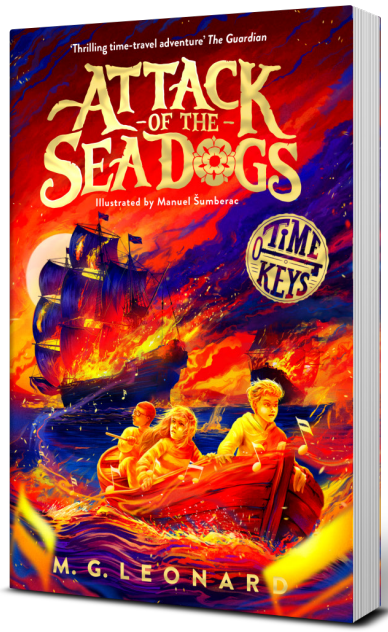
# ATTACK OF THE SEA DOGS

BY

M. G. LEONARD

# NOTES FOR TEACHERS & LIBRARIANS

AGES 8+




Step aboard with *Attack of the Sea Dogs* by M. G. Leonard and journey back to the thrilling world of Tudor England. Blending fast-paced adventure with real historical events, the novel introduces readers to famous figures such as Sir Francis Drake and explores the build-up to the Spanish Armada through the eyes of unforgettable characters.

This resource has been designed to support reading, discussion and cross-curricular learning in both classrooms and libraries. Through practical activities including close reading, historical enquiry, mapping, drawing and creative writing, pupils will deepen their understanding of the novel while exploring the people, places and events of the Tudor period.

Whether used alongside a class novel study or as part of a wider topic on the Tudors, these activities encourage pupils to make connections between fiction and history, develop their literacy skills, and discover how M. G. Leonard brings one of England's most fascinating periods to life.

## Explore themes of:

The Tudors
Francis Drake &
the Spanish Armada

## Subject Checklist:

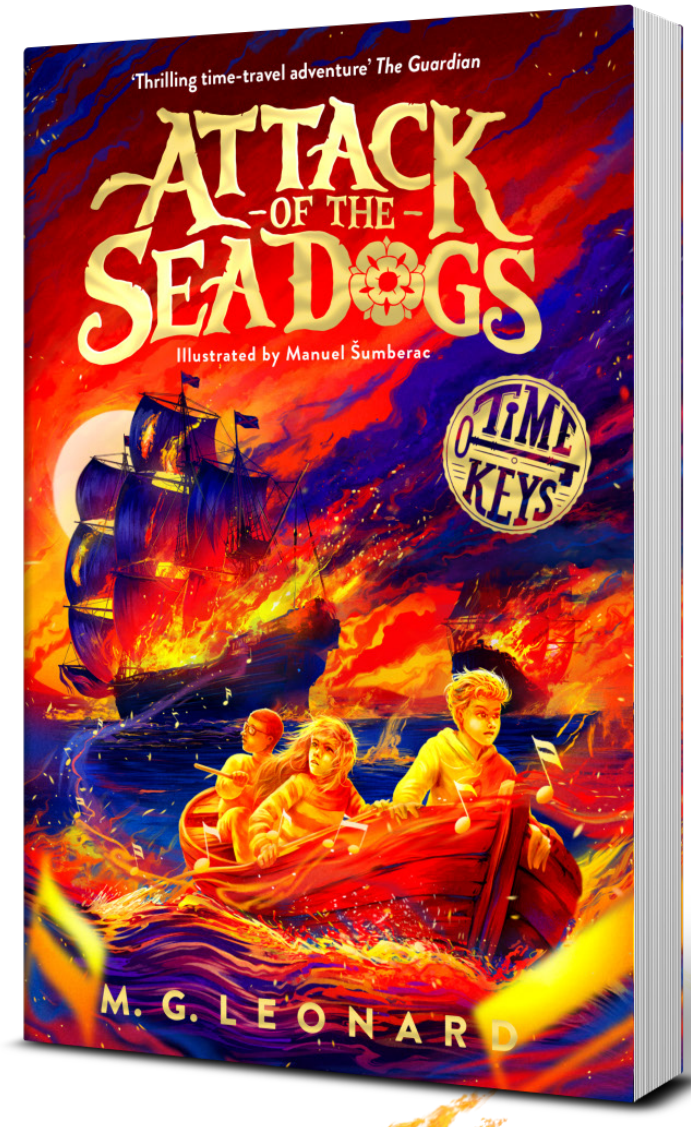
History
Literacy
Art & Design
Geography

Please share your Time Keys activities with us – we'd love to see them!
@macmillankidsuk @mglnrd #TimeKeys

# ABOUT THE BOOK

Swashbuckling action adventure meets time travel in the fourth title in this epic series by bestselling award-winner M. G. Leonard.

Sim, Jeopardy, and Nelson are supposed to be in Tudor London. Thanks to Uncle Emmett, however, they're in the right time, but the wrong place: aboard the ship of infamous privateer and explorer Sir Francis Drake, setting sail to raid Cádiz. Trapped, Sim and his friends must navigate explosive sea battles and a mysterious masked mercenary before they can attempt to return to London and their mission to save Sim's father.



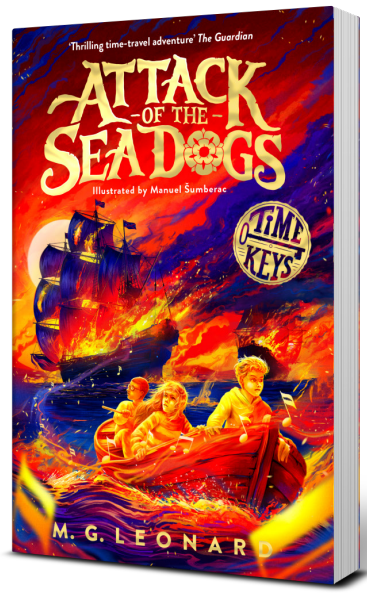

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# Pre-reading

## Pre-reading Activity 1

Book Cover Discussion Questions




- What can you see on the front cover? Look carefully at the people, the ship, the sea and the sky. What details stand out to you?
- What clues tell you what kind of story this might be? Do you think it will be an adventure, mystery, historical story or something else? Explain your thinking.
- How does the cover make you feel? Which colours, expressions or features create that feeling?
- What do you think the title Attack of the Sea Dogs means? Who or what do you think the "Sea Dogs" might be? What makes you think that?
- When and where do you think this story is set? What evidence from the cover helps you make your prediction?
- What do you predict will happen in the first chapter? Use at least three clues from the cover to justify your prediction.

# Pre-reading Activity 2

## Sort the Tudor Words

Work with a partner or small group. Read each word card and sort the words into groups that make sense to you.

Do not use headings at first. Decide which words belong together and create your own category names. There may be more than one sensible way to organise the cards, so be ready to explain your choices.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Elizabeth I | Privateer | Banquet | Armada |
| Francis Drake | Doublet | Pottage | Fleet |
| Monarch | Gown | Beer | Navy |
| Courtier | Hose | Flagon | Galleon |
| Noble | Cloak | Candle | Half-timbered house |
| Merchant | Velvet | Harbour | Voyage |
| Servant | Drawstring purse | Compass | Gunport |
| Sailor | Signet ring | Mast | Stern |
| Pirate | Tankard | Prow | St George's flag |
| | Groat | Ruff | |

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# Pre-reading Activity 2

## Sort the Tudor Words

### Discuss Your Choices

- Which words did your group already know?
- Which words were unfamiliar?
- What headings did you create?
- Which words could belong in more than one group?
- Which words appear to be connected to Francis Drake?
- Which words suggest that the story may involve danger, travel or conflict?
- Which five words do you think will be most important in the story?

### Final Challenge

Choose the five words you think will be the most important in the story.
Work with your partner to explain:

- Why did you choose these words?
- How do you think they might be connected?
- What do they make you predict about the story?

Note to teachers: possible headings include People & Status, Clothing & Appearance, Life in Tudor England, Ships & the Sea.



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# Extracts

## Extract 1: The Events of 1587

Read Chapter 2: Pirate or Privateer?!
In this chapter, the children learn why they are travelling back to the year 1587.

He led them onto the escalator that delivered them into the train station. 'We need to arrive in 1587, before Callidora and I first landed in Elizabethan England, which was 1588.'
'Why?' Jeopardy persisted.
'I can't risk bumping into my younger self,' Emmett told her. 'The consequences could be catastrophic. At least, that's what the law of the Council of Keys declares.'
'Gosh!' Nelson looked alarmed. 'I wonder what would happen if present you met past you, four hundred years before you were born?'
'Let's hope we never find out,' Emmett said breezily.
'You still haven't explained why we're going to Plymouth,' Jeopardy reminded him as they followed him across the station to a bank of ticket machines.
'Big historical events took place in 1587,' Emmett said, buying four tickets to Plymouth. 'The execution of Mary Queen of Scots, which we do not want to get mixed up in. The Spanish Armada . . .'

Nelson took his ticket from Emmett. 'But, Mr Walsh, the Spanish

Armada didn't set sail for England until 1588.'
'Only because they were delayed by my good friend Francis Drake. Did you know that he amassed a fleet of ships in Plymouth in 1587 and took the fight to the Spanish?'
'Yes. Isn't that known as –' Nelson paused – 'singeing the King of Spain's beard, or something?' 'Exactly!' Emmett looked pleased. 'In that historic moment, Francis weakened the armada and changed the course of history, which is why there's a time door in Plymouth.'
'But we need to be in London,' Sim said. 'My dad lived and worked near London Bridge.'
'I'm well aware of that.' Emmett looked a little irritated.

‘How are we going to get from Plymouth to London?’ Jeopardy asked, narrowing her eyes.
‘We’ll hire horses,’ Emmett said, pointing. ‘Platform six. That’s our train.’
Nelson grabbed Sim’s arm as they climbed aboard. ‘Sim, I can’t ride a horse.’
‘It isn’t difficult,’ Sim told him. ‘You’ll love it. It’s fun.’
‘For you, you mean. You’re a natural. You rode that pony bareback in the Colosseum.’ Nelson’s brown eyes were puddles of worry. ‘I’ve never gone anywhere near a horse. I don’t like them,’ he admitted. ‘They’re huge, with big teeth, and they kick.’
‘Nelson, are you scared of horses?’ Sim asked.
‘No,’ Nelson said, while nodding. Then he whispered, ‘Please don’t tell Jeopardy. She’ll tease me for ever.’

Jeopardy, Nelson and Sim sat round a table. Emmett slid into a pair of seats behind them. He made himself comfortable and closed his eyes, as if to nap.
Nelson used the journey to share the findings of his investigation into Elizabethan England.
‘Piracy depends on whose side you’re on,’ Nelson explained. ‘The Spanish saw Sir Francis Drake as a pirate, because he captured ships and stole their cargo, which was usually gold. They called him “El Draque”, which means “The Dragon”.’
‘Good name,’ Jeopardy approved. ‘El Draque.’
‘In England, they thought of Drake as a privateer.’ ‘What’s the difference?’ Sim asked.
‘A privateer has the approval of the government, in exchange for a share of their treasure.’
‘That’s wild.’ Jeopardy laughed. ‘Imagine being a thief, and the police being OK with it, as long as you only steal from other countries and give them a cut of your loot.’
‘Was Drake doing proper pirate stuff?’ Sim asked Nelson. ‘Attacking ships, stealing gold and sinking them?’
‘Yes.’ Nelson nodded. ‘And Queen Elizabeth liked him. She called Drake her “favourite pirate”.’
Jeopardy glanced over her shoulder at her dad. He was breathing deeply. She whispered, ‘Dad says Francis Drake is one of his besties.’

# Extract Discussion Questions

1. Why does Emmett choose to travel to 1587 instead of 1588?

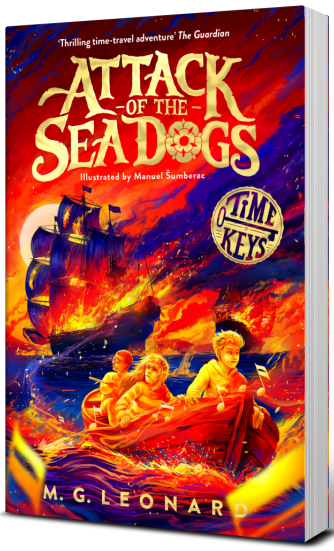
2. Why are the characters travelling to Plymouth? What important historical event does Emmett explain happened there?

3. Nelson explains that Francis Drake was called both a pirate and a privateer. Why might different countries have viewed him in different ways?

4. The Spanish called Francis Drake 'El Draque' ('The Dragon'). Why do you think they gave him this nickname?

5. How does the author show that Nelson and Sim have different personalities?

6. The novel mixes real historical events with fictional characters.




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# Activity:

## Why Was 1587 An Important Year?

Before continuing with the story, explore the real historical events that made 1587 such a significant year. Read the timeline below.

- **February 1587**

  Mary, Queen of Scots was executed after being accused of plotting against Queen Elizabeth I.

- **April 1587**

  Francis Drake attacked Spanish ships in the harbour of Cádiz, delaying Spain's plans to invade England.
  This attack became known as 'Singeing the King of Spain's Beard.'

- **Throughout 1587**

  England prepared for a possible invasion from Spain by strengthening its navy and gathering ships.

- **1588**

  The Spanish Armada, a huge fleet sent by King Philip II of Spain, sailed towards England.

### Discuss:

- Which event do you think had the biggest impact on England? Why?
- Why might the author have chosen to send the characters to 1587 instead of 1588?
- Why do you think Plymouth was an important place during this period?
- How might England have been feeling as Spain prepared to invade?

### Challenge:

Imagine you are a newspaper reporter living in England in 1587.
Write a headline that people might have read at the time.
For example:

- England Prepares for Invasion!
- Drake Attacks Spanish Fleet!
- Queen Faces New Threats!

Share your headline with the class and explain which event inspired it.

# Extracts

## Extract 2: The Council of War

In this extract, Drake and his commanders disagree about when to attack Cádiz.

As the Elizabeth Bonaventure neared the Rock of Lisbon, Drake called a war council. Some of the ships at the rear of the fleet were still catching up after the storm. They weren't close enough to join the meeting that took place on the quarter- deck.
'We need to find out what they're saying,' Jeopardy said as the three of them watched William Borough, commander of the Golden Lion and Drake's vice-admiral, come aboard with Captain Bellingham of the Rainbow.
'There's nowhere to hide on the quarterdeck,' Sim said, studying the high platform at the back of the boat. 'How do we get close enough to hear them?'
Nelson's eyes sparkled. He had an idea. 'What about the cabin with the whipstaff? Where the helmsman moves the rudder to steer the ship. It's below the grate in the floor of the quarterdeck. If we can get in there, we'll be able to hear everything.'
'We'll need to get the helmsman out first,' Sim said.
'We've weighed anchor,' Jeopardy said. 'It shouldn't be that difficult. There's no steering that needs to be done.'
'Who's on shift?' Nelson asked.
'Walter Symons,' Sim said.
'Oh well, then –' Jeopardy grinned – 'all we need to do is tell him that Drake has offered the crew a ration of beer while we're at anchor. He'll be straight down to the galley with his tankard.' Sim moved towards the stairs. 'Let's go.'

In single file, with Sim leading, they descended into the belly of the galleon, hurrying through the gun deck, to the stairs that led up to the helmsman's post.

Walter Symons leaped to his feet when they told him about the ration of beer. He was off like a shot.

Sim moved the crate on which the old helmsman had been sitting, positioning it below the grate in the ceiling. 'I'm the tallest,' he whispered, climbing onto it. Jeopardy was going to argue, but he put his finger to his lips as they heard voices. The captains of the queen's ships were discussing their battle plan.
Sim looked up through the iron grid at the military men. Captain Thomas Fenner – Francis Drake's flag captain and adviser – was standing on one side of the admiral. Emmett was on the other.
'We know that King Philip is amassing an armada of ships, not far from here, in Lisbon,' Francis Drake was saying. 'The Dutch merchants we intercepted at Fisterra brought us that news. The ships are being fitted and stocked in Cádiz. That is where we will strike.'
'Yes, Vice-Admiral . . .' Borough said with a bow of his head. 'However—'
Drake cut him short. 'The only question, to my mind, is do we attack this afternoon, or wait till morning?' He looked at the faces of each of the men gathered about him.

'Our fleet of ships is stretched out over miles,' William Borough pointed out. 'The storm weakened us. We will be stronger once reunited. If Cádiz is housing many warships, we must attack when we are strongest.'
'And yet, if we tarry,' Drake countered, 'we risk losing the good grace of the wind that has brought us here. It will be harder to attack Cádiz if the wind changes and favours Spain. If we move fast, the tide will carry us into the harbour.'
'We have the advantage,' Emmett said to Drake. 'They don't know we are coming. If we wait, word will reach them. Let us take them unawares.'
William Borough frowned at Emmett, then glanced at the other commanders. They all looked uncomfortable.
'I am of the same opinion as you,' Drake said to Emmett. 'Though some would have us wait till morning, we shall not wait at all!'
Borough protested, saying gloomily that he'd never heard of such an action and there was a muted murmur of agreement from the other commanders.
Drake didn't argue. Instead, he dismissed the meeting. He'd made up his mind.

# Extract Discussion Questions

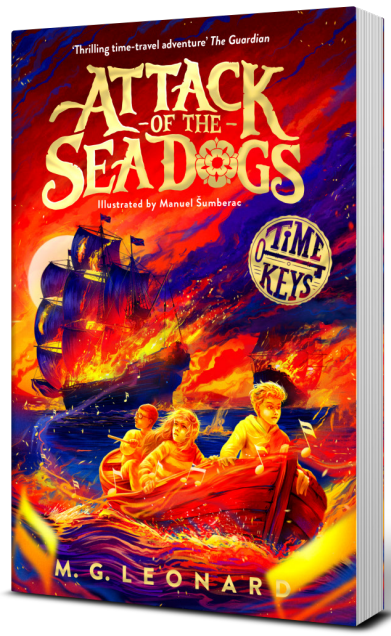
1. How do Jeopardy, Sim and Nelson manage to listen to the war council without being discovered?

2. Why does William Borough think the fleet should wait before attacking Cádiz?

3. Why do Francis Drake and Emmett want to attack immediately instead?

4. Why do some of the commanders seem uncomfortable with Emmett's advice?

5. What does this extract tell us about Francis Drake as a leader?



# Activity:

## Plan the Attack on Cádiz

Imagine you are one of Francis Drake's advisers at the war council.

Study a map showing Plymouth, Lisbon, Cádiz and the Atlantic coast of Spain and Portugal. Using the information from the extract, discuss the best plan for attacking the Spanish fleet.

**Consider:**

- Where is Drake's fleet travelling?
- Why is Cádiz an important destination?
- How could the wind and tide affect the journey?
- Should the English fleet attack immediately or wait for the remaining ships to arrive?
- What risks might they face if the Spanish discover they are coming?

On your map, draw the route you think Drake's fleet should take. Annotate it with at least three reasons to explain your decisions, using evidence from the text.

**Challenge:**

If you were King Philip II of Spain, how would you defend Cádiz against Drake's attack? Add your ideas to the map or explain them in a short paragraph.



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# Further Activity Ideas:

## Art & Design

The Elizabeth Bonaventure – Read the description of Drake's ship in Chapter 3. As you read, underline or highlight words and phrases that tell you what the ship looks like. Create a labelled sketch of the galleon using only the information in the text. Include as many details as you can, such as the masts, sails, hull, stern, prow, figurehead and St George's flag. Challenge extension: Why do you think the author describes the ship as "a floating fortress"? What impression does this create for the reader? Use evidence from the text to explain your ideas.

Design Tudor Clothing – Choose one of the following people: a sailor, a privateer, a wealthy noble, a merchant, or a member of Queen Elizabeth I's court. Using clues from the story and your own research, draw and label a Tudor outfit for your chosen character. Include at least five items of clothing or accessories, using accurate Tudor vocabulary such as ruff, doublet, cloak, hose, jerkin etc. Challenge extension: Which parts of the outfit are practical, and which are designed to show power or importance? Explain your ideas using evidence from your research.

## History

Explore the Real History – The novel is inspired by real people, places and events from Tudor history. Choose one of the following topics to research: the attack on Cádiz in 1587, the Spanish Armada, Plymouth in Tudor times, Cádiz in Tudor times, or Tudor galleons. Create a museum information panel for your chosen topic. Include five key facts, one interesting or surprising fact, a labelled picture, diagram or map, and three important dates or a short timeline. Challenge extension: Explain how your research helps you understand Attack of the Sea Dogs.

# Further Activity Ideas:

Meet the Sea Dogs – The Sea Dogs were a group of English sailors, explorers and privateers who sailed during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. Choose one of the following Sea Dogs to research: Francis Drake; John Hawkins; Walter Raleigh; Martin Frobisher. Create a Tudor Intelligence File for your chosen Sea Dog. Include: A portrait or illustration; Who they were; Their most famous voyage or achievement; Why they were important to Elizabeth I; An interesting fact; Three key dates. Challenge extension: Explain why some people admired your Sea Dog while others feared or disliked them. Use evidence from your research.

## Design & Technology

A New Ship in the Fleet – The ships in Francis Drake's fleet have memorable names, such as The Elizabeth Bonaventure, Rainbow and Golden Lion. Imagine you have been asked to design a new ship for the English fleet. Give your ship a name that reflects its purpose, strength or reputation. Create a technical drawing (blueprint) of your ship. Label its key features, such as the masts, gunports, sails, figurehead, flag, hull and stern, and annotate each feature to explain why it has been included. Challenge extension: Add a ship specification panel beside your drawing. Include: Name; Purpose; Crew size; Number of cannons; Special features; and Motto.

## Writing

Recruitment Poster – Francis Drake is looking for brave sailors to join the crew of your new ship. Design a colourful recruitment poster that persuades people to enlist. Include the name of your ship, an illustration, and a catchy slogan. Explain what kind of people you are looking for, what skills they will need, and what adventures or dangers they might face. Think carefully about why someone would choose to sail with your crew. Challenge extension: Include a short section explaining why your ship is the best choice in Drake's fleet.