





## Teacher Instructions

The aim of this activity is to introduce students to the concept of a constitution, using a fictional pirate scenario. This activity forms a nice starter / ice-breaker activity at the start of the AS course, but could be revisited at the start of the A2 course, when comparisons must be made between the UK and the US constitutions.

Students should be issued with a copy of the Pirate Code, the general information card, and a character card each (or possibly 1 between 2 depending on class size). They must follow the instructions in the scenario below. Once the governance process has been agreed upon, they should then spend another lesson as a follow-up answering the questions on the accompanying question sheet.

### Scenario (to be read out to the class)

It is the late 1700s. There are many pirate ships roaming the West Indies but small islands for them to land on are becoming increasingly scarce as more islands become occupied and well governed.

All of the Pirate Captains have met on Constitution Island to discuss their problems. They have decided that they must all agree to share Constitution Island. Some of the smarter Captains have realised that they must have clear arrangements for running the Island, in terms of laws, regulations, voting procedures and so on. It is agreed that they will all meet tomorrow to discuss how to govern their island. As night falls, and they ponder their actions and plans for tomorrow, they begin to realise that this might be a difficult task. They think about how things are run on their own Pirate Ship, and discuss the pros and cons of their methods. Day break, and the Pirate Captains meet on the beach of Constitution Island to discuss the following aspects to governance of Constitution Island:

- ☠ How will an overall leader of the Pirate Captains be chosen?
- ☠ Do the governing rules need to be written down, or not?
- ☠ For how long does the leader stay as leader?
- ☠ How can abuses of power be prevented?
- ☠ What roles might other Pirate Captains play?
- ☠ How might they decide which Pirate Captains have greater influence?
- ☠ How might the rules be adapted if the Pirate population changes?
- ☠ What services do the Pirates need to provide for each other?
- ☠ Where, how frequently, for how long will meetings take place?
- ☠ Anything else they think is important!

Each student (or pair of students) represents one of the Pirate Captains – you should have a copy of your character information card, in addition to a copy of the standard Pirate Code. You must first note down any pros and cons of the governance method on board your own ship and then secondly you must reach agreement on how to govern Constitution Island. This needs to be finalised and agreed on by the end of the lesson.

As a follow-up activity, students could be given copies of the Constitutions of other organisations e.g. local sports club, or their school's PTA etc.





## *The Pirate Code*

*To be obeyed on every Pirate Ship that sails the Seven Seas*

- 1 No fighting on board ship*
- 2 No gambling with cards or dice on board ship*
- 3 No women on board ship*
- 4 All weapons and pirates to be ready for battle at all times*
- 5 Every pirate gets equal amounts of food and drink*
- 6 Every pirate gets equal amounts of all loot captured, except the Captain and the Quartermaster, who get twice as much, or any pirate that loses an arm or leg in capturing the loot gets half as much again*
- 7 Every pirate gets to vote on where the ship goes and what the crew does*
- 8 Every pirate does what the Captain or Quartermaster says*



## *Captain Peg Leg* a young pirate captain of just 21, of the Dirty Drifter with a crew of 15

Captain Peg Leg is the son of the previous Captain of the Dirty Drifter, and has lived his whole life on board the ship. The rule for succession on board the Drifter is through bloodline rather than bloodthirstiness. The crew like him but there is sometimes tension due to his young age versus the age and experience of the crew. He treats his crew fairly if they obey his orders, but can be ruthless with the plank if they don't. Captain Peg Leg has a close group of advisors on board, who worked with his father and said they would abandon ship unless the young Captain consulted them on all decisions.

Pros:

Cons:



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## *Captain Jack Harrow* an adventurous pirate captain aged 28, of the Black Curl with a crew of 25

Captain Jack is considered to be a fair and honest pirate by his crew. He holds a democratic vote on board whenever a major decision needs to be taken, although he holds the casting vote and can veto the crew's decision if he feels strongly enough. He never consults advisors. He has made himself "Captain until death" so is in the job of Captain for life. Some of the crew have considered swapping ships in order to experience life under a different Captain.

Pros:

Cons:



## *Smilin' Dora Napier* an experienced female pirate captain, of the Cat O' Nine with a crew of 30

Smilin' Dora has been elected Captain of the Cat O' Nine in a unanimous vote by her crew for the 4th time in a row, although a simple majority vote would have sufficed. Captain elections are held every 2 years, with no limits on how many times a crew member can be Captain. Smilin' Dora is famous for her meticulous approach to record-keeping and paperwork, and so all election results for the past 40 years are stored on board, and election rules are posted around the ship. Crew members also elect the Pirate Posse, the Captain's group of 3 deputy captains at the same time as electing the Captain.

Pros:

Cons:



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## *Captain Hairy Hacke* an old pirate captain of 55, of the Blue Bottle with a small crew of 10

Hairy Hacke is a fearsome pirate. Any pirate that challenges his authority is thrown to the sharks immediately – this is why his crew is so small. There are no written rules on board; Hacke appears to make them up as he goes along, and makes all decisions on pirate attacks and adventures himself. He always gets his way. He speaks very persuasively (the handy hook for an arm helps) and is good at communicating with other pirate captains.

Pros:

Cons:



## *Nervous Lazlo* an inexperienced pirate captain of 22, of the Laughing Lubber with a crew of 21

An ironical name, Lazlo is far from nervous. He put himself forward for election as the new Captain when the old one perished in an attack on a tea ship. Up against the existing Quarter Master, he won the required supermajority, as per the ship's rules that have remained unchanged for as long as anyone can remember. The most valuable possession on board is the Lubber's Law Book, which outlines the entire procedure for governing the boat and the decisions taken. New rules can be added but only after debate over 2 weeks, with a super-majority agreement to them.

Pros:

Cons:



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## *Captain Sam Mauvebeard* aged 30, of the Rippling Rapscallion with a large crew of 50

The Rapscallion is one of the largest Pirate ships sailing the Caribbean and its crew usually overpower anyone or anything that gets in their way just by sheer force of numbers. Mauvebeard is Captain simply by virtue of his swashbuckling, bloodthirsty nature – he is strong and brave, although perhaps not as intelligent as the crew would like. Luckily, his right-hand man, the experienced Quarter-Master and his devoted assistants, manages to keep the Captain's outlandish ideas in check most of the time. Each has to agree to the decisions of the other in order for any change to be made or plan to be hatched.

Pros:

Cons:





## *Captain Barnacle* a mad captain in his 40s, of the Grumpy Galleon with a crew of 25

Captain Barnacle's crew is known for being full of crazy people with strong, and usually differing, opinions. Getting anything done can be a problem! The crew is split into groups of 5, and decisions are made on a 'first past the post' system for each group. Some of the crazier members of the crew find this a bit complicated! Barnacles was elected Captain by the Foremost Five, the group of senior pirates onboard of which he was a member, with other pirates having no say. He is terrified of the legendary Davy Jones and believes that the Pirate Code is the most important thing to any pirate.

Pros:

Cons:



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## *Captain Deadweight* a wise and grey captain, of the Merciful Monster with a crew of 32

Captain Deadweight became captain in a very unusual way; retired pirates of the Monster have taken up residence in Havana, and once every 4 years, the Monster heads to Havana where the pirate crew nominates the 2 pirates who have earned the most treasure and loot over the previous 4 years. The Retired Pirates then meet up and decide which of the 2 nominated pirates is most worthy. It is often the existing captain that is re-elected.

Pros:

Cons:



## *Fish Breath Jaques* a grimy but hard working man of 34, of the Treasure Chest with a crew of 40

Fish Breath's crew is made up of crew members from 3 boats that he captured as well as his original crew. He allows the outside crew members to vote for their own Pirate Leader to run day to day matters such as grog allowance and deck-scrubbing duties in their area of the boat, but the Leaders must defer to Fish Breath for all matters relating to treasure and booty hunting. There is considerable tension on board. Fish Breath has not been elected.

Pros:

Cons:



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## *Captain Porthole Pete* a little man with a big attitude, of the Angry Anchor with a crew of just 8

The Anchor may be a small boat but Pete has steered a wise course making friends with other Pirate captains and helping them out on raids. In return for his allegiance to other pirates, Pete gets treasure allowances; the crew stay loyal to Pete so they can get their share. The crew are all ranked in terms of vote popularity – they use a proportional system for electing the Captain every 10 years. The Deputy Captain is therefore the pirate with the 2nd most votes.

Pros:

Cons:

