



Nevada Yacht Club Sailing Terms & Boat Parts



Aboard	On the boat
Aft	At or toward the back (the stern) of the boat
Anchor	A heavy object attached to a rope or chain (rode) and used to moor a vessel to the sea bottom
Backstay	The wire/cable running from the stern to the top of the mast, keeping the mast from falling forward. Some boats have adjustable backstays.
Beam	The width of the boat at its widest point
Below	The area of the boat beneath the deck
Berth	A sleeping area in the cabin
Block	The nautical term for a pulley
Boom	A horizontal pole that attaches to the mast and is used to extend the foot of the mainsail
Boomvang	A rigged line that pulls the boom down
Bow	The forward part of a boat
Bow-line	A line running from the bow of the boat to the dock
Bowline	a common nautical knot used in many situations
Breakwater	An obstruction or obstacle set up around a marina to protect its waters ie: stone wall or floating tires
Cabin	The interior of the boat
Can	A green, odd-numbered, cylindrical shaped buoy marking the left side of a channel as you return to port. Cans are usually paired with Nuns.
Capsize	When the boat overturns
Centerboard	A pivoting plate in the center of the boat, acts as the center of resistance used to balance a boat
Chafe	a wearing away on a section of a line due to overuse and friction
Cleat	A fastening around or in which lines can be secured (cam, clam horn)
Clew	The bottom most aft corner of a sail
Cockpit	The lower exterior area in which the steering controls are located
Companionway	The passage from the cockpit to the cabin interior
Crew	Besides the skipper, anyone on board who helps sail the boat
Cunningham	Rigged lines attached to the mainsail that can be adjusted to flatten or loosen the luff of the mainsail
Daysailer	A small boat usually with a retractable keel or centerboard
Deck	The mostly flat surface area on top of the boat
Downwind	Away from the direction of the wind
Fairlead	A block that a headsail's sheet is run through to the cockpit and adjusts forward and aft, changes the upper twist of the headsail
Fender	A plastic bumper used to protect a boat by keeping it from hitting a dock or other boat
Fend off	Push off
Foot	Is the bottom edge of the sail from the tack to the clew
Forestay	The wire / cable running from the bow to the top of the mast (or $\frac{3}{4}$ up on a fractional rig)
Freeboard	Distance from the waterline to the upper deck level, measured at the lowest point of sheer where water can enter the boat or ship.
Galley	The kitchen
Gooseneck	The hardware that connects the boom to the mast
Ground Tackle	The anchoring gear system including anchor, rode, shackles, windlass, winches etc.
Gunwale	the upper edge of the side of a boat or ship.



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Gybe (jibe)	To change direction of the boat by turning the boat's stern through the wind
Halyard	A line used to hoist or lower a sail
Head	The restroom area
Headsail	The sail at the front of the boat ie the jib, the genoa or the staysail
Heel/Heeling	A term for when a sailboat leans over in the water, pushed by the wind.
Helm	Where you steer the boat either a wheel or tiller
Helmsman	(or woman) who operates and steers the boat by the wheel or tiller
Hoist	Raise as in raise a sail
Hull	The primary structural body of a vessel, not including superstructure, masts or rigging
Hull Speed	The theoretical maximum speed of the sailboat determined by the length of its waterline ($HS = 1.34 \times \sqrt{LWL}$)
Jib	The sail found forward of the mast. They come in various sizes..
Keel	A boat's fixed underwater part used to prevent sideways drift and provide stability
Knot	1 nautical mile / hour (is equivalent to 1.151 m/hr or 1.852 km/hr)
Lazarette	A storage compartment built into the cockpit or deck
Leech	The back edge of the sail
Life Lines	The cabling running from the bow to the stern that can prevent crew falling overboard
Line	A nautical rope (lines can be sheets, halyards etc)
Luff	The forward edge of a sail
To Luff	Luffing or to luff when the sail is flapping a bit, indicating under trimmed sails
Mainsail	The sail hoisted on the mast of a sloop or cutter or the sail hoisted on the main mast of a ketch or yawl and it held out by the boom.
Markers	floating buoys in different colors indicating different notices ie. No wake marker, local rock danger marker, shallow water marker.
Mast	A pole placed vertically on a boat used to support sails
Mooring	a safe place to secure the boat ie a mooreball, or slip at a Marina
Nautical Mile	a distance of 6.076 feet equaling one minute of Earth's latitude (or 1.151 miles)
Nun	A red, even-numbered, cone shaped buoy marking the right side of a channel as you return to port. Nuns are usually paired with cans.
Leeward	The side of the boat furthest from the wind. When heeling over, this will always be the low side.
Outboard	meaning outside the rail of the boat OR a portable engine (motor)
Outhaul	The line attached to the boom that adjusts the tension of the foot of the Mainsail
Overpowered	A boat that is heeling too far over because it has too much sail up for the amount of wind. It is not moving efficiently through the water.
Painter	A line attached to a small boat's bow used to tie it to a dock or another boat
PFD	Personal Floatation Device (life jacket)
Pitchpole	When the wind overpowers the boat from the stern and the boat capsizes over its bow
Points of Sail	Boat direction in relation to the wind
Port	Left side of the boat when facing forward. Lights are red for port, wind over the port side while sailing makes this vessel the give-way vessel in a port vs starboard right-of-way scenario
Rail	The outer edges of the deck
Rigging	Running rigging: The wires, lines and hardware used to control the sails (movable) Standing rigging: the stays, shrouds, mast, boom, spreaders (fixed)
Rode	The line & chain attached to an anchor and secured to a vessel



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Rudder	A boat's movable underwater steering board (it is attached to the tiller above water)
Salon	The area of the cabin with benches and table to sit
Scope	The amount of rode needed to let out to safely anchor Rode = depth of water + height of freeboard X 5 to 8 (5:1 ratio for day anchoring, 7-8:1 for overnight)
Shackle	A metal fitting commonly used to connect sails and halyards
Sheer	The curved fore and aft line formed by the uppermost plank of a boat. It's profile line.
Shrouds	Rigging that runs mid-ship from the deck to the mast to hold the mast upright
Skipper	The person in charge of the boat
Slip	A docking area where a boat can moore-up
Spreader	Struts attached to the mast to increase the holding power of the shrouds
Stanchions	The post bolted to the deck that support the life lines
Starboard	The right side of the boat while facing forward. Lights are green. If wind is over the starboard side while sailing, this vessel is the stand-on vessel in a port vs. starboard right-of-way scenario.
Stern	A boat's afterpart
To Tack	To change direction of the boat by turning the boat's bow through the wind
The Tack	The bottom most forward corner of the sail closest to the mast
Telltails	Pieces of ribbon or string (often red and green) tacked onto a sail to demonstrate the winds attachment to the sail – helps in correct trim of sail
Tiller	A wooden or metal "stick" used to turn the rudder
Tiller Extension	A pole attached to the tiller to extend the length
Topping Lift	A line attached to the mast that holds the aft end of the boom up
Transom	The flat vertical surface of the back of the boat (transom rail is the metal rail above it)
Traveler	A device that allows for changing the position where the mainsheet tackle connects to the boat. The traveler is typically mounted either in the cockpit or on the cabin top for mid-boom sheeting.
Turtle	When the boat capsizes and the mast ends up directly downward
Wheel	A steering apparatus
Winch	A metal drum-shaped object around which lines are wrapped to make trimming them easier (use a winch handle to grind the line in)
Windlass	A mechanism on the bow's deck to help raise and lower the anchor
Windward	The side of the boat closest to the wind. When heeling over, this will always be the high side.

This is by no means an exhaustive list. For even more terms visit:

<http://www.seatalk.info>

Trivia: There are arguably only four-five (4-5) ropes on a sailboat

1. A bolt rope (sewn in the edge of a sail)
2. A bucket rope
3. A bell rope
4. A tiller rope (to keep it in place)
5. A life-ring rope



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