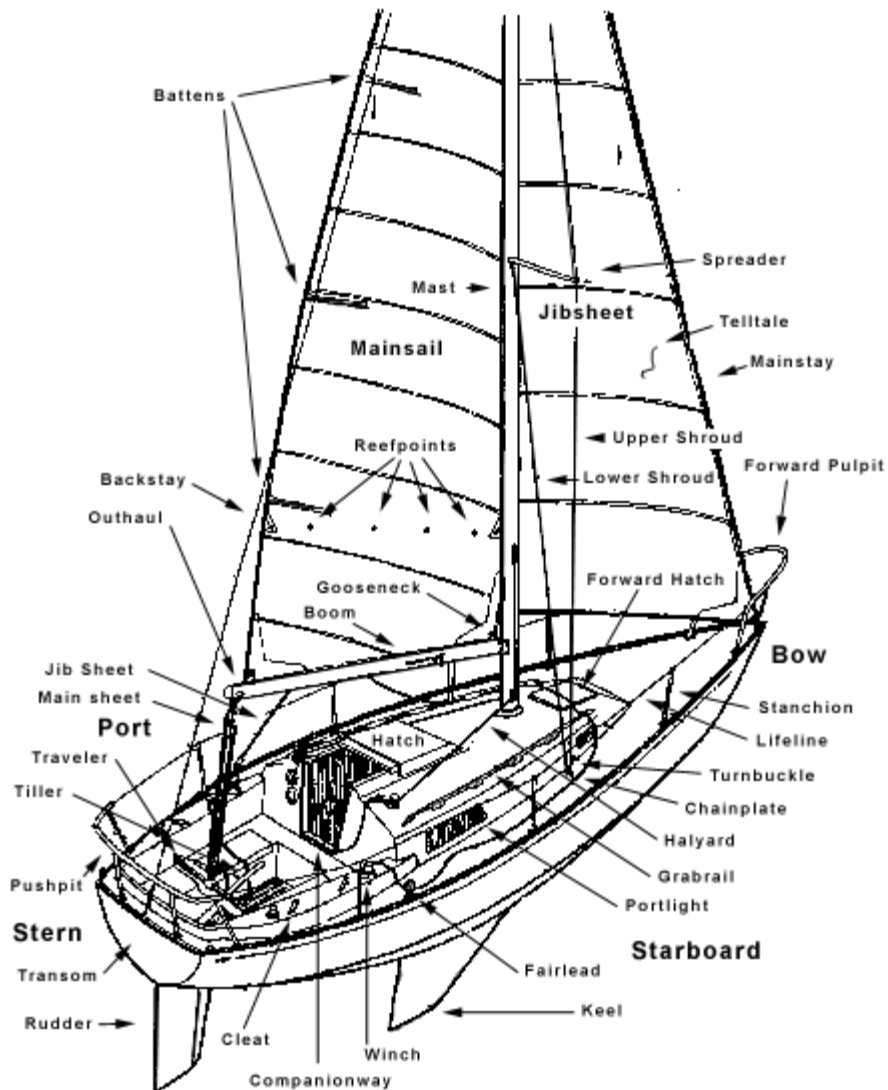


# Sailing Terms Everyone Should Know

If you're just learning how to sail, these handy terms can provide a helpful overview of sailing basics you need to become familiar with.

1. **Aft** - The back of a ship. If something is located aft, it is at the back of the sailboat. The aft is also known as the stern.
2. **Bow** - The front of the ship is called the bow. Knowing the location of the bow is important for defining two of the other most common sailing terms: port (left of the bow) and starboard (right of the bow).
3. **Port** - Port is always the left-hand side of the boat when you are facing the bow. Because “right” and “left” can become confusing sailing terms when used out in the open waters, port is used to define the left-hand side of the boat as it relates to the bow, or front. (**red**)
4. **Starboard** - Starboard is always the right-hand side of the boat when you are facing the bow. Because “right” and “left” can become confusing sailing terms when used out in the open waters, starboard is used to define the right-hand side of the boat as it relates to the bow, or front. (**green**)
5. **Leeward** - Also known as lee, leeward is the direction opposite to the way the wind is currently blowing (windward).
6. **Windward** - The direction in which the wind is currently blowing. Windward is the opposite of leeward (the opposite direction of the wind). Sailboats tend to move with the wind, making the windward direction an important sailing term to know.
7. **Boom** - The boom is the horizontal pole which extends from the bottom of the mast. Adjusting the boom towards the direction of the wind is how the sailboat is able to harness wind power in order to move forward or backwards.
8. **Rudder** - Located beneath the boat, the rudder is a flat piece of wood, fiberglass, or metal that is used to steer the ship. Larger sailboats control the rudder via a wheel, while smaller sailboats will have a steering mechanism directly aft.
9. **Tacking** - The opposite of jibing, this basic sailing maneuver refers to turning the bow of the boat through the wind so that the wind changes from one side of the boat to the other side. The boom of a boat will always shift from one side to the other when performing a tack or a jibe.
10. **Jibing** - The opposite of tacking, this basic sailing maneuver refers to turning the stern of the boat through the wind so that the wind changes from one side of the boat to the other side. The boom of a boat will always shift from one side to the other when performing a tack or a jibe. Jibing is a less common technique than tacking, since it involves turning a boat directly into the wind.

## Basic Sailboat Terms



- Rudder:** A spade-like object at the back of the boat that steers the boat by deflection of the water.
- Tiller:** The lever that controls the rudder.
- Winches:** A mechanical device used to increase pulling power on a line.
- Fairleads:** Eyes or blocks that guide lines in a desired direction. Usually they are used for jibsheets.
- Gooseneck:** The fitting that connects the boom to the mast. It works like a swivel allowing the boom to move up and down and swing from side to side.
- Keel:** The weighted fin at the bottom of the boat that keeps the boat from slipping sideways through the water.
- Bow:** Front end of the boat.

- Stanchions:** Vertical posts that hold lifelines in place.  
**Pulpit:** Safety rail at the bow of the boat.  
**Stern:** Back end of the boat.  
**Port:** The left side of the boat when facing forward.  
**Starboard:** The right side of the boat when facing forward.

### **Basic Standing Rigging**

- Mast:** The large vertical spar that supports the sail and boom.  
**Boom:** The horizontal spar used to hold and extend the foot of the main sail.  
**Forestay:** The wire (cable) that supports the mast from the bow and prevents the top of the mast from moving aft.  
**Backstay:** The wire that supports the mast from the stern and prevents the top of it from moving forward.  
**Shrouds:** The wires that support the mast from the sides and prevent it from moving athwartships. (sideways)  
**Spreaders:** The horizontal spar attached to the mast, which extend the shrouds and stays and help to support the mast.  
**Turnbuckle:** Device for adjusting tension on shrouds and stays.  
**Chainplate:** Fitting that connects shrouds to hull.

### **Basic Running Rigging**

- Halyards:** Lines or wire rope used to hoist the sails.  
**Sheets:** Lines used to control the sails. Trimming is tightening the sheet to move the sail towards the centerline of the boat and easing is letting it out.  
**Outhaul:** Line used to tighten or tension the foot or bottom edge) of the sail.  
**Downhaul:** Line used to tighten or tension the luff (forward edge) of the sail.  
**Boom Vang:** Used to pull the boom down. It prevents the boom from lifting which causes the top part of the sail to twist.  
**Topping Lift:** Holds the end of the boom up and prevents it from falling into the cockpit when the main sail is lowered.