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SMALL SAILBOATS MADE FUN AND EASY

Sailing Made Simple

**Easily remember sailboat terminology
with the memory techniques used in
this pocket-sized sailing manual.**



By Floyd Jay Winters

SMALL SAILBOATS MADE FUN AND EASY

Small Sailboat Pocket Manual
With Water Riddles
And Memory Tips

By Floyd Jay Winters

<http://SmallSailboats.net>

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About the Author

Captain/Professor Floyd Jay Winters is a career instructor and coach, with multiple American Sailing Association Certifications, and multiple Sail and Power Squadron Certifications. He coached championship varsity wrestling for 10 years, going undefeated for two years. He currently gives small sailboat lessons at BiminiBaySailing.com off the beautiful shore of Anna Maria Island, Florida. He also teaches for the Anna Maria Island Sail and Power Squadron.

Jay is experienced on small boats and tall boats and in between sailboats. He has taught small sailboat sailing to hundreds of students, ranging in age from as young as 7 to over 70. Over the years, he has taught numerous small sailboat sailing summer camps, and has provided sailing instruction to many students in one-on-one and small group sessions, on the water and in the classroom.

Floyd Jay Winters has had several college textbooks published by major publishers. Jay presents the small sailboat material covered in this manual in a friendly and easy-to-understand way. He uses helpful teaching methods, such as mnemonics and association techniques, to help you remember sailing terms and understand sailing maneuvers. This fun and simple pocket-sized manual includes numerous diagrams and figures to help make sailing a safe and enjoyable sport.

To contact or find more information on Captain F. Jay Winters email wintersfj@gmail.com or visit BradentonWebsiteDesign.com.

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Introduction

Small sailboat sailing is absolutely my favorite pastime. I must use my mind, hands, eyes, balance, and even my backside as I change from side to side during a tack. Every part of me becomes magically in sync. Yeah, you must work to make a boat sail, but in the end, you are in complete control, working with and against one of the most primal, basic forces of nature — the wind. That’s really cool, and empowering, whether you’re 9 or 69 years old. And unlike a powerboat, as soon as I raise my sails, I have arrived at my destination — because my destination is the journey, not some piece of land “over there” that I must rush to get to. No gas, no noise, no fumes, no pollution. Just the peaceful lapping of the water against the bow of my boat.

Yet, I vividly remember my first learning experiences on a small sailboat. Although I knew what a mast, tiller and rudder was, I was so woefully unprepared. My instructor started throwing all these unfamiliar terms and commands at me. She’d start barking instructions like,
“Ease the main to slow down.”
“Your sail is luffing; fall off.”
“Push the tiller to port before you hit that channel marker, you idiot.”

I needed a short simple manual to quickly and concisely present the basic terms and sailing concepts in a way that I could easily remember and understand. I wanted well labeled photos and illustrations. I also needed a manual that I could put on my smartphone and have on me for quick reference. Goldie Locks like. Not too big, not too short.

I could not find exactly what I needed, so I started writing my own short, fun and simple-to-understand manual for both my personal use and for my students. And as a career educator, coach and author who had already published several instructional books, the rest is history.

So, this book will start with the most basic terms, providing short, clear and concise definitions, often using common synonyms. Once a good foundation is set, important concepts will be covered with easy to follow steps. I’ll also share many of my **memory tips** and fun water **riddles** (**shown in bold purple**) to help you remember them.

Main Parts of a Sailboat

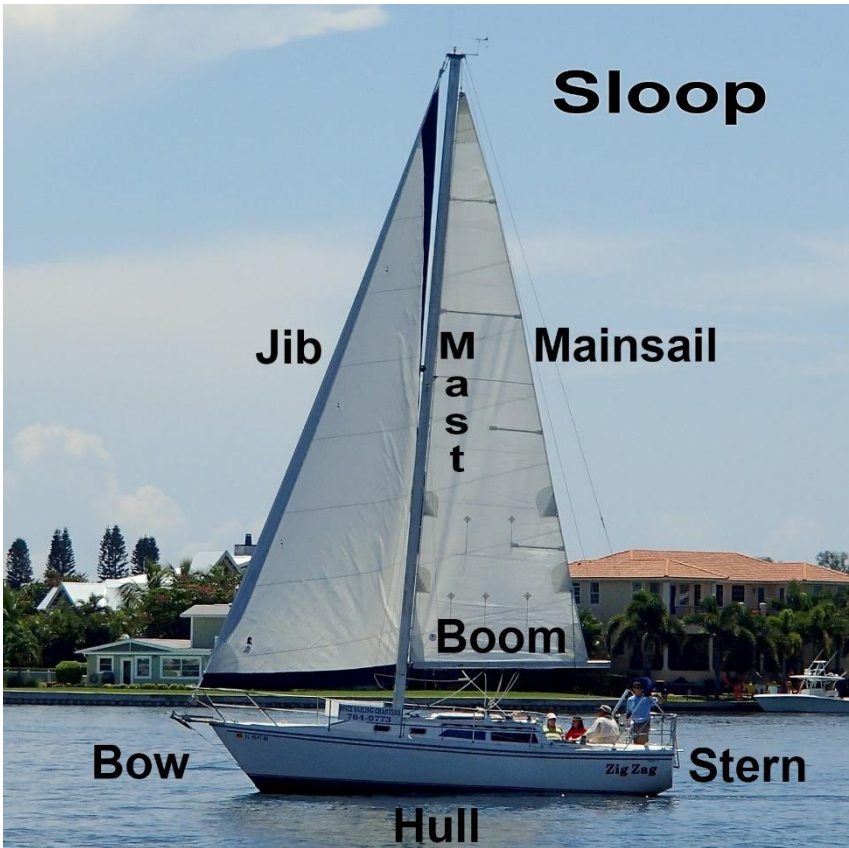
BOW – The **front** part of a boat. (**You bow to the front**)

HULL – The main watertight floating body or shell of a boat. (shell/hull)

DECK – The part of boat that sits on top of the hull. (**Think sundeck**)

MAST – The tall vertical **pole** that supports the sails. (**Both a flag and a sail are raised up a mast**)

BOOM – A horizontal pole connected to the mast; it supports the bottom of the sail. (If you are not careful, **it can go boom on your head**)



The main parts of a sailboat, 30 foot Catalina (a Sloop)

DAGGERBOARD – A 3 to 4-foot removable lightweight wood or fiberglass **keel** used to stabilize a *small* sailboat and keep it from drifting sideways. It is pulled up in shallow water, as shown at right. **(It is inserted like a dagger through the center of the hull)**



CENTERBOARD – A rotating wood or fiberglass **keel** used to stabilize a *mid-sized* sailboat. It is secured in the **center** of the hull and can be rotated or **pivoted** down in deeper water. It may be brought up in shallow water or when sailing downwind.

KEEL – A weighted fin-like **spine** on the bottom of a *larger* sailboat designed to reduce **Drift** (sliding) when the wind blows from the side. **Keel boats** have heavy lead-filled keels to provide **Ballast** (counterweight) for **stability**, greatly reducing the chance of a capsize when a boat **Heels** (tilts) to one side. **(Keels keep keel boats from keeling over)**

TILLER – A pole attached to the **Rudder** used to steer smaller boats. A tiller is moved in the **opposite** direction of which the bow of the boat will move. Moving the tiller left will steer the bow to the right.



RUDDER – A vertical board hinged to the **Stern** (back) of a boat. It extends down into water like a fish fin and is used for steering. On small boats the rudder is typically controlled by a tiller. Other boats use a wheel to steer.



TRANSOM – A vertical, flat surface at the **Stern** of the hull, where the rudder and/or motor are attached.

STERN – The **aft** or **after** or back part of a boat, where the tiller is located. **(Steer from the Stern, where you keep the Spare tire ☺)**

Directions on a Boat

FORE – The **F**orward part of a boat; near the bow.

AFT – The **A**fter or back part of a boat; toward the stern.

STARBOARD – The **right** side of a boat when looking forward. (It literally meant **Steerboard** or **Steering Oar**, because ancient boats were often steered by a right-handed man holding a large oar on the right side at the back of the boat.)

PORT – The **left** side of a boat when looking forward. Early boats were docked on the left side when in port to keep from crushing the steering oar located on the right side. Remember, when you are out to sea you have *left port*. Also, both **port and left have 4 letters**.

BEAM – The greatest **width** of the boat (from side to side).

DRAFT – The minimum **Depth** of water a boat can sail in. It is the distance **between the waterline and the bottom of the keel**.

WINDWARD – **Upwind** or *towards* the direction from which the wind is blowing **from**. The sail is blown to the opposite side of the wind.

LEEWARD – Pronounced “*loo-erd*.” **Downwind** or the direction where the wind is blowing **to**. Or, the side opposite that **from** which the wind blows. A full sail is on the **Leeward** side. A sailboat will **Heel** or **Lean to the Leeward** side, where the sail is blown to.



Sails and Rigging

We will start at the bow of the boat and work to the back of the boat.

JIB – A triangular foresail located in the **front** of the mainsail. The **Head** (top) of a jib is often shackled to the top or near the top of the mainsail mast.

GENOA (sometimes called a **Genny**) – A longer, lighter foresail, which extends past the mast providing more sail area.

SPINNAKER – A large lightweight, parachute-like sail, extended beyond the front of racing boats when running downwind.

SPINNAKER POLE – A pole used to extend the **Foot** (bottom) of the spinnaker out beyond the edge of the boat.

WHISKER POLE – A pole, usually attached to the mast, used to hold or push the **Clew** (bottom aft **Corner**) of the jib or genoa out when sailing downwind.

MAST – A vertical pole or **Spar** used to attach the mainsail and boom.

MAINSAIL – The larger, main sail on a sailboat. It is usually located slightly forward of the middle of a sailboat.

BATTENS – Long thin strips of plastic inserted into pockets of the **Leech** (back) of a sail, to support the sail shape.

JIB SHEET – The **Line** (rope) connected to a sail's **Clew** (bottom aft corner) to **Trim** the curve and tension of the jib. Jib sheets usually run along the front sides of the boat.

MAINSHEET – The line that **Trims** (adjusts) the curve and tension of the mainsail. Pull it in tighter and closer when sailing upwind. Let the mainsheet and mainsail out further when sailing downwind.

At right is a **Sheet** (line to **Trim** a sail) wrapped around a **Winch** (always clockwise) and locked into a **Cam Cleat**.



BOOM – A horizontal pole or spar running perpendicular, at a right angle, from the mast. It supports the bottom of the sail. It is usually connected to the mainsheet by a **Block** (pulley) and line at the end of the boom, as shown on the right of the figure below. The boom swings across the boat depending on the direction of the wind. If you are not careful – **it can go Boom on your head!**



The **Boom** is connected to the **Mainsheet** (see block and line on right)

HALYARD – A line going to the top of the mast, used to **Haul** up or raise a sail up the mast, sometime by means of a **Block** or fixed pulley. **Point the bow of the boat into the wind when hoisting a sail!** (**Loosen** Halyard a **Little** in **Light** wind for more curve in sail.)

WINCH – A mechanical device, usually consisting of a metal drum, turned by an inserted handle, around which a line (such as a jib sheet) is wound or hauled in. All winches rotate in only one direction. Always wrap lines **clockwise** around a winch, from bottom up. Typically, one to three wraps are necessary, using only one wrap in a light wind. (**A Winch Winds or Wraps lines.**)



WINCH HANDLE – A ratchet device inserted into the top of a winch, used to turn the winch to tighten a sheet as you trim a sail. A winch can also be used to pull in a halyard as you raise a sail.

GRINDING (winching) – Turning the winch handle to **Sheet In** (pull in) a line, such as a **Jib Sheet**.



LINE – a rope used to **Trim** (adjust) a sail, raise a sail, or secure a boat or something on a boat. Sailors use the word line instead of rope.

SHEET – A line used to trim a sail, such as a **Mainsheet** or **Jib sheet**. If a sheet is loose, the sail will **Luff** (flutter). (The ancients called it **scéatlíne** or **sheet-line**, for the line to control the cloth sheet or sail.)

CRINGLE – a reinforced hole, **grommet** or metal ring in the top of a sail (**Head**), the front bottom of a sail (**Tack**) or the back-bottom Corner of a sail (**Clew**).



Cringle for Clew on left. Outhaul on right.

OUTHAUL – A line connecting the **Clew** (a **grommet** in the back bottom of a sail) to the **outer** edge of the boom. It hauls **out** (or releases) the back of a sail, controlling the curve of its **Foot** (the sail's bottom). You often **Loosen** the outhaul in **Light** winds.

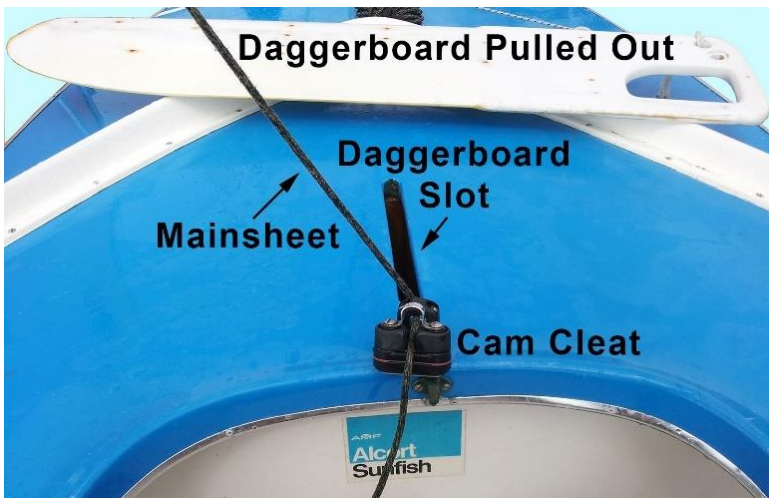
DOWNHAUL – A line attached to the **Tack** or front of a sail. It is used to pull down and tighten the sail, to help flatten (or loosen) the sail shape. Tighten the downhaul to move the **Draft** or belly or curve of the sail forward in heavy winds to help slice through the wind.

CLEAT – A fitting to which lines are secured or **Made Fast**. The classic deck cleat is anvil-shaped; it looks like small stubby bull horns.



Left: A **Dock Line** in a **Flemish Coil** and secured to a **Deck Cleat**
Right: **Deck Cleat** on top, **Cam Cleat** on bottom

CAM CLEAT – A device used to secure a jib sheet, mainsheet, or other line as it is pulled between two cams. The hard rubber cams have small gear-like teeth to grip the line and hold it into place. However, even when the line is locked in place, you can still pull the sheet out further through the cleat to trim the sail even more. Lift the line up out of the cleat to ease the jib or to release the sheet completely.



A typical Sunfish with **Mainsheet** set in the **Cam Cleat**

Riddle: Where do you take a sick boat? (See last page)



Parts of a Sunfish

The **Boom** is connected to the bottom of the sail.

The **Mainsheet** is a line that controls the mainsail.

The **Tiller** is used to turn the **Rudder** which steers the boat.

The **Daggerboard** provides stability, keeps boat from drifting sideways.

(Only the top brown part of the daggerboard is seen in middle of boat.)

Riddle: What gets wetter the more it dries? (See last page)

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