

Astern —behind the stern, the backward direction.
Athwartships —Objects that are oriented across the boat are athwartships. That is at right angles to the centerline.
Auto pilot —a system used to steer a vessel automatically along a prescribed bearing without human assistance.
Awash —situated so that the top is intermittently washed by waves or tidal action. Applies to both objects afloat and fixed objects.
Azimuth —the horizontal direction or bearing of a celestial point from a terrestrial point.
Bar —a ridge or mound of sand, gravel, or other unconsolidated material below the high water level, especially at the mouth of a river or estuary.
Backing —refers to the wind changing direction in a counter-clockwise direction. In the southern hemisphere the wind backs in a clockwise directions. The opposite of veering wind.
Backstay —The aft stay (line) from the upper part of the mast down to a point on the boat abaft of the mast, the purpose of which is to hold (stay) the mast upright along with the shrouds (sidestays) and forestays.
Ballast —extra weight added to the keel or bottom of the hull to add stability. Lead is a preferred material for ballast because of its high density.
Barometer —an instrument used to measure atmospheric pressure.
Bathymetric chart —topographic chart of the seabed. i.e. a topo chart of water depth.
Batten down —refers to closing and securing of hatches and securing loose objects, usually in anticipation of bad weather.
Battens —strips of plastic or wood which are used to stiffen sails.
Baud —data transmission speed in bits/second.
Bay —a recess in the shore, on an inlet of a sea or lake between two capes or headlands, that may vary greatly in size but is usually smaller than a gulf but larger than a cove.
Beacon —fixed aid to navigation, attached to ground as opposed to a buoy which floats.

Slip—a space between two piers or pilings for docking a boat bow to or stern to the main pier or float.

Sloop—single-masted sailboat with two sails, one fore and one main aft.

Small scale chart—a scale involving a relatively large reduction in size. A small scale chart usually covers a large area.

SOLAS—acronym for the standards set in the 1974 International Convention for the Safety Of Life At Sea.

Sole—the floor of a cabin, saloon, cockpit, etc.

Sonar—a system that determines distance and/or direction of an underwater object by measuring the interval of time between transmission of an underwater sonic or ultrasonic signal and the return of its echo. The name sonar is derived from the words sound navigation and ranging.

South pole—the south geographic pole.

Spar—a straight pole like structural member such as a mast or boom.

Spinnaker—a large headsail often made of nylon used for sailing downwind.

Spinnaker pole—a pole attached between the mast and clew of the spinnaker to hold the spinnaker out.

Spreader—a device used to spread the shrouds away from the mast the purpose of which is to lessen the tension on the upper shrouds.

Springline—(1) a docking line used to pivot a boat into a dock, or (2) a fore or aft line set to prevent a boat at dock from moving forward or backward.

Squadron—from the 16th century British Navy. Describes a small group of warships that could be commanded effectively by one officer.

Squall—a sudden, violent storm with high winds and often rain.

Stanchion—the metal poles that hold the lifelines up.

Standing rigging—rigging that is fixed, such as stays.

Stand-on vessel—the vessel that has right of way in a meeting, crossing, or overtaking situation.

Starboard tack—sailing with the wind from starboard