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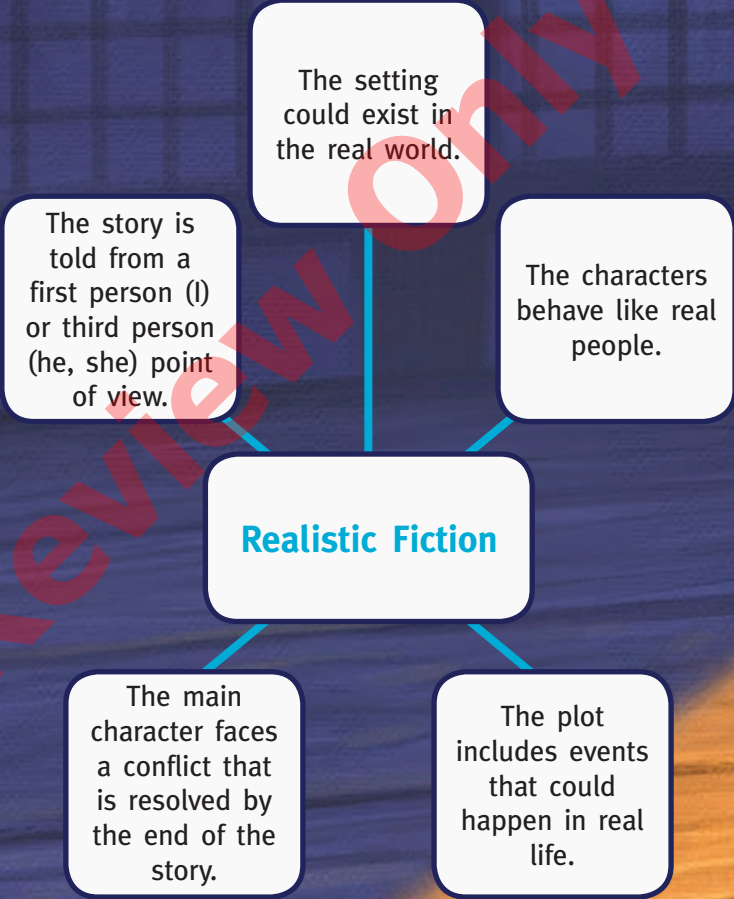


REALISTIC FICTION
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Level **O/34**
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Realistic Fiction

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Part 1: The Bounty, 1741



Sam stopped swabbing the deck for a moment and took a deep breath of sea air. Just for fun, he climbed high into the **rigging** of the pirate ship.

Even cabin boys deserve a break, he thought.

It was a clear day, and Sam could see for miles. But instead of just endless blue waves, Sam saw something floating in the distance.

“Ahoy,” he yelled. “I see the mast of a ship!”

“Who cares, boy?” barked a scruffy pirate.

“It’s a shipwreck,” shouted Sam. “And that could mean treasure!”

“Turn the ship!” ordered the captain. The crew jumped into action. Sam scurried down to the deck. Soon they reached the shipwreck. A broken ship’s mast floated alongside twisted sails and ropes, and tangled in the ropes was a boy.

“There’s a lad! Do you see him?” Sam shouted.

“Get the **grappling hook**,” the captain ordered.

Using hooks and ropes, the men pulled the mast close. A pirate climbed down a rope ladder and carried the boy on his shoulders to the deck.

The young boy was shivering, so Sam grabbed his own blanket. As Sam put the blanket on the boy's shoulders, he noticed a tiny wet book gripped in the boy's hands.

"Where's your ship, lad?" growled the captain.

"I don't know, sir," said the boy. "There was a storm ... The waves were huge." The boy could barely speak. "Captain, what are we to do now with another mouth to feed?" asked the cook.



“It’ll be all right!” cried Sam. He didn’t want the boy to be dropped off at the next port or island. He wanted a friend on the ship. He gulped and continued, “I’ll teach him to work. I’ll share my food, too.”

“Very well,” said the captain. “But see that he doesn’t get in our way!”

Sam led the boy down into the dark belly of the ship and helped the boy into his hammock. Then Sam made himself a makeshift bed from some canvas and old cloth bags, and they both fell asleep.

Over the next few weeks, Sam taught the boy how to do chores. The boy was helpful and ready to learn, but very quiet.

One day, while they were cooking stew for the pirates, the boy finally began to speak. “My name is Ethan,” he said. “My parents and I were traveling from England to the colony of North Carolina. We were going to be farmers.” Tears flowed from Ethan’s eyes.

Sam handed his friend a handkerchief. “I bet your parents are searching for you right now,” he said. Ethan wiped his tears.

Sam pulled a gold coin from his pocket. “Look,” he said. “This **doubloon** came from a Spanish ship. Let’s carve our initials on it. Friends forever!”

Using a nail, Sam and Ethan carved their initials. Then, Sam carefully wrapped the coin in cloth and stowed it in a small wooden box.

“How did you get the gold?” asked Ethan.

“A few months ago, we passed a sinking Spanish **galleon**. Heavy iron treasure chests slid off the ship and sank. A small wooden box floated! I grabbed it and hid it,” whispered Sam.



“So your wooden box—”

“Yes,” whispered Sam, “it held gold coins!”

Ethan, impressed, examined the pretty little box. “It sure is lucky it floats.” He frowned and then looked around. “What kind of a ship is this?”

“It’s a **frigate**, and it’s called the *Bounty*,” Sam boasted. “It’s big enough for a hundred men and forty cannons. Follow me!”

Sam and Ethan tiptoed to a locked room. Using a bit of metal, Sam unlocked the door. Inside, he threw open two large chests filled with gold doubloons, necklaces, and rings.

“You there! Back on deck, the both of you!” bellowed first mate Jenkins. The boys raced up to the deck, their hearts pounding.

Jenkins was right behind them and out of breath. “Forget the gold,” Jenkins warned. “We’ve got bigger things to think about. Look at that sky. A storm’s coming, boys. Could be a big one.”

The boys looked up at the horizon and, in the distance, saw a menacing dark gray sky.

That night, Sam and Ethan were about to climb down into the galley to scrub dishes when Jenkins called them over.

“Take a look at Gertie,” he said while pointing to the pet parrot perched on his shoulder. “She’s not making a peep and keeps trying to fly away. It’s a sign. It’s a big storm on the way.”

“The waves are moving up and down, faster and faster,” said Ethan.

“Aye, they are,” replied Jenkins. “And feel that wind.” But Sam and Ethan were already covering their eyes as the wind blew fiercely.

“Take down the sails,” Jenkins shouted.

The boys rushed to help the men with the sails. The pirate crew struggled to lash them to the **boom**. If the sails were left up, the wind could turn the frigate on its side.

“How far are we from Ocracoke?” the captain asked as he arrived on deck.

“Not far, sir,” replied Jenkins, “but we can’t outrun the storm.” Panic was setting in.

“Let’s get below,” Sam bellowed into Ethan’s ear. The boys scrambled for the hatch and slammed the door behind them.

