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## 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 Captain 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 United States Sail and Power Squadron Certifications. As a career coach, he coached championship varsity wrestling for 10 years, going undefeated for over two straight years. He also coached girls' varsity track, and a championship girls' soccer team. He currently coaches and gives small sailboat lessons at [BiminiBaySailing.com](http://BiminiBaySailing.com) off the beautiful shore of Anna Maria Island, Florida. Additionally, he teaches for the [Anna Maria Island Sail and Power Squadron](#).**

**Jay is experienced on small boats and tall ships 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. Jay has sailed, crewed, and raced on all sizes of boats, ranging from the 14-foot Sunfish to 36-foot keelboats to the historic 122-foot Baltimore Clipper Schooner, the [Privateer Lynx](#).**



**As an experienced author, Professor 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 well labeled figures to help make sailing a safe and enjoyable sport. This enjoyable sailing manual even includes a series of water riddles to add a little amusement to your reading.**

**To contact or find more information on Captain F. Jay Winters email [wintersfj@gmail.com](mailto:wintersfj@gmail.com) or visit [BradentonWebsiteDesign.com](http://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 7 or 70 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

*There are a lot of new terms to master as you begin to learn to sail. To make the process both logical and easier, we will start by covering the most basic terms, working our way from the front of the boat to the back of the boat. Memory phrases in purple are often included in parentheses to help you remember many of these terms.*

**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 sun Deck)

**MAST** – The tall vertical pole that supports the main sail.

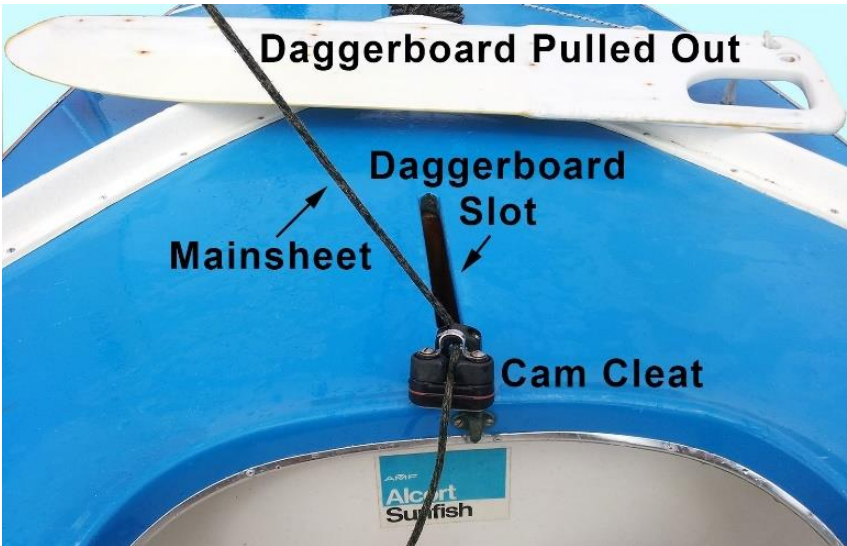
(Both a flag and a sail are raised up a mast)

**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)



Starting with the most basic – the main parts of Sunfish sailboat. The **Bow** is pointed into the wind, as students prepare to raise the sail up the **Mast**.

**DAGGERBOARD** – A 3 to 4-foot lightweight wood or fiberglass **removable keel** used to stabilize a *small* sailboat and keep it from drifting sideways. It is difficult to tack or turn properly if the daggerboard is not pushed down. However, it must be pulled up in shallow water, so you do not run aground. It is also sometimes raised when going downwind to reduce friction. (It is inserted like a dagger through the center of the hull)



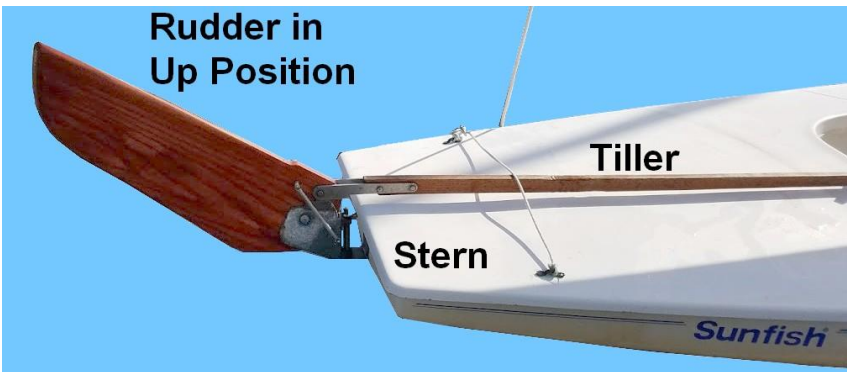
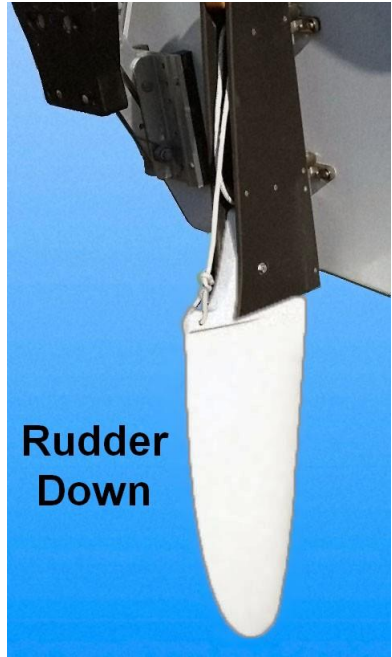
A typical Sunfish with **Mainsheet** set in the **Cam Cleat**

**CENTERBOARD** – A rotating wood or fiberglass **keel** used to stabilize a *midsized* 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 capsized if a boat **Heels** (tilts) too much to one side. (**Keels keep keel boats from keeling over**)

**RUDDER** – A vertical board hinged to the **Stern's Transom** (the back) of a boat. It extends down into water like a fish fin and is used for steering. It is moved left or right to change the direction of the boat. On small boats the rudder is typically controlled by a tiller. Larger boats tend to use a common steering wheel to control the rudder.

**TILLER** – A pole attached to the **Rudder** used to steer smaller boats. The **Tiller Turns** the rudder causing the boat to turn. A tiller is moved in the **opposite** direction of which the bow of the boat will move. Pushing the tiller left will steer the bow to the right.



**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 ☺**)

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



Below is a common **Sloop** sailboat, with a single mast for the mainsail. It has a **Jib**, which is hoisted up a **Forestay** (a strong cable running from the bow to the top of the mast). The sloop below has a cabin with a small dining area and berths large enough to sleep in.



The main parts of a sailboat, 30 foot Catalina (a **Sloop**)  
The **Keel** and **Rudder** are under water and are not visible.

# 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.



Notice how she is **facing the sail** and pushing the tiller to steer.

# 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 tension and concave curve 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**.



Parts of a Sunfish

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

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

You **Steer** from the **Stern**, at the back of the boat.

The **Tiller Turns** 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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