

Script for leaders

Follow along with the video session for
'Build a bottle boat'.



Explain what you're doing today and make sure everyone has what they need. You could say something like:

Today we're going to make a model of a boat and practise our sailing terminology. Before we get started, we'll need clean items of recycling (including a clean, empty plastic bottle) and craft materials. As long as you have a bottle, you can use whatever you have laying around for this one.

Prompt everyone to create their hull, decide which way around their boat will be, and add a keel. You could say something like:

We're going to start by creating our hull from a plastic bottle. If you've got two bottles, it'll help keep your boat stable in the water – if you're just using one, you can add some uncooked rice (or lentils) to stop it from tipping over.

Decide which end will be the front (the bow) and which end will be the back (the stern).

Next, we're going to add the keel: the long, heavy fin on the bottom of the boat that sticks down into the water. The keel helps stop the boat from being blown sideways by the wind and it also holds the ballast (material) that keeps the boat the right way up.

Talk everyone through making a hull. You could say something like:

Next, we need to make the helm, a wheel or tiller that controls the rudder that steers the boat. The person in the video's used a paper straw but something like a rolled up piece of paper would work too.

Explain that everyone should add a mast, mainsail, and jib. You could say something like:

A sailboat wouldn't be a sailboat without a mast, the big long stick that goes straight up into the air. Onto the mast we'll add our mainsail, a big, triangular sail that goes behind (or aft, if we're using sailing words) the boat's mast. The mainsail is the largest and most important sail, it creates the lift that drives the boat. We're going to squeeze on a jib too, a smaller sail found forward of the mast.

Finally, talk everyone through marking the port side, starboard side, and stern with the right colours. You could say something like:

Finally, we're going to mark the port side (the left, if you're looking to the front of the ship) red and the starboard side green, like a boat of this size's lights. We'll add something white on the stern. When a sailboat's at anchor, they show white lights all around.

Give everyone the chance to test their boat on the high seas and explain the different wind directions. You could say something like:

Now it's time to test the boat on our version of the high seas. If the wind's blowing from the port side of the boat, it's port tack. When it's coming from the starboard side, you guessed it, it's starboard tack. Windward describes the side closest to the wind, while leeward describes the side furthest from the wind.

Our boats might change direction by tacking, turning the bow of the boat through the wind. They could also jibe if they turn the stern of the boat through the wind.