

# TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR LAST VOYAGE OF THE SCOTIAN

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The *Last Voyage of the Scotian* is an ideal way to introduce students from grades 6 to 8 into the fascinating world of wooden Nova Scotian sailing ships in the 1870s. The novel describes how ships were sailed, working conditions for the crew and the hardships and dangers that were faced. But this is no dry academic study; it is an engaging adventure story that leaves readers anxious to know what will happen next.

Ideas for stimulating classroom discussion and student projects based on the novel:

## THE NOVEL

- John is shanghaied aboard the *Scotian*. What does shanghai mean? Why was shanghaiing allowed? Would it be allowed today?
- Once on board, why do John and Meg agree to work on the *Scotian*?
- What are the attitudes of the captain and sailors towards Meg?
- Why were the conditions of the immigrants aboard the *Scotian* so grim, uncomfortable and unhealthy?

## CANADIAN HISTORY

- Why was shipping so important for Nova Scotia in the 1870s?
- John is 14 and Meg is 13 in the novel. Would children that age be allowed to work on ships in the 1870s? What about today?
- Captain Barnard imposes harsh discipline on his crew. Are sailors subjected to lashings today?
- The Nova Scotian ships were called the British North American fleet. Why was that term used?

## GEOGRAPHY

- The *Scotian* carries a cargo of timber to Jamaica, sugar cane to Britain and immigrants to Canada. Why did it carry those cargos to those locations?
- What are the “trade winds” and “the westerlies”? Why were winds so important to sailing ships?
- How do sailors manage weather problems today?
- There is mention of the “Gulf Stream” in the novel. What is the Gulf Stream and where does it flow?

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

- Draw a map of the *Scotian*'s voyage described in the novel.
- Collect photographs of square rigged ships and schooners. What is the difference in the rigging of these types of ships?
- Write a description of what it would be like to be in the riggings of *Scotian* during a storm.
- Draw a picture of the *Scotian*.