

# Skupper Dippers

## CSUB TYA TOUR

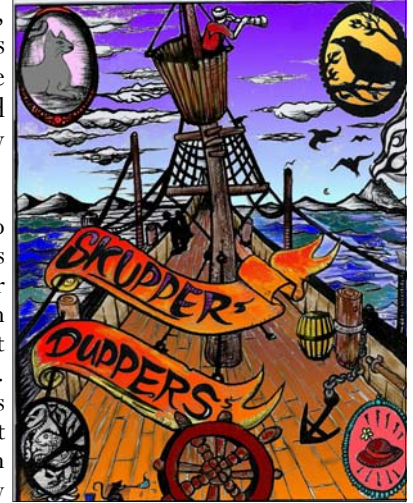
### ALL ABOARD FOR SEA TALES!

The sea has always provided stories of adventure, mystery and discovery. For thousands of years explorers have crossed the sea to find that on the other side there may be cultures that they could never imagine, but that the people there were really not much different from themselves.

*Skupper-Dippers* takes its audience on an adventure to various ports-of-call to collect stories from these various places and bring back their treasures of wisdom. Our journey begins in Alaska where Grandfather Raven teaches that it is only necessary to have enough to get through today, and worry about tomorrow. Next we sail to Hawaii where we learn how the islands came into being through the clever actions of the youngest son, Maui. Then, its off to the Caribbean for a story from the Virgin Islands. Christina Cat believes that she is very ill, and her animal friends cannot convince her otherwise.

It is only through the helpful trick played on her by Iggy Iguana that she discovers that she is very well after all. Finally, the ship sails to Puerto Rico for the bilingual story "Sombrero de Suerte." In the story Pedro is able to convince Juan Bobo that he has a lucky hat, though the only thing that is lucky is Pedro's ability to take advantage of Juan Bobo's gullibility.

On the journey the audience joins the crew to sing sea shanties and help participate in "swabbing the deck" and "raising the sails." At the end all passengers will have a treasure trove of folklore wisdom to take with them on their next journey.



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#### THEATER ARTS STANDARDS

This guide is designed to use the Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) standards for easy use in your classroom. When you see a standard in parenthesis (TA 2) that refers to Theatre Arts Standard that the activity meets. For more information on the theatre arts standards visit:

[www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/thmain.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/thmain.asp)

### CAN TRICKS BE TREATS?

Trickster stories are a common feature in folklore around the globe. The simple fact that almost every culture values a trickster hero shows that we all have the need to find ways to overcome odds through using our wits and humor.

Popular trickster heroes in the US who have their origins in other cultures include Bugs Bunny, Brer Rabbit, Bart

Simpson and even Captain Jack Sparrow.

Trickster heroes teach audiences that it is important to do your best to think your way out of problems, and to have a sense of humor along the way. Children can benefit from these heroes by learning that there are ways to resolve problems without resorting to aggression. And although we

may admire the trickster hero, oftentimes we are still able to know the difference between tricks that help others as opposed to tricks that harm. The stories presented provide us with the opportunity to discuss this important difference and how the heroes in the stories used their talents to help their friends.



*“What shall we do  
with all these sailors  
early in the  
morning?”  
Put ‘em to work  
hauling in  
the stern line.  
Put ‘em to work  
hauling in the  
spring line.  
Put ‘em to work  
hauling in  
the bow line  
Early in the  
morning.”*



## THE AGE OF SAIL

The recent popularity of pirates and tall ships has peaked and interest in the lore of the era they come from known as “The Age of Sail.” The term refers to the era in history when sailing ships were the dominant form of transportation, thus fueling trade, immigration, and cultural exchange. This era extends from 1571 with the regular use of clipper ships and tall ships to the dominance of the steam boats in 1872.

Even though pirates were and are still a part of sea travel, the era most often referenced in television and film is that of the 18th century when pirates would prey upon merchant ships. The name of Blackbeard comes from this time, as do the traditional stories about secret coves, buried treasure, and maps to hidden islands. Perhaps part of our love affair with this era comes from the romantic notions of the sea. Travel on

the sea, although full of adventure, was also dangerous and not glamorous at all. Once in the ocean, ships could become victim to storms, pirates, and disease. It was possible that any of these events could leave a ship’s crew in danger of never coming back to port. Sailors would be gone for months, if not years on end, in jobs that paid little and were harsh.

## SEA SONGS AND SHANTIES

According to Andrew Draskoy, sea shanties and sea songs were developed as “work songs” on larger sailing ships, or “square rigged” ships. The boats required a team of sailors to work together to raise sails or tack lines and different songs would have different verse structures that would create a tempo for the work. As Draskoy states, “Traditional shanties can be grouped into three types: short haul shanties,

for tasks requiring quick pulls over a relatively short time; halyard shanties, for heavier work requiring more setup time between pulls; and capstan shanties, for long, repetitive tasks requiring a sustained rhythm, but not involving working the lines.”

Although modern sailors enjoy sea shanties, they aren’t sung as work songs since sails were replaced with engines.

Life on the tall ships also inspired “sea songs” which told stories about ocean voyages, and “pilot songs” which would have sailing directions in the verses.

As with most folk music, it has been shared for years as an oral tradition and only in recent history has it been recorded. A new album with sea songs and shanties is “Rougue’s Gallery” which includes pirate songs.

## CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THEATER AND SAILING

It is no coincidence that there are many theatre terms that are also words used in sailing. This is the result of early theatres hiring former sailors as the first stage hands, hence the name “stage crew.” Sailors adopted names for the parts of the theatre that were similar in nature to those they used for parts of the sailing ship. One of the words is “rigging,”

which refers to the system of weights, ropes, and pulleys that are used to raise and lower curtains and scenery onstage. On large ships, rigging is used to raise, lower, and tack sails. One of the ways sailors would communicate different signals for when to raise and lower sails was through specific whistles that they would send across the ship to

crew members. Upon working in theatres, crew members adopted the same whistles to raise and lower scenery onstage. As a result, it is a common superstition in the theatre NOT to whistle onstage. The belief is that something may come falling onto your head if you do!

## THINGS TO DISCUSS BEFORE THE SHOW

- In our show the actors will be playing multiple roles. Sometimes they will be sailors and sometimes they will have different roles in the various stories. Have you ever seen a play where the actors have played more than one part? What did they do with their bodies and voices to show they were a different character? (TA 1)
- Our play takes place in various settings, including the islands of Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and the Virgin Islands. Why are boats important to people who live on islands? What sorts of things to boats bring to islands, or take away from them? (TA 5)
- Some of the characters in our play are animals. To bring the animals to life the actor will use their body and voice to help the audience pretend that they are an animal. This is called *personification*. Have you ever personified an animal? Have you ever seen a play or film where the actors personified animals or things? (TA 1)
- Theater relies upon its audience to make it come to life. Without an audience the actors would not perform the play at all. How can we behave so that we are a positive part of the show? What are some behaviors we should refrain from doing at a live show? (TA 4)
- The stories in our play come from places far away from California,



but they all take place along the ocean. Can you remember any stories you have heard that take place on or by the ocean? What kinds of characters were in the story? Do you remember the country that the story came from? (TA 3)

## ACTIVITIES FOR BEFORE VIEWING THE PLAY

### Vacation Destination

It's time to pack your bags and get ready for a trip! Have students spread out in the room and suggest different destinations for a vacation. Students can then pantomime packing for that trip by selecting various items that they would need in that location. Perhaps a journey to snowy Alaska would include a parka, boots, a dog sled and snow shoes. Begin by making suggestions and then allow students the opportunity to suggest and pack additional items. You can even pack for all four of our play's destinations! (TA 2)

### Who Can I Be?

In our play actors will be playing multiple roles. To help students understand this concept, lay out a series of five objects. Each one can suggest a character like a wrench, or a hat, eraser, etc. Allow students to pick up the object and then create a character using that item. Original dialogue and movement is to be encouraged. Afterwards discuss with students how they were a single actor, but they were able to play many people. (TA 1,2)

### Folklore Finds

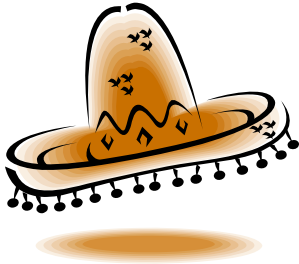
Using your language arts textbook, have students page through to find the folktales inside. Where are these stories from? What are some of the names or titles that tell the reader more about the place the story comes from. Choose one story to read that the class can later compare to the stories presented in the play. (TA 3, 5)



### Character Connections

On page two of this guide is a character list for the show. Allow students to improvise what they think the character might be like. There may be some interesting ideas for Iggy Iguana, or the island boy Maui. After students have explored the characters they can choose a favorite and have them interact with another students' portrayals. (TA 2)

## POST SHOW DISCUSSIONS



Our play uses several musical instruments to tell the stories. See if you can remember when we used the

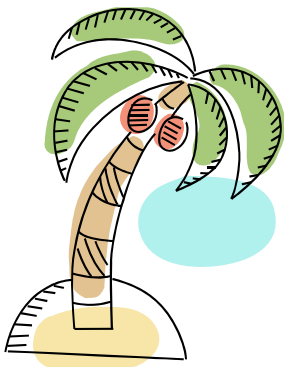
following instruments:

*Guitar*

*Accordion*

*Ukulele*

*Steel Drum*



\* The stories in the show each have a character who plays tricks on others to get things done. How did you feel about the trick that Raven played on his grandchildren in comparison to the trick Iggy the Iguana played on Christina the Cat? Did these tricks help others learn important lessons? (TA 4)

\* During the play the actors created the action of sailing on a ship together

and getting the audience to help raise the sails and swab the deck. What did you like about participating with the actors? What other actions might you like to pretend to do on a ship? (TA 4, TA2)

\* In our play the audience sat with the stage in the middle. This is called an "Alley Stage." Did you like watching the show this way? How did having the actors all around the

audience make you feel? Would you have staged the play differently? (TA4)

\* Our play uses a lot of music to help set the location of the play in your imagination. Which instruments reminded you of ships? Which ones reminded you of islands? Which ones made you think of warm weather? (TA 4)

## POST SHOW ACTIVITIES

### Tall Ships Away!

Just like in our play, it is possible to create your own sailing ship. Start with the design of your boat. With a large sheet of paper, draw the outline of a boat from the "eagle's eye" view. Allow each student the opportunity to contribute one item to the boat, such as the masts, anchor, wheel, and even cannons. Once all the items are on the "blueprint" push the desks back and see if the class can use the plan to create their stage and the location of these items. Chairs can be used to designate the location of the masts and other large items. Once the stage is set, allow students the opportunity to sail their ship. Take on the role of captain so that you can be part of the action and control the events of your pretend play (TA 2)

### Pilot Songs

Sailors would sometimes create songs that had directions in the lyrics that would help them sail to different locations. Have the class collaborate in small groups to create their own "pilot songs" that help the listener find their way to the school's library, lunchroom or playground. An example could be:

*As we walk out our door  
We will sail to the right  
Twenty steps down the hall  
Past the exit light*

*We follow the smell  
Drop the anchor down  
To the room at the end  
Where lunch will be found.*  
(TA 3)

### Ocean Locations

Our stories take place along various oceans and seas. Using an atlas or a globe have students find the locations of Alaska, Puerto Rico, Hawaii and the Virgin Islands. Can they identify which oceans these places are along? Which locations share the same oceans? What are the seven largest oceans on our earth? (TA 5 – geography)

### Helping Plays

In the story of "Christina Cat" the animals trick Christina into trying something that she thought she was unable to do. Have students collaborate on a story in which they are able to convince a friend that they have the ability to do something they thought they couldn't. Allow students to share their ideas through improvisation. (TA 2)

## Skupper Dupper Secret Word Find

Use the clues below to find the correct stage / sailing term from the choices.

Once you have answered the clues, put the circled letters together to discover the secret word.

Deck   Batton   Captain  
Rigging   Lash   Strike   Crew

*A long pole that supports theatre curtains or supports the top of a sail*

— —  — — — —

*To tie something down on a boat, or to tie two flats in theatre together.*

— —  —

*The group of workers who run the show backstage or help a ship to sail*

— —  —

*The name for the person who is in charge of the ship or the theater rigging.*

—  — — — — —

*When a sail is lowered or in theater when a set is taken apart after a show closes.*

—  — — — —

*The stage or the area of the boat that you walk on.*

—  — —

*The system of ropes that raise and lower scenery or sails*

— — — — —

The Secret Word is

— — — — —

## CSUB TYA TOUR

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C. 2008

Sources used for  
writing the  
guide include:

[www.tantoon.com](http://www.tantoon.com) for the  
Costume design template

[www.shantie.redance.org](http://www.shantie.redance.org)

For the information on  
“The Age of Sail” and  
sea shanties.

### *Skupper- Dupperts*

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#### Faculty Design Advisor:

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#### Costume Design:

Roger Upton

#### Stage Manager:

Maggie Castellanos

#### Cast:

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Teresa Langdon

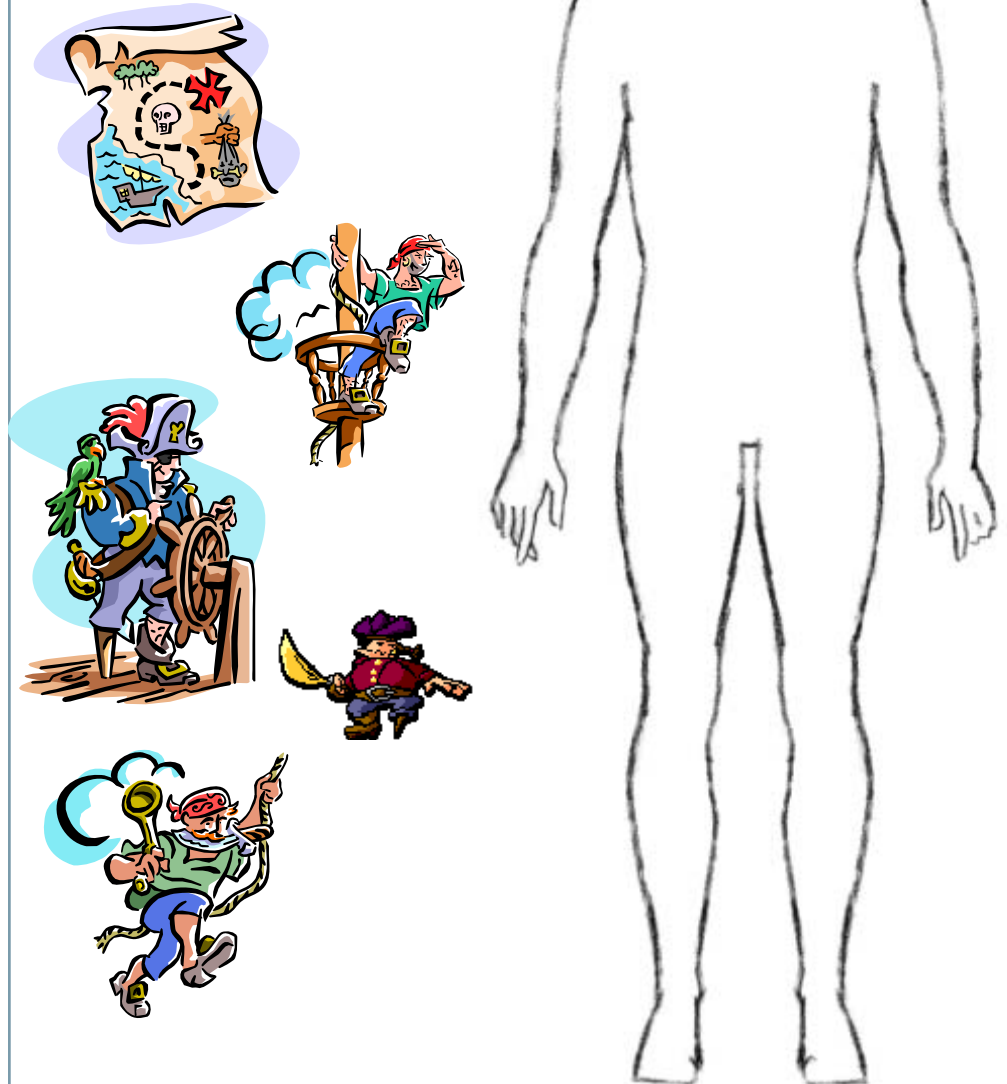
Courtney Sherman

Jake Facile

Chelsea Gahagan

## *Design Your Own Pirate*

Using the template design your  
own pirate costume. Don't forget  
to include something for the head,  
feet and hands. Have fun with  
patterns and colors too. (TA 2)



## OTHER FUN THINGS TO DO!

### **Books to Check Out!**

Once Upon a Tide by Tony Milton

Ships by Andrew Halsam

Boat by Eric Kently

Una Isla Bajo el Sol by Stella Blackstone

Sail Away by Florence McNeil

Juan Bobo: Four Folktales from Puerto Rico

Retold by Carmen T. Bernier-Grand

### **Make your own paper boat!**

Visit the website:

<http://www.laits.utexas.edu/hebrew/personal/toolbox/acm/boat/boat.html>

and follow the directions to make your own paper boat! With a parents help, sail them off in the tub, the pool or even a small stream.