



TEACHER GUIDE: SUPPLY, DEMAND AND A SLOOP FULL OF SUGAR

One class period (about 45 minutes) · Grades 4–8 · Solo or in pairs · History, economics, geography

Silver & Sails is a browser trading game set in 1715 across 79 real ports of the Atlantic world. Students captain a merchant ship: they buy goods where they're cheap, sail real routes, and sell where they're dear, while dodging pirates and storms. Along the way they meet real people, laws and events of the age of piracy.

BEFORE CLASS

- **Play for 15 minutes yourself.** It's the best way to learn the buttons and to see how the game handles hard history (see the note on the right).
- **Devices:** any browser works, including Chromebooks and iPads. Go to **play.silverandsails.com**. Nothing to install, no logins.
- **Saving:** progress saves on each device automatically. To continue on a different device, use a family code from the ⚙️ menu. Ask students to use nicknames, not real names.
- **Difficulty:** choose **Easy** for this lesson. New captains are offered **Show me how**, a guided first trade.
- **Mate's advice** (the bosun's tips on where to buy and sell) is on for Easy. For older or stronger students, turn it off in the ⚙️ menu so they reason it out themselves.

THE LESSON

1. **Hook (5 min).** Ask: in 1715, why would sugar cost more in Boston than in Barbados? Take a few guesses.
2. **Set sail (5 min).** Start a new captain on Easy and name the ship. Let students follow **Show me how** if it's offered.
3. **Trade run (20 min).** Goal: the most profit in three voyages. Students record every trade on the trade log (page 2).
4. **Compare (10 min).** Who earned most? Which goods and routes worked? What went wrong: pirates, storms, a crowded market?
5. **Exit ticket (5 min).** The two questions at the bottom of the trade log.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why did each port make some goods and need others? What does that tell you about its climate and people?
- When you sold a lot of one good in one port, what happened to its price? Why?
- Was it worth paying for a bigger crew or more cannon? How did you decide?
- Why did some sailors become pirates? Why did governments work so hard to stop them?
- Which ports were British, Spanish, French or Dutch? How did that change your trading?
- Who isn't the hero in a pirate story? Whose stories does the game's Library tell that movies usually leave out?

A NOTE ON HARD HISTORY

The Atlantic world of 1715 included the slave trade, and the game doesn't hide it. It appears as it was, legal and openly offered, but it is never the best way to win. The game also tells stories of resistance, uprisings and escape, and players can choose to free captives at real places of refuge, such as Spanish Florida and the Windward Maroons of Jamaica. Preview it and decide how you'll frame it for your students.

GOING FURTHER

- **Tavern quiz:** history questions with an explanation for every answer.
- **Library** (in the Logbook): articles on the people and places students meet.
- **Map work:** trace a profitable route on a blank Atlantic map and label the winds.

PRIVACY

No student accounts, no email, no ads and no tracking inside the game. Free classroom access:

silverandsails.com/teachers



CAPTAIN'S TRADE LOG

Buy low, sell high. Write down every trade so you can see what worked.

Captain _____

Ship's name _____

Date _____

Your goal: make the most profit in three voyages. **Profit** = (sell price – buy price) × tons.

#	Good	Bought at (port)	Price per ton	Tons	Sold at (port)	Price per ton	Profit
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							

SHIP'S LOG

Silver when you started: _____

Silver after three voyages: _____

Something that happened at sea (pirates, a storm, a lucky find):

BEST AND WORST TRADE

My best trade was _____ because:

My worst trade was _____ because:

EXIT TICKET

1. In one sentence: why do prices differ from port to port?

2. Name one real event, place or person from 1715 you learned about in the game.
