



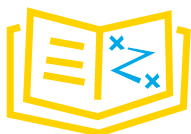
What's unique about Sailing

Sailing offers young people a unique sporting experience that helps them move, think, connect and learn in new ways. Because it is often new to everyone, it can level the playing field, giving young people the chance to discover new strengths and succeed outside their usual roles. Alongside developing confidence, teamwork and physical literacy, sailing also builds communication, independence and problem-solving skills. Its inclusive nature brings young people together regardless of background or ability, creating safe, meaningful, and positive experiences that can inspire lifelong participation.

What is the intent of your format



Develop confidence and competence within physical activity/sport skills



Champion physical literacy through opportunities to move, connect, think, and feel



Engage new/target groups of young people (tackling inequalities)

Our six sailing-related on-land games make up a fun, inclusive, and engaging Sailing Skills for Life Festival, perfect for dipping your toe into the wonderful world of sailing. The games are all about participation, enjoyment and confidence building. They can be played in mixed gender groups and are the perfect way to introduce new audiences to a sport that broadens horizons, encourages teamwork and resilience, and helps young people discover new strengths.

Target group benefits



All young people

The Sailing Skills for Life Festival is designed for all young people. Our six sailing-related games can be played anywhere, with no boats or water required. The activities can be adapted to be competitive or purely participation focused, making them accessible and inclusive for everyone. Through fun and engaging challenges, young people will explore new ways of moving, learn sailing-inspired skills and language, and connect with a different kind of sporting experience through positive and meaningful participation.

It's just not sailing if you...

- 1 Don't move your body in weird and wonderful ways.
- 2 Don't daydream about open blue spaces.
- 3 Don't work as a team, building confidence and resilience along the way.



How to run inter-competition: Sailing Skills for Life Festival



How to set up

- Choose your location, all activities can be delivered indoors or outside and adapted to suit the space available
- Mark out clear activity areas using cones or existing lines (typically 10m x 10m or lane-based)
- Set out equipment in advance, organised by game or station
- Define key points such as boundaries, start/finish lines, and movement routes where needed
- Ensure all spaces are safe, clear of hazards, and equipment is secure
- Position any visual aids so they can be easily seen and used during the activity
- Give a quick demonstration of each game once set up
- Some activities have short videos to watch beforehand that provide additional knowledge, simply scan the QR code on the activity card
- Check there is enough space for safe movement between participants and groups.



Age group

KS2 (7-11 years old)



Gender

Mixed



Participant numbers

- The Sailing Skills Festival can be played with the whole class
- Groups of 8-10 rotating around different games works well to maximise engagement.



Target audience

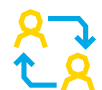
- For all – these games can be scaled up or down and can be adapted to be competitive or purely participation focused, where all young people feel included.



Benefits for YP

Young people will:

- Build confidence through new and unfamiliar movement challenges
- Develop communication and teamwork in paired and group activities
- Strengthen problem-solving through rules and changing tasks
- Improve balance, coordination and overall physical literacy
- Introduce basic sailing language and concepts in a simple way
- Create inclusive experiences where all abilities can take part equally.



Roles for YP

Young people can be a:

- **Game leader / coach:** Helps explain the activity, demonstrates movements, and keeps the game flowing safely and fairly
- **Equipment manager:** Sets up and tidies equipment, checks stations are ready, and supports smooth transitions between activities
- **Reflection leader:** Encourages teams to discuss challenges, teamwork and positive experiences during activities.



Progression

- Feel ready to get on the water after the Sailing Skills for Life Festival?
- Contact the Royal Yachting Association directly and we can facilitate this for you with our regional teams – simply email onboard@rya.org.uk
- Young people can also continue their sailing journey through local clubs, centres and community opportunities linked to [RYA OnBoard](#).



Additional support

Sailing is a fully inclusive sport. To support you to adapt your practice, check out the [SEND Inclusion Toolkit](#) co-created by YST and the National Disability Sports Organisations (NDSOs) who are the leading experts within inclusive sport. They provide advice, support and opportunities for people of all ages with specific impairments. [The toolkit](#) provides you with an introduction to each Special Educational Needs and Disability, key top tips for creating an inclusive environment and signposting to further training and development opportunities within each NDSO. It will help you adapt any practice in addition to our suggestions to make it inclusive for all.

Physical Literacy

We have designed these formats with physical literacy at their heart. We want all young people to have a positive experience with physical activity from an early age. As far as possible, we've considered opportunities for young people to move, think, feel and connect through our activities, and given you suggestions to make adaptations. But, if they don't work for you and your young people, then use the THRIVE principle to remove barriers, make changes and give ownership to your young people to have a positive experience with the activities to see their true value.

For further support, look to the Physical Literacy Enactment Guide - Community, which can be found by [clicking here](#), and going to the "Getting Started" guide section to download it.

NGB regional contacts

- If you are looking for some additional support or guidance all enquiries can be directed to onboard@rya.org.uk.

Personal development

- There are plenty of training courses for both children and adults run at RYA Training Centres up and down the country. You can use the [RYA Where's My Nearest](#) search tool to find a club or course near you
- The RYA National Sailing Scheme provides a clear pathway to get started, beginning with RYA Youth Stage 1 for children and RYA Level 1 for adults. Visit our [Get Started](#) page for more information
- Any RYA OnBoard club will support youngsters to continue their sailing journey. Contact the Royal Yachting Association directly and we can facilitate this for you with our regional teams – simply email onboard@rya.org.uk.

Where to participate next?

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- Young people can also continue their sailing journey through local clubs, centres and community opportunities linked to [RYA OnBoard](#).

Where to compete next?

- The RYA has a wide network of clubs and centres that support competitive sailing, from introductory "learn to race" sessions through to regular club racing. A great place to start is any [RYA OnBoard](#) club or centre, where you'll find friendly, supportive environments to build racing skills at your own pace.



Why Sailing for your school?

Sailing offers young people a unique sporting experience that helps them move, think, connect and learn in new ways. Because it is often new to everyone, it can level the playing field, giving young people the chance to discover new strengths and succeed outside their usual roles. Alongside developing confidence, teamwork and physical literacy, sailing also builds communication, independence and problem-solving skills. Its inclusive nature brings young people together regardless of background or ability, creating positive experiences that can inspire lifelong participation in sport and physical activity.

How to use activities in curriculum time

Our Sailing Skills for Life Festival is made up of six on-land activities with no need for water or a boat! The activities offer primary schools a fun and inclusive way to introduce sailing through curriculum PE. Using simple equipment and adaptable activities, they help children develop teamwork, communication, problem-solving and confidence while learning basic sailing concepts and language. The games work well in halls or playgrounds and support wider School Games values, THRIVE principles, and whole-child development.

The activities also support physical literacy by developing balance, coordination, agility and spatial awareness in engaging and playful ways. Alongside physical skills, children build confidence, motivation and positive attitudes towards movement, helping create foundations for lifelong participation in sport and physical activity and supporting their overall health and wellbeing.

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These formats and activities have been designed with physical literacy at their heart. We want all young people to have a positive experience with physical activity from an early age. As far as possible, we've considered opportunities for young people to move, think, feel and connect through our activities, and given you suggestions to make adaptations. But, if they don't work for you and your young people, then use the THRIVE principle to remove barriers, make changes and give ownership to your young people to have a positive experience with the activities to see their true value.

Thrive isn't a checklist – it's a lens to help you sense check quality and inclusion, so consider the following when choosing which format to deliver and how it supports your young people to have a positive experience with physical activity:

- **TAILORED:** does your event support the needs, strengths and circumstances of the group?
- **HOLISTIC:** do the selected activities support young people to move, connect, think and feel?
- **REFLECTIVE:** have you built in time to allow young people to reflect on their engagement and to make choices about what they want to take part in next?
- **INCLUSIVE:** does your event support all young people to engage, feel welcome and included to take part?
- **VARIED:** have you planned for activity differentiation with equipment, space, task and outcome to provide appropriate challenge and maintain interest for all?
- **EMPOWERING:** have you consulted your young people to ask what they want to do, and how they want the event to run? Often, they create better rules and adaptations than we do, which gives them ownership and a positive experience.

For further support, look to the Physical Literacy Enactment Guide - Education, which can be found by [clicking here](#), and going to the "Getting Started" guide section to download it.



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- Any RYA OnBoard club will support youngsters to continue their sailing journey. Contact the Royal Yachting Association directly and we can facilitate this for you with our regional teams – simply email onboard@rya.org.uk.

Where to participate next?

- Feel ready to get on the water after the Sailing Skills for Life Festival?
- This can seem like a big step, but getting out on the water is hugely beneficial to pupils both within and outside of the classroom. RYA OnBoard – the RYA's grassroots sailing and windsurfing programme – is carefully designed to further develop life skills and has learning at its core. Find out more by [clicking here](#)
- Contact the Royal Yachting Association directly and we can facilitate this for you with our regional teams – simply email onboard@rya.org.uk. We can get you on the water too!
- Young people can also continue their sailing journey through local clubs, centres and community opportunities linked to [RYA OnBoard](#).

Where to compete next?

- Contact your SGO to seek progression from school-based intra-competition into local inter-school competitions.
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How to run intra-competition: Sailing Skills for Life Festival



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Roles for YP

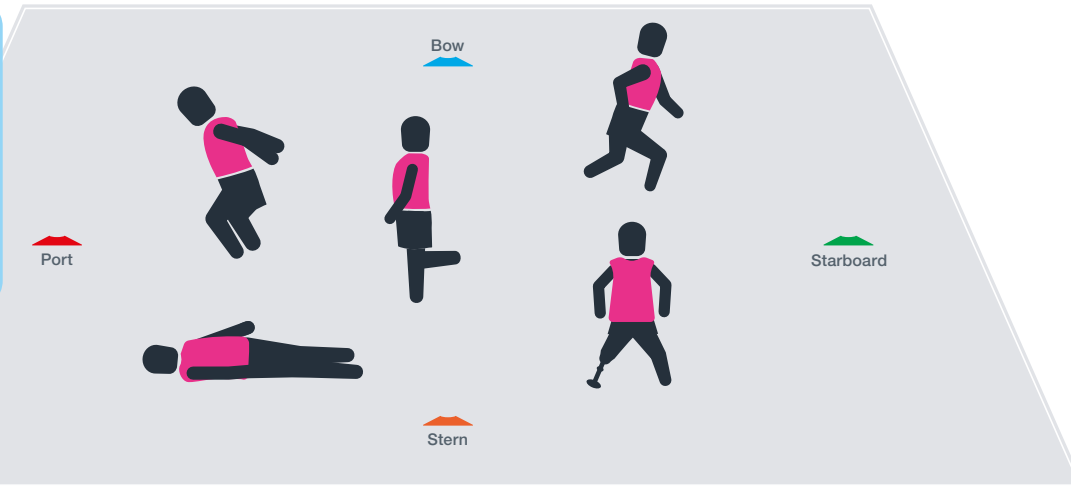
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How to make it easier

- Keep to just “front/back/left/right” then gradually add sailing terms
- Walk instead of run

How to make it harder

- Call out two commands (e.g. “starboard then bow”) to create a sequence
- Make it a race or ‘last person standing’ style game

Spirit of the Games



- What helped you keep going even if you didn't know the correct answer?
- How do mistakes help us learn?



- How did you show respect to others while moving around the game space?
- Why is it important to wait for the leader's call before running?

How to play

- Mark out a diamond with 4 cones (different colours are important – red for port and green for starboard if possible) to represent a large boat. Label each cone: bow, stern, port, starboard
- Explain what each word means:
 - bow (at the front)
 - stern (at the back)
 - port (left hand side)
 - starboard (right hand side)
- Teacher/leader calls a command (e.g. “Run to port!”). Children run to the correct corner using different movements such as jogging, skipping or side stepping.
- Add variations:
 - Call “on deck!” and children gather in the middle
 - “Climb the rigging” and children mimic climbing some netting
 - “Cannon ball” and children lie on the ground.

Safety

- Ensure the area is free of obstacles
- Remind children to look where they're running.

Equipment required

- 4 cones (different colours if possible).

Space required

- 10m x 10m square (indoor hall or playground).

Estimated set-up time

- 5 minutes.

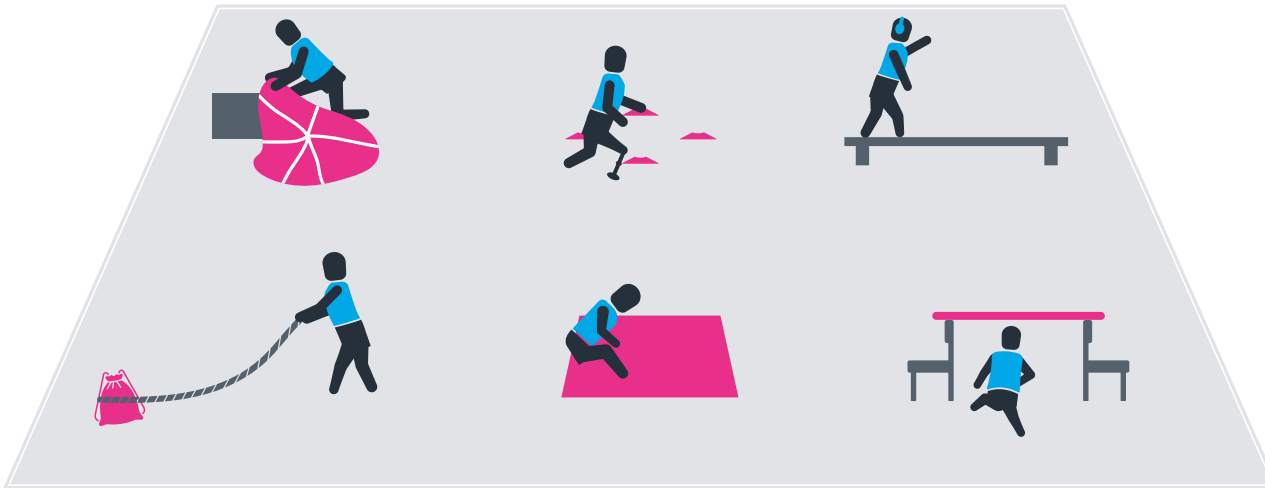
Difficulty level





Sailing Obstacle Course

PRIMARY



How to make it easier

- Fewer obstacles in the course
- Walk instead of run

How to make it harder

- Add timing – which team can complete the course as fast as possible
- Include extra sailing challenges – e.g. tying a sailing knot to finish

Spirit of the Games



- How did you feel when you tried something that looked tricky at first?
- How did you feel after you'd completed the course?



- How does it feel to complete a challenge like an obstacle course?
- How does practising something help us improve?

How to play

Set up a sailing-themed obstacle course using different equipment to mimic physical sailing skills.

- Duck under a pole balanced on two chairs – going underneath the boom
- Move across a PE bench – balancing on the boat
- Move in circles around cones (anti-clockwise or clockwise) like tacking and gybing
- Pull a rope attached to an object towards you – hoisting the sail
- Gather up a parachute into a box/bag to pack away the sail
- Roll poly across a PE mat – you've capsized!

Split the group into teams and take it in turns to cross the obstacle course, encouraging teamwork, communication and problem-solving throughout.

Safety

- Ensure all equipment is stable and won't slip, use mats if there is a risk of falling
- If something is being pulled by a rope, make sure it's lightweight
- Encourage children to move in control rather than rushing.

Equipment required

- | | | | |
|--|------------|--|--------|
| | PE benches | | Pole |
| | PE mats | | Chairs |
| | Parachute | | Cones |
| | Rope | | |

Space required

- 15m x 15m square (indoor hall or playground).

Estimated set-up time

- 10 minutes.

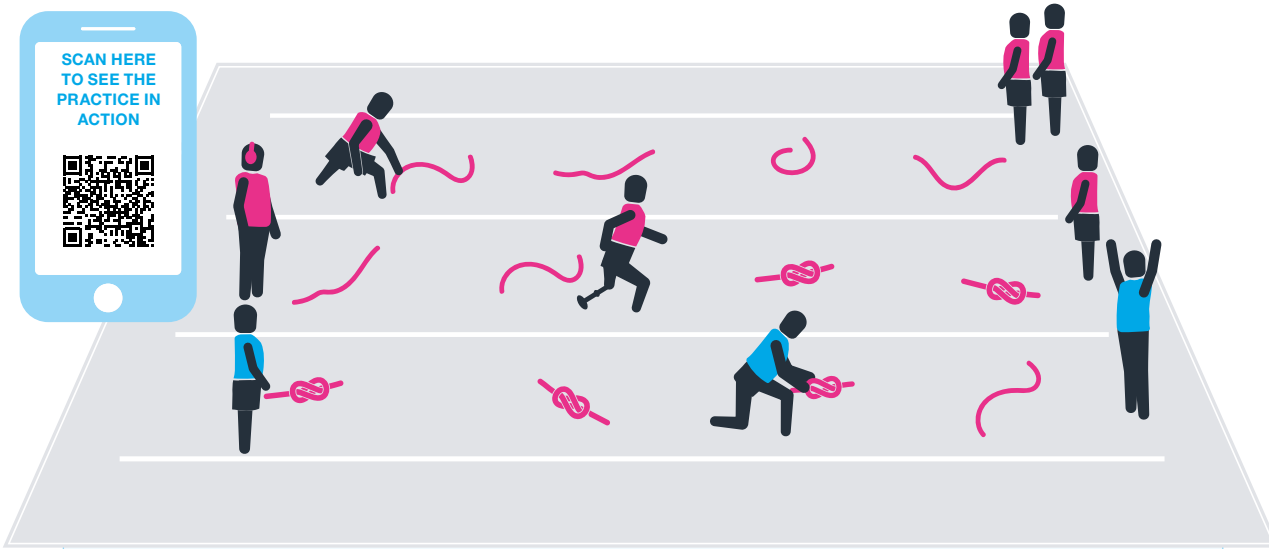
Difficulty level





'Knot' Your Average Relay

PRIMARY



How to make it easier

- Only use one simple knot (figure of eight)
- Fewer ropes along the course

How to make it harder

- Add more complicated knots (round turn and two half hitches)
- Blindfolded knot tying!

Spirit of the Games



- Did you always check the knot was tied properly before moving on?
- Why is it important that a knot is tied correctly?



- How did you have to work as a team to complete the task?
- Where else have you used teamwork to get something done this week, at school or at home?




How to play

- Lay out a course with a start and finish line. Have as many lanes as there are teams. Lay two or three pieces of rope at equal intervals along the lane
- Take time to show the group how to tie one or two sailing knots – reef knot, figure of eight, round turn and two half hitches (you'll need a chair leg or similar for this one!) etc.
- Each team member must take it in turns to move along the line, tying the chosen knot in each piece of rope – these could be the same or different. The next person goes along and unties them
- The game finishes when every member of the team has tied and untied the knots.

Safety

- Ensure enough space in lanes so children don't bump into each other
- Dynamically risk assess rope as trip hazard.

Equipment required

-  Small lengths of rope
-  Chairs
-  Something to mark out a relay course start and finish line

Space required

- 10m x 5m lane per team (indoors or outdoors).

Estimated set-up time

- 5 minutes.

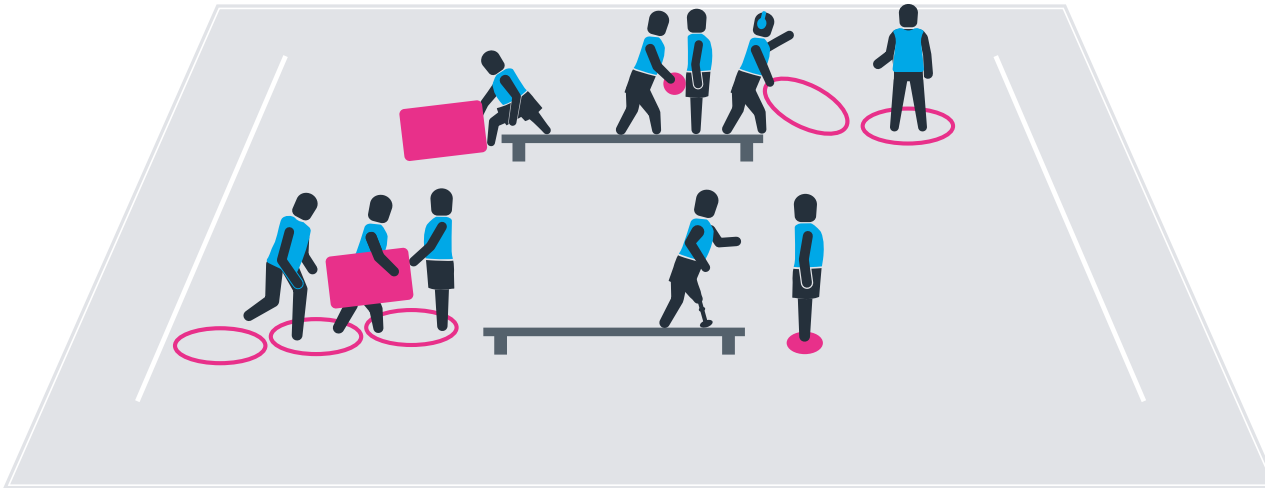
Difficulty level





River Crossing

PRIMARY







How to play

- Split the group into two or three teams (5-7 per team) and set up a 'river crossing' with two shorelines. Give each group the same set of equipment
- Use a variety of equipment that teams can stand on – some easier (hula hoops, PE mats) and some difficult (benches, spot markers). They're not allowed to touch the water, they must be inside or on top of each piece of equipment. Make sure that the total amount of equipment does not reach across the river – they must take some with them as they go!
- As a team – each group must set up their own river crossing bridge using the equipment. They can't leave anyone behind; the group must travel together
- If someone falls into the water, the whole group must go back to the first shoreline and start again
- Encourage teams to reflect and adapt their strategy after each attempt.

Safety

- Ensure mats and benches won't slip
- Show proper way to move equipment depending on weight.

Equipment required

-  PE benches
-  PE mats
-  Hula hoops
-  Spot markers

Space required

- 10-15m wide river between two shorelines.

Estimated set-up time

- 10 minutes.

Difficulty level



How to make it easier

- Have a halfway point 'safe zone' (sandbar) – once the team reach that point, if someone falls in, they only need to return to that point
- Give more equipment so groups can make a crossing without having to take equipment with them along the way

How to make it harder

- Give less items so teams must take it with them – three pieces of equipment for a team of 5-7
- Try the task in complete silence!

Spirit of the Games



- What ideas did you come up with as a team to cross the river?
- Did everyone have the chance to contribute ideas and feel involved?

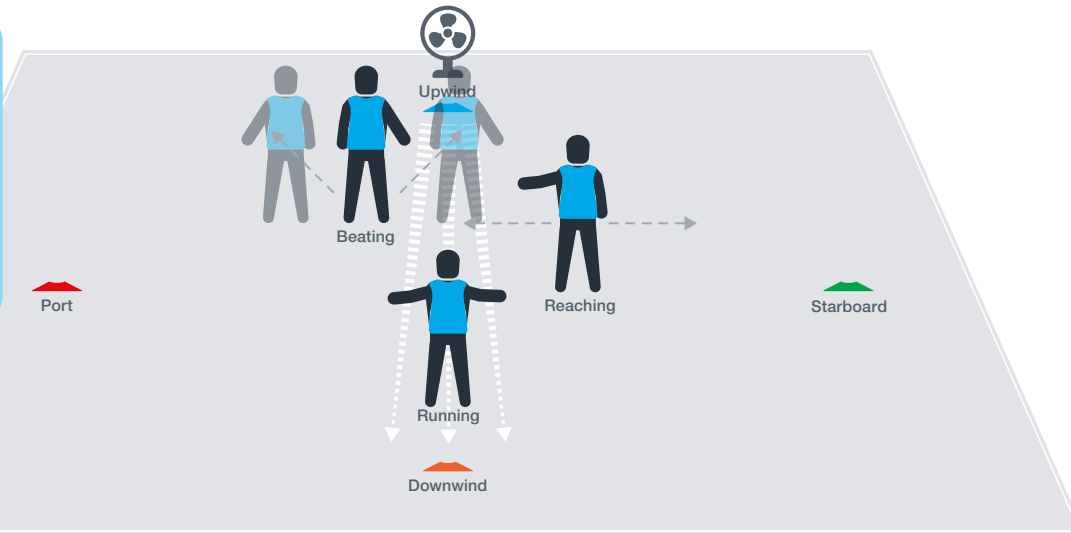


- How did it feel when you had to start again?
- What does it take to achieve something that is tricky?



Points of Sail

PRIMARY



How to play

- This game will help us learn where and how we can sail in relation to the wind while developing spatial awareness and coordination
- Set up a fan or arrow that represents the wind
- Explain the points of sail and actions for each one – your arms will represent the sail
 - Sailing towards the wind – we can't go directly towards the wind, so we need to zig zag. Hold out your arms at 45° and move in either direction until you reach the wind. If your right arm is out, travel towards the right. If your left arm is out, travel towards the left. This is called beating
 - Sailing across the wind. Hold out either arm at 90° to your body and move in that direction, one way or the other: port (left) or starboard (right). This is called reaching
 - Sailing with the wind. Turn your back to the wind, hold both arms out at 90° to your body and move away from the wind. This is called running
- Go outside and play using the real wind direction if possible, using something to mark where the wind is coming from.

Safety

- Encourage young people to look out for each other, especially when zig-zagging upwind. If your right arm is out, you have right of way. If you come across anyone with their left hand out, they must stop or go around you
- Keep everyone moving in the same direction.

Equipment required

- Fan or rope to show wind direction
- Flags to show wind direction if outside
- Cones

Space required

- 10m x 10m square (indoor hall or playground).

Estimated set-up time

- 5 minutes.

Difficulty level



How to make it easier

- Focus on just two points of sail
- Run through each action before starting

How to make it harder

- Explain to the group that they can only take three steps whilst 'beating' upwind
- Set out a sailing triangular course using cones

Spirit of the Games



- What did you do when you came across someone travelling in the opposite direction?
- How did we learn together as a group?

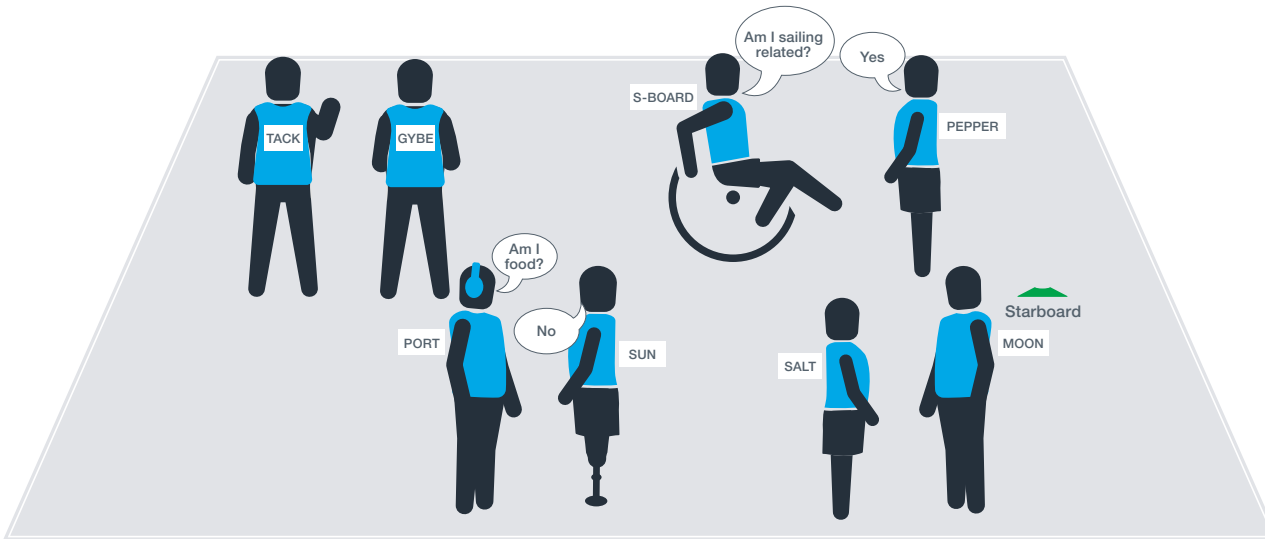


- How is travelling by sailboat good for the environment?
- What can we do to keep our shorelines clean?



Port & Starboard

PRIMARY



How to play

- Write down some paired words – sailing or non-sailing related. Port & Starboard (left & right) Tack & Gybe (turning towards & away from the wind), Windward & Leeward (closer or further away from the wind), Salt & Pepper etc. You can use the children to help with this
- Make sure everyone knows what the words mean. i.e. – a tack is turning towards the wind in a boat; a gybe is when you turn away from the wind
- Tape one word to the back of a person, so they can't see which word they're representing
- The group must then set off in search of their partners. They can only ask yes or no questions to each other to determine what's written on their back
- Once they know their word, it'll be easy to find their partner!

Safety

- Ensure children move carefully whilst looking for partners
- Keep space clear of trip hazards.

Equipment required

- Pen & paper
- Sticky tape

Space required

- 10m x 10m square (indoor hall or playground).

Estimated set-up time

- 5 minutes.

Difficulty level



How to make it easier

- Only use familiar paired words
- Allow children to speak freely, not just 'yes/no', to support communication and confidence building

How to make it harder

- Use more challenging sailing terms
- Add a time limit

Spirit of the Games



- Why was it important to answer questions honestly, even if it meant helping someone else?
- Are there any times this week when you've found it tricky to be honest?



- Was it ever frustrating to find your partner, and if so, why?
- When have you had to stick with something that you weren't good at straight away?