

Pirate Facts

Here are some pirate facts to get you started:

- A pirate is anyone who attacks and robs ships. Some pirates were “privateers” who had permission from their nation’s governments to attack and plunder the ships of enemy nations.
- There are records of pirates from ancient times till current times. The 16th through 18th centuries were the Golden Age of Piracy.
- Pirates took merchant ships and warships and streamlined them for speed. A strong, fast ship was what a pirate needed.
- A pirate ship might carry as many as 40 cannons.
- Most pirates have been men, but there have been some famous female pirates, including Cheng I Sao, a Chinese pirate queen with 80,000 pirates under her command.
- Pirates usually ignore laws, but many pirate bands had “codes” of laws they made up for themselves. Black Bart’s band had a set of 11 rules, including a no gambling rule, lights out at 8:00, and a rule that musicians could have only Sundays off. However, pirate musicians were usually paid more than other pirates.
- Pirates were violent criminals, like modern gangsters. They usually made their money by stealing, smuggling, and holding captives for ransom. Just like modern gangsters, most pirates had hard lives and didn’t make much money, though some pirates became rich and famous.
- Romantic images of pirates can be found in books like *Treasure Island* and movies like *Pirates of the Caribbean*. There have been operas written about pirates, and there are many ballads and paintings showing adventuresome pirates.
- The most common kind of modern piracy is pirating movies, games, or music. The use of the word “pirate” as a verb meaning to use other’s work without permission was first recorded in 1701, according to the *Online Etymology Dictionary*.

