

A Life at Sea

Picture a graceful clipper ship out on the ocean. The wind billows its sails as it glides smoothly over the waves. For the crew, life on board must be relaxed and easy, right? •

Picture yourself as a cabin boy. You signed on because you wanted adventure. Well, you might find adventure, and you might even become a captain yourself one day. The skills of sailing are called *seamanship*. On board the ship, you might learn which rope knots you need and how to tie them. Perhaps you would learn how to measure the ship's rate of speed and the depth of the water. You certainly would learn to tell where you are and what weather is coming your way. •

Still, you are a cabin boy, which means you have many chores. You have to swab (scrub) the deck, polish the brass, waterproof the rigging with tar, catch rainwater in a barrel, clean dirty living areas on the ship, carry coal for the stove, and— well, you get the picture. At night, you crawl into a hammock, fall asleep to the sound of the ship's bell marking the time, and dream of faraway places. •

Strategy What do you predict this article will be about? What makes you think that? What might the author's purpose be? How should you read this?

Skill Which author's purpose relates to writing about the beauty of life at sea? Watch for another possible purpose as you read.

Skill Why do you think the author told you about some of the things you could learn on a clipper ship? Did you read more slowly or reread any parts of this section?

Strategy How did predicting the author's purpose help you understand the article better?