**Captain’s Coming Commands**



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* Captain's coming!
* At ease!
* Bow!
* Stern!
* Port!
* Starboard!
* Swab the deck!
* Climb the rigging!
* To the boats! (have them sit in groups of four socially distanced two sit in front of the “the boat” the other two in back of the front two like they are in a lifeboats)
* Mermaids!
* Pirate Pete!

Scroll down for other ideas below. Just keep them socially distanced as much as humanly possible!

Thanks,

Chalese

**Directions From Wikipedia**

Assign one person to be the "Captain." The role of the Captain is call out the actions and dismiss the players who don't do the actions quick enough or who break from character. Once the captain calls an action, each player has to quickly start performing the action (e.g. within 3-4 seconds). If they don't find a group fast enough or perform the right action, they are out of the game. When there is 1 player left, the game is over. Since there are many variations to the actions (see below) we recommend the Captain choose their list of 5-10 actions and ask for volunteers to help demonstrate each of the action before beginning the activity.

For the groups that are meant to include a specific number of players e.g. Crows Nest! (3 players) if the group ends up with a number different than the one called, those players are out of the game e.g. If you find a Crows Nest with 2 or 4 people in it, the whole group is out. Any sailor who does something different from what the caller said is out of the game. If there are several players left and it seems like it will be too difficult to “trick” them, you can also declare multiple winners and end that round. For some of the commands, like “Jellyfish”, players may not prefer (or may not be able) to get down on the ground – come up with an alternative way of acting that command out (e.g. they can act like they are “floating” around the room, just like jellyfish “float” in the water). To make this a more co-operative game, you can just play for the fun with nobody being out.

Here is a sample of the actions or commands that the Captain will call out...

* Captain's Coming!: Everyone stands at "attention" (in a salute), and they can’t move from this position until the caller says, "At Ease!" If they laugh or break from the attention, they are dismissed.
* To the ship!: Players run to the right.
* To the shore!: Players run to the left.

(for an added bonus be sure to point the right direction the first few times and then begin to point the opposite occasionally. You will be surprised how many go the way you point instead of the right direction)

* Sailor Overboard!: One person drops to one knee the other stands behind them, puts a hand on their shoulder. Both scan the ocean for the sailor overboard.
* Crows Nest!: Three players stand backs to each other and lock arms at the elbows to form the crows nest.
* Mess Table!: Four players squat in a circle like sitting at a table and pretend to eat like they haven't eaten in days. Tell them to make really loud eating sounds like "YUM YUM YUM YUM YUM!"
* Walk the Plank!: Five people stand in a single file row hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them

The Captain is Coming! This is just a random guy, pretending to be a ship captain.

**Variations**

Several of these are similar commands with different group names or slight variations:

* Sailor Overboard: 2 players. One person gets down on one knee and the other puts a hand on their shoulder and pretends to search for someone.
* Bunk Beds: 2 players. One person lays back down on the ground and holds up their arms. The second person puts their head by the other person's feet and uses their hands to support themselves. The first person grabs their legs and holds them up.
* Beached Whale: 1 player. Lays on the ground while acting like a beached whale and making weird sounds.
* 3 sailors rowing: 3 players. Get in a line and pretend to row a boat while singing "row row row your boat".
* 4 sailors pointing north: 4 players. All get into a circle and point up.
* 5 sailors eating: 5 players. Get in a circle and pretend to eat.
* Seasick: 1 player. Pretend to throw up over the side of the ship.
* Ships: Run to the left.
* Sailors: Run to the right.
* Hit the deck: players fall to the floor on their stomach
* Swab the deck:
* Bow: To the front of the ship
* Stern: To the back of the ship
* Port: To the left side of the ship
* Starboard: To the right side of the ship
* Rowboat: Find a partner (2 total), sit on the ground one behind the other, and row
* Seasick: To the side of the ship and do your duty (pretend to throw up) overboard
* Jellyfish: Get down on the ground, on our back and shake your arms and legs in the air
* Lifeboat: find 5 partners (6 kids total) and sit in a circle on the ground
* Octopus: find 7 partners (8 kids total), gather in a circle and have each person stick a leg out
* Holystone the Deck: Get on their hands and knees and pretends to scrub the floor
* Seagull: Players duck and cover their heads
* Roll call: the crew must line up at the midline of the playing area, feet together, toes on the line, salute and say “aye-aye captain!” The crew may not lower their salute until the captain salutes and says “at ease.”
* Crow’s nest: players act as if they’re climbing up a ladder to the crow’s nest, the top of the main mast, an area at the highest point of the ship to lookout.
* Swab the deck: players act like they’re mopping the deck.
* Shark attack: the captain becomes a shark and tries to tag the crew. Those tagged go to the “brig” to dance or perform a designated exercise.
* Break time: active crew members can run to the “brig” and tag as many people as possible. Those that are tagged can come back in and play again. Make sure everyone gets let out of the “brig” during break time.
* Sailor overboard: players pair up and decide which one gets on their hands and knees and which one places a foot gently on the other’s back while acting like their using a spyglass to find the sailor in the water.
* Drop anchor: crew lies on their backs with legs up and acts like an anchor.
* Pirates: crew closes one eye, puts up a hooked finger, hobbles around like they have a pegleg and say “Aaargh!”
* Row to Shore: crew gets in lines of 4; players act as if they are rowing to safety while singing “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”
* Sharks: lie on stomach with feet up.
* Freeze: stop all actions when this is called. If a further command is given without saying ‘unfreeze’ anyone obeying it is out.
* At Ease: Relax (this is only said when players are at attention because “Captain’s Coming” has been said)
* Players who are "out" have to march around the outside of the rest of the group singing 'Oh we oh, A pirate's life for me.'"
* You can also include the rules for 'Simon Says', i.e. if Simon Says the action then it has to be done. If Simon does not say then the players have to ignore the command and follow the previous one. Very good for improving concentration skills. "I also add a little extra to the concentration skills needed by pointing in the 'wrong' direction and watching the children who have the courage of their convictions rather than just following the majority of the class!" - [Rod Hogg from Teaching Ideas](https://www.teachingideas.co.uk/warm-up-ideas/pirate-ship)

From beyondthechalkboard.org: "Captain’s Coming can easily be adapted to teach players vocabulary from other content areas. Instead of being on a ship, maybe players need to learn North, South, East and West. Add commands where they have to act out meteorological terms (e.g. the command “Cloud” might have them “floating” around the room; “Hail” might have them stomp their feet loudly on the ground, and “Storm’s A-Coming!” might have them hold their arms over their head like an umbrella, not able to move until the caller says “the storm has passed”). There are lots of variations you could try – be creative!

**Debrief**

Gather the players in a circle to reflect on the activity. Was it easy or hard to remember the instructions? What was their favorite command to do? If you have time to play multiple rounds, consider asking after each round: what might you do differently next round to stay in longer