessing them to see if they adequately serve particular purposes. In Theme 5 they create a sparkling treasure-inspired collage and in Theme 3 they make story boxes for small world pirate play.

Pirate sea shanties are used as inspiration for dance, music and movement in Theme 6 and the children are encouraged to use percussion instruments to emulate the sound of the sea.

Note

The Early Learning Goals raise awareness of key aspects within any child's development for each area of learning. It is important to remember that these goals are reached through a combination of adult and child-initiated activities within early years settings, as well as in the child's home. Thus, it is vital that goals are shared by practitioners and parents, and children are given every opportunity to develop throughout their Early Years Foundation Stage both in their setting and at home.

Example chart to aid planning in the EYFS

Week beginning:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
FOCUSED ACTIVITIES					
Focus Activity 1:					
Focus Activity 2:					
Stories and rhymes					
CONTINUOUS PROVISION (Indoor)					
Collage					
Construction (large)					
Construction (small)					
ICT					
Imaginative play					
Listening					
Malleable materials					
Mark making					
Painting					
Role play					
Sand (damp)					
Sand (dry)					
Water					
CONTINUOUS PROVISION (Outdoor)					
Construction					
Creative play					
Exploratory play					
Gross motor					
ENHANCED PROVISION (Indoor)					
ENHANCED PROVISION (Outdoor)					



Theme 1: Ship Ahoy!

Communication and Language

- Take the children to a large quiet space and ask them to lie on their backs with their eyes closed. Give them a sensory description to help them imagine what it is like to sail on a pirate ship. Describe: the wide expanse of dark blue rolling ocean and cloudless skies; the sounds of the lapping water, pirates singing and gulls crying; feeling the boat rocking; the salty smell of the sea and the musty stink of unwashed pirates; the taste of the sea spray. Change the scene and plunge the ship into a storm. Invite children to stand up and take over describing the scene. (CL1, 3)

Physical Development

- Put gym benches outside for the children to pretend to 'walk the plank'. Show them how to jump and land safely. (PD1, 2)
- Use the PE apparatus in the school hall or visit a playground to practice climbing up rope ladders just like the rigging on a pirate ship. (PD1)
- Play 'Battleships'. Set out two rows of gym mats, one each end of an open space. These represent the pirate ships. Line up a row of bowling pins across the front edge of each 'ship'. Divide the children in to two teams and give them some large balls. These represent cannon balls. The aim of the game is to roll and throw the balls to knock down the opposing team's pins. (PD1)

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Discuss the need to be gentle when playing pirates. Invite the children to suggest how they can play at being pirate 'baddies' without actually hurting each other. (PSE2)

Literacy

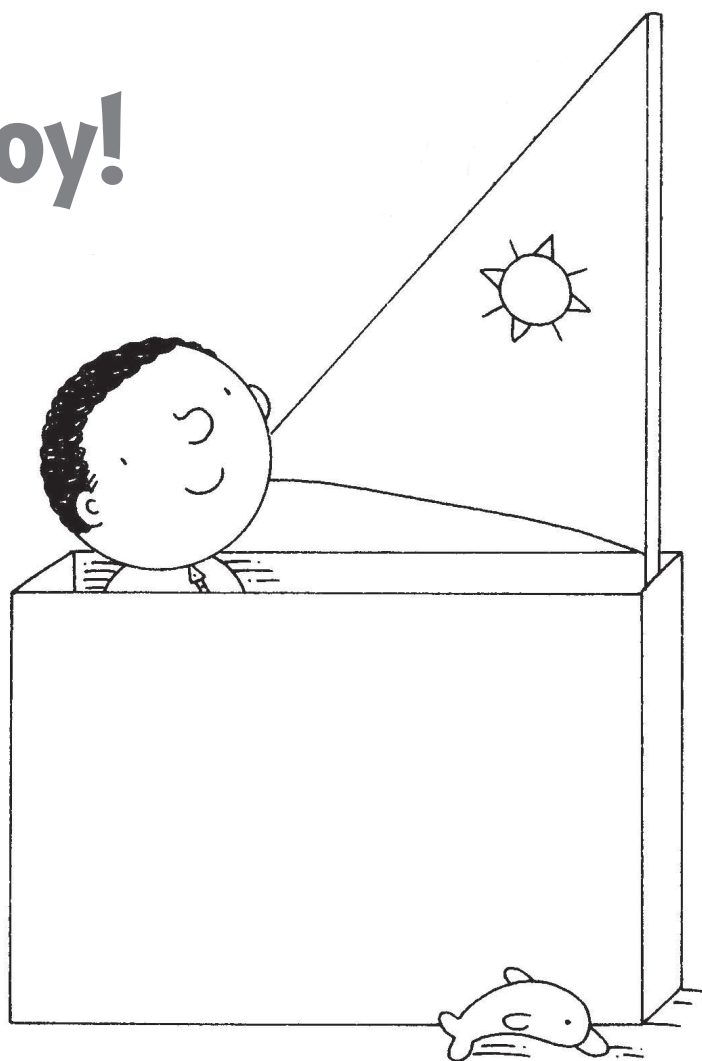
- List the parts of a pirate ship on pieces of card. Help the children to read out the labels then stick them on a large diagram of a ship. (L1)
- Find examples of pirate and ship names in story books and challenge the children to make up their own. (L1)

Mathematics

- Visit www.earlylearninghq.org.uk/pirate_game/Main.html to find an interactive pirate ship counting game. (M1)
- Float different sized boats in water and see how many toy pirates each can hold before it sinks. (M1, 2)

Understanding the World

- Read *Look Inside a Pirate Ship* by Minna Lacey. Identify the different parts of the ship. Find out how pirates



lived and the roles of different crew members. Create a lift-the-flap pirate ship (see display, opposite). (UW1, 2)

- Find out what happens to food on a pirate ship (see activity below). (UW2)
- Challenge the children to make junk pirate ships that float. Talk about the different materials available and consider which are waterproof and more likely to float. Test the ships and ask the children to explain why they float or sink. (UW2)

Expressive Arts and Design

- Use large bricks or crates to build a role-play pirate ship outside (see activity opposite). (EAD1, 2)
- Draw and paint pirate ships. (EAD1)

Activity: Pirate grub

Learning opportunity: Develops an understanding of decay; talks about why things happen and how things work.

Early Learning Goal: Understanding the World. The world.

Resources: Tinned, jarred, dried, pickled and frozen foods;

fresh foods that can be preserved in this way; sterile jars; cooking pan; vinegar; tupperware; freezer.

Key vocabulary: Fresh, preserve, rot, decay, mould, store, tin, jar, preservative, freeze, cool, bacteria, seal, boil, dry, food poisoning, sickness, diarrhoea.

Organisation: Small groups.

What to do: Explain that pirates used to stay on their ships for weeks at a time. This meant storing food below deck for long periods. There was no way to keep the food fresh so it would go off very quickly and pirates often got ill with food poisoning.

Explain that all foods contain tiny organisms called bacteria. We cannot see these bacteria feeding off the food but we can see the food 'going off' or rotting. It is possible to stop or kill bacteria. This is called preserving the food. There are different methods of preservation.

Show the children some examples of preserved food and explain how each method works:

- Tinned and jarred: Food is boiled to kill all the bacteria then sealed inside a container while it is still boiling hot.
- Frozen: Food is frozen and the bacteria are frozen with it.
- Pickled: Some foods can be pickled in a liquid preservative such as vinegar that kills the bacteria.
- Dried: Some foods can be left to dry out. This also kills the bacteria or slows it to a stop. Dried meats are often coated in salt, which helps to draw the moisture out.

Prepare and taste the different types of preserved food. Talk about the texture and how it looks, tastes and smells.

Have a go at preserving some food to show the children what happens to it. For example, boil some pears and seal them in a jar. Leave them overnight to cool then open the jar and invite the children to try them. Compare them with fresh pears and note the difference in appearance, texture and taste. Have a go at freezing fruit, drying bananas and pickling beetroot.

Carry out some experiments to find out what happens to food when it is stored without being preserved. Leave some fruit in a bowl and observe it as it goes mouldy and rots. Leave some milk out of the fridge for a couple of days and see what happens to it.

Explain that when we eat food that has gone off, our bodies usually try to get rid of it and we suffer with sickness and diarrhoea. That is why it is important to store food properly.

Activity: Building a role-play pirate ship

Learning opportunity: Constructs with a purpose in mind, using a variety of resources; engages in imaginative role play.

Early Learning Goal: Expressive Arts and Design. Exploring and using media and materials. Being imaginative.

Resources: Large wooden blocks and planks; crates; cardboard boxes; brooms; benches; chairs; blankets; clothes airers; ropes; flags.

Key vocabulary: Build, construct, plan, shape, join, stern, bow, hull, mast, rigging, deck, plank, Ship Ahoy!, high seas, sailing, ocean, port, starboard, poop deck, quarterdeck.

Organisation: Small groups.

What to do: Challenge the children to build a role-play pirate ship using large construction materials and everyday objects. Encourage them to make their own suggestions about what they can use. Promote discussion about their different ideas as they work together to build their ship.

Once the ship is complete give the children time to play in it. Later, help them to evaluate their work by asking if there is anything they would like to change.

Display

Create a lift-the-flap pirate ship. Draw a large outline of a ship on thick card. Include a mast but not sails. Cut it out and use it as a stencil to draw another ship on white card. In pencil, divide the lower deck of the ship into parts, including a stowaway, sleeping area and galley. Invite children to draw pictures showing what is happening within each area inside the ship as well as on and around the mast.

Use the stencil to draw an identical outline of the ship on another piece of white card. Draw sails on this picture. This is going to be the outside of the ship and it will sit on top of the first piece of card. With a pencil, divide this picture into the same ship's areas as the first. Use this as a guide to mark out door flaps in black pen. Rub out the pencil marks then invite children to paint and draw details on the outside of the ship.

Use sharp scissors or a craft knife to cut open the flaps you marked out earlier. Cut around the sails to create more flaps that reveal the pirates on and around the mast underneath. Then, taking care not to put any glue on the flaps, stick the top card onto the bottom card. Finally, hang the picture on the wall at a height that will enable children to open and close the flaps independently.