



KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER: VOICE AND SONGS 2



- *A sea shanty is a type of song sung by sailors at sea
- *Sea shanties have a strong, steady beat and are often call and response in nature. The 'caller' is called the Shantyman. The Shantyman often improvised the words to songs
- *The rhythm of the song helped the sailors to work together. Work was really hard. It included loading, pulling, pumping, dropping and raising the anchor and setting the sails
- *Singing also helped to alleviate boredom. Sailors were often at sea for a very long time and missed home
- *Singing also helped build trust and friendship. The sailors on board the ship had to spend a lot of time together!
- *Sea shanties were usually unaccompanied
- *The word shanty comes from the French word 'chanter' which means 'to sing'
- *Sea shanties make references to many shipboard practices and help to tell us about history at sea. Sometimes the language is quite rough and unsuitable for children!

*Visit this site to hear some *suitable* sea shanties:
www.artofmanliness.com/articles/the-10-manliest-sea-shanties/

Nautical Slang

- 'I passed the test with flying colours' - The phrase 'flying colours' comes from when a ship has been victorious at battle and has her flag flying
 - 'I feel groggy today' - The word 'groggy' come from when a sailor has drunk too much grog. Grog is rum and water
 - 'I eat 3 square meals a day' - Sailors were sometimes served food on square wooden plates
 - 'You must toe the line and do as I say' - 'Toe the line' refers to when the ship's crew were called to attention and asked to stand with their toes along a seam in the deck planking
- Other phrases from nautical slang include—'pipe down' 'a long shot' being a 'loose canon' 'give a wide berth' and to 'know the ropes'

HMS Victory is a ship docked at Portsmouth Harbour. It was Lord Nelson's flag-ship first launched in 1765. HMS Victory fought in the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. The battle was a victory even though Lord Nelson died. To preserve his body and bring it home safely, Nelson was placed in a barrel of rum. Legend has it that the sailors continued to drink rum from the barrel. In a way, it was like paying their respects. There is a statue of him in Trafalgar Square in London.



Suggested listening and singing:

- Blow the Man Down—this sounds like the theme of Spongebob Squarepants
- Roll the Old Chariot—this has the reference to 'a drop of Nelson's blood.'
- Leave Her Johnny
- Old Billy Riley
- Boney was a Warrior
- Sacramento—this refers to Cape Horn, a much feared place for sailors
- Rio Grande
- A-Roving
- What Shall we do with a Drunken Sailor?



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| Call and response | Two phrases where the second is heard in direct response to the first sometimes like an echo |
| Improvised | To create spontaneously without preparation |
| Unaccompanied | When a song is sung alone without any instruments |

Life At Sea

Whether you were an explorer, in the navy or transporting and trading goods on merchant ships, life at sea was hard. Sailors lived in cramped conditions and disease spread quickly. Food was poor and sailors became ill. Scurvy was a disease caused from lack of Vitamin C as sailors lacked fresh fruit to eat. Discipline was strict and sailors were flogged. There were no women and sailors were at sea for months on end. Pay was poor and the weather could be bad. No wonder the sailors sang—wouldn't you?!

