



CHART A COURSE FOR SUCCESS

# Shipmate Update

Captain Homeschool • 06/01/2026

Parent Resources

Port of Practice Worksheets

## HANDS-ON DECK: MONTHLY PROJECTS

### Hoist the Sails for a Sonic Voyage!

*Ahoy, mateys! Captain Abe here, ready to guide you on a grand adventure into the world of Music & Audio with three hands-on projects, perfect for exploring sound from stem to stern!*

Ahoy there, mateys! Captain Abe, your trusty old sea dog, is back on deck, and this month we're setting our compass for a thrilling voyage into the mysterious, magnificent waters of Music & Audio! From the gentle lapping of waves against the hull to the booming thunder of a storm, sound is everywhere, shaping our world. So, grab your spyglass and ready your thinking caps, because I've got three grand hands-on projects, shipshape for every age group, that'll have you exploring the very currents of sound from your own humble abodes!

#### **For My Youngest Cadets (Elementary School): The "Sea Shanty Shaker" & "Rubber Band Banjo"**

Ever wonder how the rhythmic splash of waves makes its music? You can create your own!

- **The Project:** Gather up some empty plastic bottles, tin cans, or even small cardboard boxes. Fill them with different items from around your home – rice, beans, pasta, buttons, pebbles. Seal them up tight with tape. Voilà! You've got a "Sea Shanty Shaker!" Now, for a "Rubber Band Banjo," grab an empty tissue box or shoebox. Stretch a few

rubber bands of different thicknesses and lengths across the open part of the box.

Pluck away!

- **Why It's Shipshape:** This teaches you that sound is made by \*vibration\* – the shaking of materials! Different fillings in your shakers make unique sounds, just like different instruments. With your banjo, you'll discover that tighter or shorter rubber bands make higher sounds (pitch), while looser or longer ones make lower sounds. It's all about how fast things vibrate!
- **Supplies:** Empty containers (plastic bottles, cans, small boxes), various small dry items (rice, beans, pasta, buttons), tape, rubber bands, empty tissue/shoebox, scissors.

### **For My Sharper Sailors (Middle School): The "Sound Wave Navigator"**

Ready to chart the invisible currents of sound? This project lets you \*see\* sound with your own two eyes!

- **The Project:** Find a small cardboard box (like a cereal box) and cut a window in one side. Cover this window tightly with a piece of balloon or plastic wrap, securing it with tape or a rubber band. This is your sound "membrane." Tape a tiny, shiny piece of aluminum foil (or a small mirror fragment) to the center of the membrane. Now, shine a laser pointer at the foil in a darkened room, aiming the reflected dot onto a wall. Make some noise – talk, sing, shout – towards your membrane. Watch the laser dot dance!
- **Why It's Shipshape:** Your membrane vibrates with the sound waves hitting it, just like your eardrum! The dancing laser dot is actually showing you the invisible sound waves. Louder sounds will make the dot bounce more (higher amplitude), and higher-pitched sounds will make it vibrate faster (higher frequency). It's a direct visual of how sound travels! To dive deeper into the science of these unseen waves, [Explore Sound Waves](#).
- **Supplies:** Small cardboard box, balloon/plastic wrap, small piece of mirror/aluminum foil, laser pointer, scissors, tape, rubber band.

### **For My Seasoned Crew (High School): The "Voyage of Foley"**

Ever wondered how the thunderous crack of a whip or the gentle patter of rain in a movie is made? It's often thanks to Foley artists – masters of sonic illusion!

- **The Project:** Find a short, silent video clip (a few seconds long – maybe you can even film a silent scene yourself!). Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to create \*all\* the sound effects for that video using only items found around your house. Record these sounds with a smartphone or simple recorder, timing them perfectly to the actions on screen. The rustle of clothes, the clinking of keys, the squish of footsteps in mud (perhaps a wet sponge on a cutting board!).

- **Why It's Shipshape:** This project teaches you the art of sound design and psychoacoustics – how sound influences our emotions and understanding of a scene. You'll learn about timing, layering sounds, and how specific effects can build a believable, immersive world for your audience, all without a single word being spoken. You'll become a true storyteller with sound! For inspiration, [Learn About Foley](#).
- **Supplies:** Smartphone (for recording), common household items (keys, water, shoes, fabric, crumpled paper, spoons, etc.), a short silent video clip.

There you have it, my fearless explorers! Three fantastic ways to drop anchor and delve deep into the wondrous world of Music & Audio. Remember, the ocean of knowledge is vast, and every discovery is a treasure. Smooth sailing, and happy experimenting!

## BEYOND THE LIVING ROOM: SOCIALIZATION & ACTIVITIES

# Navigating Social Seas: Homeschool Adventures Ashore!

*Ahoy, homeschool parents! Join Captain Abe as we chart a course to rich outside-the-home experiences and build a vibrant community, all with the help of Captain Homeschool.*

Ahoy, mateys! Captain Abe here, with a grand tale to spin about one of the most exciting parts of our homeschooling voyage: connecting with the world beyond our own ship's bow and forging strong new crews! We all know homeschooling is a magnificent journey, but sometimes parents worry about charting a course for socialization and outside activities. Fear not, for Captain Homeschool has just the navigational tools we need!

Let me hoist the flag for "Captain Connect," our remarkable AI engine that acts like a trusty lighthouse, guiding you to incredible local opportunities. Every Wednesday, without fail, Captain Connect plots a course for a unique field trip right in your local port of call. But here's the true treasure: these aren't just random jaunts! Each suggested excursion is carefully tied to your week's lessons, transforming textbook learning into tangible, real-world exploration. Studying marine biology? Captain Connect might suggest a visit to the local aquarium or a beach cleanup expedition, where your cadets can observe sea life firsthand. Delving into local history? A trip to a historical society or an old fort awaits!

These weekly voyages are not only fantastic for learning but are prime opportunities to bump into other homeschooling families and begin building your community.

Now, how do we drop anchor and build those vital friendships? Here's some actionable advice from an old sea dog:

- **Be the Skipper:** Sometimes, you've got to be the one to hoist the first flag. When you meet another family at a Captain Connect field trip or a local park, don't be shy! Invite them for a follow-up playdate or suggest a shared learning project.
- **Form a Crew:** Consider starting a small co-op or interest group. It could be a science club that meets once a month, a book club for young readers, or even just a regular playgroup at a local park. Use online community boards or local homeschooling social media groups to find fellow voyagers ready to join your crew. You might be surprised how many are waiting for someone to take the lead!
- **Seek Out Local Havens:** Libraries, community centers, nature preserves, and local museums are often welcoming ports of call for homeschooling families. Many offer specific programs or dedicated times for homeschoolers. These are natural gathering spots where friendships can blossom.
- **Volunteer Together:** There's no better way to teach empathy and connect with the wider community than by giving back. Seek out opportunities at animal shelters, food banks, or park cleanups. It's a fantastic way for your children to interact with diverse groups and learn the value of teamwork.
- **Explore Digital Shores:** Many regions have online forums or social media groups specifically for homeschooling families. Dive in! Ask questions, offer support, and look for announcements about local meetups. A great place to start looking for these communities is by using search terms like "your city homeschooling groups" or "your county homeschool co-op." For more general connection ideas, you can also explore broader resources like [Explore Local Connections](#).

Remember, every great voyage needs a strong crew. Captain Homeschool helps you chart the most engaging course for your child's education and connections, but it's your spirit that truly sets sail and builds those enduring friendships. Fair winds and smooth sailing, my friends!

# Captain Abe's Compass Points to Learning Shores!

*Ahoy there, mateys! Captain Abe here, with a fresh breeze of wisdom to guide your young learners beyond the usual charts. I've charted a course to three magnificent, free online harbors of knowledge, perfect for enriching your educational voyage!*

Ahoy, my steadfast crew of learners and guides! Captain Abe at the helm, ready to share some truly valuable intel from my latest voyages across the vast digital seas. We all know the importance of a sturdy ship and a good map, and when it comes to learning, having the right supplementary tools can make all the difference in navigating those boundless oceans of knowledge.

I've hoisted the spyglass and scoured the digital horizon to bring you three absolutely free, top-notch learning resource websites. These aren't full-fledged curriculums that'll steer your whole ship, mind you, but rather mighty lighthouses that illuminate specific paths and add a powerful tailwind to your existing educational journey. Let's set sail!

First on our manifest, we've got a true leviathan of learning: **Khan Academy**. This grand vessel offers a treasure chest overflowing with free lessons, practice exercises, and instructional videos across a vast ocean of subjects – mathematics, science, history, art, economics, and so much more! It's not a full-fledged curriculum you'd sail for a whole year, no, no! Think of it as your trusty compass and sextant, helping you navigate tricky waters or explore new islands of knowledge. If your young sailor needs to shore up their understanding of fractions, delve deeper into the wonders of photosynthesis, or even get a head start on algebra, Khan Academy is your port of call. It's a fantastic supplementary tool, offering clear explanations and plenty of practice to ensure the knowledge truly anchors itself in their minds. A true beacon for self-paced learning and review!

Next up, hoist the colours for language learning with **Duolingo**! This lively platform is like having a crew of friendly parrots, ready to help your little buccaneers learn a new tongue, be it Spanish, French, German, or dozens of others. They make it a game, with short, engaging lessons that feel more like playtime than hard work. Learning a new language is like discovering a new continent – it broadens horizons and opens up entirely new worlds! Duolingo is the perfect supplementary vessel for this journey. It's not about replacing a language arts curriculum, but rather adding a vibrant, interactive dimension to it. With daily practice, progress tracking, and fun challenges, your learners can steadily build their vocabulary and grammar skills, making their learning voyage all the more

exciting and rewarding. Plus, hearing "You're doing great!" in a new language is always a morale booster!

And for our third splendid stop, cast your gaze upon the wondrous shores of [Google Arts & Culture](#). Prepare to set sail on virtual voyages through the world's most renowned museums, historical sites, and cultural landmarks – all from the comfort of your own home! Imagine strolling through the Louvre, exploring the pyramids of Egypt, or examining ancient artifacts in breathtaking detail, all without ever leaving your ship, so to speak. This magnificent resource is a veritable galleon of discovery for history, art, and cultural studies. It's not a curriculum, but a grand expedition that complements any learning journey by providing rich context and visual splendor. Want to see Van Gogh's brushstrokes up close? Curious about the architecture of ancient Rome? Google Arts & Culture offers unparalleled access and immersive experiences. It's a fantastic way to spark curiosity, bring lessons to life, and show your young explorers the boundless beauty and history our world holds. A true compass point for cultural exploration!

There you have it, my brave crew! Three powerful, free tools to add to your educational arsenal. Remember, the world is a vast ocean of knowledge, and these resources are just a few of the many lighthouses guiding us to new discoveries. Keep those sails full, keep those minds curious, and always be ready to explore. Fair winds and following seas on your learning adventures! Captain Abe, signing off!

## CAPTAIN'S RIDDLES

### Solve the Mystery!

*Parents: read each riddle aloud and let your young detective reason it out! Captain Abe and his first mate Ms. Pennington are on the case. Answers are at the very bottom of this newsletter – upside down, just like a real puzzle page.*

#### Elementary (Ages 6-9)

Captain Abe and Ms. Pennington were enjoying a quiet afternoon tea on the deck when Captain Abe noticed something missing. "Shiver me timbers! Who's nabbed the last blueberry scone from the basket?" he exclaimed.

Young Cabin Boy Timmy piped up quickly, "Not me, Captain! I saw it earlier, and it was still warm and wonderfully crumbly. I didn't lay a finger on it."

Ms. Pennington smiled kindly. "Is that so, Timmy?" she asked gently.

Captain Abe stroked his beard. "Well, Timmy, you're quite right, it was delicious. But you've also just told us who enjoyed the last bite!"

### **Middle School (Ages 10-13)**

Captain Abe was preparing for a special voyage when he realized his lucky, silver-plated compass, usually hanging by the chart table, was gone! He needed it for his private study. He asked the three crew members who had been in the chart room that morning for clues.

Quartermaster Eliza stated, "I was in there right after the first light, around 6 AM, setting the morning course. The compass was hanging exactly where it should be, gleaming."

Navigator Tom then said, "I popped in mid-morning, about 10 AM, to fetch a specific chart. I remember noticing the hook was empty where the compass usually hung. I figured you'd taken it, Captain."

Ms. Pennington added, "And I was in there just before lunch, around 12 PM, checking the old star maps. I saw your compass, Captain, hanging right there on its hook, looking quite smart."

Captain Abe stroked his beard. "Well now, Ms. Pennington, I appreciate your keen eye, but you've just told us a tall tale! My compass was definitely gone before lunchtime."

### **High School (Ages 14-18)**

Captain Abe had a magnificent, ornamental Golden Feather Quill on display in his private parlour, a room located on the port (left) side of the main deck. The parlour has a single, round porthole window that looks directly out from the port side of the ship. At 2:00 PM, Ms. Pennington locked the parlour door after polishing the quill. At 3:00 PM, Captain Abe discovered it was gone! Only three people claimed to be near the area during that hour.

First, Sailor Fiona reported, "I was coiling ropes on the main deck from 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM, nowhere near the parlour door. Then I moved to the bow (front of the ship)."

Next, Deckhand Gary said, "I was cleaning the anchor chain up on the forecastle deck (upper deck at the bow) from 1:45 PM until 2:45 PM. Too high and too far forward to even see the parlour door, let alone go in."

Finally, Navigator Nora explained, "I was in the chart room, which is also on the main deck, but on the starboard (right) side of the ship, working on the tide charts from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM. I distinctly remember glancing out the chart room's porthole window around 2:15

PM and seeing a flash of gold from inside the Captain's parlour, through its porthole. So the quill was definitely there then!"

Captain Abe shook his head. "Nora, you are a fine navigator, but that's impossible! You've just told us you were untruthful."

Parent Resources

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STATE WATERS: ESA & LEGISLATION UPDATES

## Setting Our Compasses: Riding the Wave of Homeschool Choice

*Captain Abe brings news from the educational seas, charting the rapid growth of homeschooling, expanding scholarship opportunities, and the importance of staying vigilant on our journey.*

Ahoy there, my intrepid crew of homeschool families! Captain Abe here, with a fresh breeze filling our sails and exciting news from across the educational oceans. It's truly a marvel to witness the homeschooling movement, a tide that continues to rise, now recognized as the fastest-growing education model on the charts. What a magnificent journey we're on!

The horizon is indeed expanding with more opportunities for our families to navigate their educational courses with confidence. We're seeing **funding expanding and access growing**, which means more hands on deck to support your unique voyages. For those sailing with Captain Homeschool, remember, we are eligible for incredible programs in states like Florida, Arizona, Arkansas, Utah, Georgia, West Virginia, Texas, and many more! This means many families can set their course with **\$0 out of pocket**, truly an incredible fair wind for your family's budget.

A significant beacon on our radar is the **updated eligibility income limits for scholarship recipients** tied to the new federal tax credit. This is fantastic news, opening

the gangway to even more families who wish to chart their own educational journey. It's a clear signal that the broader educational landscape is recognizing the value and necessity of school choice. Indeed, we've even heard that **teachers love school choice**, understanding the diverse needs of learners and the benefits of flexible educational paths for all.

Now, every good captain knows to keep a watchful eye on the charts. While the seas are generally favorable, we must remain vigilant. Whispers of **new battles emerging in 2026** remind us that we must keep our compasses true and our voices strong to protect these freedoms. And like any grand vessel, we must ensure our programs are managed with the utmost trust and transparency. We've seen reminders, like the situation with the LA GATOR, that demand our collective oversight to ensure all resources faithfully serve the families they're meant to empower. Staying informed is our best defense against any squalls!

My hearty crew, the winds of change are undeniably at our backs. The freedom and flexibility that homeschooling offers are proving to be invaluable treasures for countless families. Let's keep working together, sharing our knowledge, and empowering one another to make every day of this homeschooling adventure a success. Keep those anchors ready, but never stop exploring!

Fair winds and following seas!

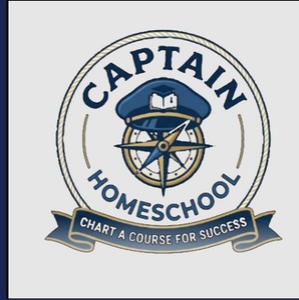
Captain Abe

**Elementary:** Cabin Boy Timmy ate the score. If he "didn't lay a finger on it," he wouldn't know it was "warm and wonderfully crumbly." He would have had to touch or taste it to know those details!

**Middle School:** Ms. Pennington is fibbing. Navigator Tom saw the compass gone at 10 AM (mid-morning). If it was gone at 10 AM, it couldn't possibly have been "hanging right there on its hook" at 12 PM (just before lunch) when Ms. Pennington claims to have seen it. Her statement contradicts Tom's earlier observation.

**High School:** Navigator Nora is untruthful. The Captain's parlour is on the port (left) side of the main deck, with its porthole facing out. The chart room is also on the main deck, but it is on the starboard (right) side of the ship, with its porthole facing out the starboard side. If Nora was in the chart room and looking out its porthole, she would be looking to the right side of the ship, not across the ship to the port side where the parlour is, and certainly not into the parlour through its

porthole. It would be physically impossible for her to have seen a "flash of gold from inside the Captain's parlour, through its porthole" from her location in the chart room.



## Captain Homeschool

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