



What the Sailor Saw - Teacher's Notes

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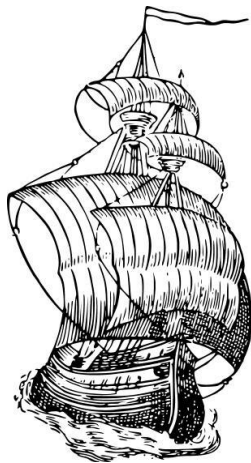
Modern scientists can use satellites and the space base images to see that the Earth is almost round like a ball, that it spins on its axis once a day and that it orbits the Sun once a year.



Many people thought that the Earth was flat, and some still do.

Sailors were amongst the first to provide evidence that it was round.

If you were a sailor standing on the beach 400 years ago and you were watching a sailing ship, you might have drawn a picture like the one below.



10 minutes ago



30 minutes ago



60 minutes ago



100 minutes ago

Is the ship sailing towards you or away from you? **It is sailing away from me as the ship is getting smaller and at 100 minutes I can only see the top of it.**

How does this sketch help the sailor to realise that the Earth is round?



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The bottom/hull of the ship cant be seen when it is far away. As it comes up over the horizon it becomes more visible. It must be sailing on a curved surface. The Earth is spherical.

The first ship to sail round the world was the Santiago initially captained by Ferdinand Magellan. It left Spain in 1519 and sailed south through the Atlantic Ocean round the southern end of South America into the Pacific Ocean. Magellan died in a war in the Philippines and the journey was completed under captain Elanco.

Sailors had always realised that the Earth was round because they had seen that as a ship sails away from the viewer it not only gets smaller but it disappears over the horizon from the base up.



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