

# UNIT 3

## A Seafarer's Life

### *Lead In*

**Interesting Blog Names:**

**I should be Folding Laundry**

**Back of the Napkin Blog**

**I Could Cry But I Don't Have Time**

**I Make Money Online by Telling People  
How Much Money I Make Online**

**Best Damn Blog on the Planet**

1. The word blog (a contraction of the term web-log) means a shared on-line journal where people can post diary entries about their personal experiences and hobbies; "postings on a blog are usually in chronological order"

Have you ever kept a blog? Do you know of anyone who has? What was it about?

Do you read blogs? On what basis (daily, once a week, once a month) ?

### *Reading*

***Blog on Board, by Keith Townley, Captain***

*Date: 16th November 2007 Location: Yokohama, Japan*

She's a really fast ship

1. The ship is nearly full but there is room for a bit more cargo before crossing the Pacific to Los Angeles, our last call here will be Yokohama, Japan. It has been a busy period with this port being the last of seven over a ten day period. We arrived in China on 7 November and have been stretched ever since. Three Chinese ports, Dalian, Xingang and Qingdao on consecutive days followed by Busan and Kwangyang in Korea. Yesterday was Nagoya, Japan and today we have about five hours alongside to drop off a few containers and load a couple of hundred to take to the USA.

2. Good news. The pilot boarding time has been changed from 0600 to 0800 which is a bit more civilised and means there will be a chance for breakfast as well. It is not very far from Nagoya to Yokohama and it's a very busy area with lots of

fishermen and plenty of small coasters to avoid. We are not used to going slowly and are rarely overtaken, but over the last night we have had to take our place with the coasters going along at a very gentle 11kts instead of our more normal 22kts. The full speed of this ship is highly impressive but is rarely used due to the environmental impact and cost of high fuel consumption. It is great fun though, particularly if there is someone to show off to, ideally a passing warship or passenger ship. Last year in the Caribbean it was necessary for safety reasons to overtake a cruise liner and US destroyer at close range at full speed. Very satisfying!

3. 0930 All fast in Yokohama. A nice day with a straightforward pilotage and a simple berth approach. Very cautious pilot - pleasantly common in Japan - and although sometimes a few minutes slower, undoubtedly much safer.

4. 0945 All the paperwork complete and not much of it either, unlike some countries. It is usually the countries which are underdeveloped where the paperwork seems to increase to make the jobs go round!

*Date: 22nd November 2007 Location: At sea, Pacific Ocean*

5. Bad weather - and stabiliser trouble

0200 Well it isn't very good sleeping weather, and to make things worse one of the stabilisers packed up in the middle of the night. We have two fin stabilisers that stick out about six metres from the side of the ship and fold themselves away when we don't need them. Normally they are brilliant, but not today.

6. 0300 Some new advice from the weather routing centre. They are suggesting a more southerly route but I don't think it is necessary as the weather improvement to be expected is slight and the increase in fuel used will not justify it. As it is already improving we will follow our planned track.

7. 0800 The weather is moderating, down from Storm Force 10 to Gale Force 8. As the weather is from behind us the ship is fairly comfortable. This is helped by the fact that we are completely full of cargo which improves our stability. This is termed the ship being 'tender', where she rolls gently. The opposite is when the ship is 'stiff', in our case this means empty or at least with little cargo, when the rolling is much quicker and more violent - not nice at all. Although the maths isn't very exciting it must be carefully checked, as if the ship is too tender, in extreme conditions, she could capsize!

8. 1200 Looking forward to a Sunday afternoon rest - a luxury after the coast, and having been up since 0200 when the stabilisers went wrong. I deserve it!

9. 1600 Daily visit to the gym - the weather is definitely much better now. Try to do around half an hour running on the treadmill most days as otherwise, like

most occupations, I will spend too long sitting down, mainly in front of the computer screen. We have a small swimming pool too, and it's quite nice when the weather allows - but certainly not in the Pacific in the middle of winter!

*Date: 24th November 2007 Location: Pacific Ocean, off the coast of California USA*

#### **10. Christmas shopping in Los Angeles**

Los Angeles tomorrow. There are lots of pre arrival checks and tests to complete and be properly recorded and reported. Some we do for every country and port, some specifically for the US, and even some simply unique to the State of California. Regrettably it seems only too easy to introduce ever more rules for us to follow. Some of these show muddled thinking and incomplete understanding. Unfortunately that doesn't mean we can ignore them!

**11.** We are expecting some contractors to carry out a number of jobs which are to be paid for by the shipyard under the warranty from new building. That means more preparations: permissions from the port, Coast Guard and company for welding, a chemist to come and ensure one of the oil residue tanks is clean enough for welding work ...

**12.** The good news is that whilst work generally increases in port, by rotating it as well as watches, and with such a long period alongside we should have a few hours ashore for a shopping trip to get some Christmas presents.

**13.** The forecast for the next few days is also good, so we'll be able get some outside maintenance done. Maintenance can be quite hard in the north Pacific as it is generally cold, often foggy and sometimes too rough to tackle the outside jobs. But today we're in luck!

*Source: <http://www.careersatsea.org/blog/>*

### **Questions**

Choose the correct answer to the following questions:

1. "Our last call here will be Yokohama" means that:
  - a) the Captain calls the company's headquarters in Japan before he leaves
  - b) the ship will berth in Yokohama
  - c) Yokohama is the ship's final destination
2. The reason that the speed of the vessel is rarely used is because
  - a) it is too expensive to run the ship like this
  - b) it is bad for the environment
  - c) both a and b.

- 3) The term “pleasantly common” in paragraph 3 means that:
- a) most pilots in Japan are cautious
  - b) most pilots in Japan are pleasant
  - c) most pilots in Japan are common
- 4) Concerning the weather the Captain
- a) intends to follow the advice of the weather center
  - b) believes that the advice concerning recent improvement is false
  - c) will follow the planned track.
- 5) When a ship is tender
- a) she rolls swiftly and violently
  - b) she is more comfortable
  - c) she is in danger of capsizing
- 6) In the North Pacific in November the weather
- a) is ideal for a swim in the outside pool
  - b) is too cold and foggy
  - c) is ideal for maintenance jobs

### **Gap Filling**

Fill in the gaps in the following sentences using maritime expressions and collocations from the text. Some changes may be necessary.

1. In order for the master to prepare a passage plan to the berth prior to his arrival, information about the \_\_\_\_\_ (1) and sufficient details of the prospective berth and anchorage are necessary. (para 2)
2. Unlike the \_\_\_\_\_ (2) the mission of which is purely military a \_\_\_\_\_ (3) is a ship designed to transport people from one seaport to another. (para 2)
3. If the ship \_\_\_\_\_ (4) through a large angle, it is said to be “broached to” and the breaking waves over it and the wind effects may be sufficient to \_\_\_\_\_ (5) it. (para 7)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ (6) are recognized as the most efficient system available to marine technology today, to ensure a drastic reduction in roll with the consequent advantages in terms of comfort to passengers and ship’s crew. (para 5)
5. \_\_\_\_\_ (7) means a tank from which sludge may be disposed directly through the standard discharge connection or any other approved means of disposal. The definition changed recently in accordance with Marpol Annex I. (para 11)

6. This notice is to set and standardize new \_\_\_\_\_ (8) practices onboard USS SAN JACINTO in order to minimize any confusion with regards to watch times, duration and standard practices. (para 12)
7. Both \_\_\_\_\_ (9) and \_\_\_\_\_ (10) are indicators at the Beaufort Scale. The initial scale of thirteen classes (zero to twelve) did not relate to wind speed numbers but to effects on the sails of a ship of the Royal Navy. At zero, all sails would be up; at six, half of the sails would have been taken down; and at twelve, all sails would be down. (para 7)
8. \_\_\_\_\_ (11) involving a ship means to bring it to a position suitable for mooring, to bring it to anchorage. (para 3)

### *Language Focus: Tenses*

1. Decide on the difference between the two expressions

- a) We **are not used to** going slowly and are rarely overtaken,
- b) The full speed of this ship is highly impressive but **is rarely used**.

2. Make a timetable for the Captain's days to account for everything he does or happens to him. Decide which of the activities described above

- a) are the same everyday
- b) happen quite often
- c) only happen occasionally.

Everyday	Quite often	Occasionally

3. Notice that the accounts are given in mainly chronological order. The verbs are mainly in the Present Simple but some are in the Future Tense or Present Continuous and some others in the Present Perfect. Why? Read the following text to verify your answers.

### **Present Simple, Present Progressive, Future Tense**

The two tenses shown by verb inflection are **present** and **past**. The two aspects are **perfect** and **progressive**. The **present** is used for situations that include the time of speaking and writing. Most academic, scientific and technical writing is done in present tense. The **future tense** is used for situations which will take place after the time of speaking and writing. Make the future tense by using *will* or its contraction 'll + the infinitive of the verb or the semi-auxiliary *be going to* and the infinitive of the present.

## Practice

1. In the following two tables (Table 1.A and Table 1.B), match the elements of Column 1 to those of Column 2.

Table 1.A

Column 1: Simple Present Uses	Column 2 : Examples
1.Present state or conditions	A. COD <b>stands</b> for Collect on Delivery
2.Natural laws or eternal truths	B. Maintenance <b>can be</b> quite hard in the north Pacific as <b>it is generally cold</b>
3.Habitual actions and repeated acts	C. The Earth rotates around the sun. Big ships cut costs for shipping companies on long-distance passages
4.Procedures or terminology	D. <b>it isn't</b> very good sleeping weather
5.Possible future and conditional or scheduled events	E. Cosco Pacific: Piraeus Port Resumes Operation
6. Newspaper Headlines	F. <b>There are</b> lots of pre arrival checks and tests to complete
Note: Look for adverbs like <b>always, never, usually, seldom, sometimes, rarely, on occasion, every</b> , etc. to signal this situation.	

Table 1.B

Column 1: Present Progressive Uses	Column 2: Examples
1. Action in process now but soon to end	A. The weather <b>is</b> already <b>improving</b>
2. Action in progress now	B. He <b>is</b> always <b>borrowing</b> cds without returning them.
3. Habitual action, usually with indications of dislike or disapproval	C. They <b>are suggesting</b> a more southerly route but I don't think it is necessary
4. Future action that you are anticipating now	D. We <b>are expecting</b> some contractors to carry out a number of jobs <b>and</b> The shipyard <b>is building</b> four ships capable of carrying 10,000 boxes for the Chinese shipping company Cosco
Note: Look for signal words <b>always, every, often, normally, usually, sometimes, seldom, never, first, then, at the moment, at this moment, today, now, right now!</b>	

2. In the following table, decide which column describes the Simple Present and which the Present Progressive. Then match each element with the appropriate examples.

Column 1 (1)	Examples	Column 2 (2)
A. Present actions	1. Fast liners sail at 20 knots an hour but hydrofoils are much faster.	a. Several actions happening at the same time

	2. The weather <b>is</b> already <b>improving</b>	
<b>B. In general (regularly, often, never) happening one after another</b>	3. First <b>he plays tennis</b> then they all <b>go</b> for a beer at the tennis club.	<b>b. Right now</b>
	4. My father <b>is playing</b> tennis and my mother <b>is watching</b>	
<b>C. Action set by a timetable or</b>	5. Bob <b>works</b> in a restaurant.	<b>c. Arrangement for the near future</b>
	6. Jenny <b>is working</b>	
<b>D. Daily routine schedule</b>	7. The film <b>starts</b> at 8 pm.	<b>d. Only for a limited period of time (does not have to happen directly at the moment of speaking)</b>
	8. I <b>am going</b> to the cinema tonight.	
<b>Note:</b> The following verbs are usually only used in Simple Present: <b>be, have, hear, know, like, love, see, smell, think, want</b>		

3. In the following two tables (**Table 3.A** and **Table 3.B**) match the elements of **Column 1** to those of **Column 2**.

**Table 3.A**

<b>Column 1: Future Tense Uses</b>	<b>Column 2: Examples</b>
<b>A.</b> For newly-made decisions	<b>1.</b> You <b>will</b> have the report on my desk by 2 PM.
<b>B.</b> For a statement of future fact either certain	<b>2.</b> The container shipping <b>will increase</b> its capacity by 22% next year, as <b>it takes</b> delivery of vessels that can each carry more than 8,000 standard boxes.
<b>C.</b> Or uncertain	<b>3.</b> Our last call here will be Yokohama, Japan The capacity increase <b>will surge</b> in the second half of 2007 when a big bulk of new ships is delivered to their owners.
<b>D.</b> For orders	<b>4.</b> They <b>will</b> explore their options
<b>E.</b> If a sentence has a dependent clause beginning with an expression of time, use the <u>present</u> tense in the <u>dependent</u> clause and the <u>future tense</u> in the <u>main</u> clause.	<b>5.</b> Otherwise I <b>will spend</b> too long sitting down, mainly in front of the computer screen. The question is whether Asia, and especially China will be able to absorb

	this additional tonnage
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Table 3.B

Column 1: Alternative Future Tense Constructions	Column 2: Examples
A. Be + going to in conversation and in less formal writing	1. Christmas <b>falls</b> on a Tuesday this year.  The capacity increase <b>will surge</b> in the second half of 2007 when a big bulk of new ships <b>is delivered</b> to their owners.
B. Be + to + infinitive to show regulations or obligations.	2. "If you're a believer that world trade <b>is going to grow</b> faster than world GDP, as it has in recent years, then paying for P&O is a good idea", said John Lawson, an analyst with Investec Securities in London.
C. Present tense to show future events that are certain to happen, after <i>if, unless, whether</i> , and after some adverbs showing time.	3. The committee <b>is to meet</b> local demands and set international standards.

### Gap Filling

Fill in the gaps of the Blog entries below with the verbs in brackets in the appropriate tense.

Most people can say that they \_\_\_\_ (1) (**to be**) at this or that party during the Millennium New Year, however few can say they were on a cruise ship in the middle of the Caribbean.

Today also \_\_\_\_ (2) (**to happen**) to be my duty day which means that everybody \_\_\_\_ (3) (**to call**) the control room wanting something from me. So you can imagine I was especially looking forward to the weekend.

It seems unreal at first, being about to live on a large ship. First of all we \_\_\_\_ (4) (**to see**) our cabins - roomy and pleasant, not the dingy cells we feared. The food is just simply too good, particularly the desserts. Then we \_\_\_\_ (5) (**to meet**) members of the crew. Straight off we're struck by how friendly and normal they were. And everyone seems to want to be helpful. Things really \_\_\_\_ (6) (**to look up**)!

We \_\_\_\_ (7) **(finish)** just after 0500 and I \_\_\_\_ (8) **(to sit)** out on deck for a bit, just watching all the ships' lights fade away. My feeling of tiredness \_\_\_\_ (9) **(vanish)**, and so I \_\_\_\_ (10) **(to sit)** watching the sun rise and taking in the amazing scenery around me.

With the sea head-on huge amounts of spray \_\_\_\_ (11) **(to send)** up and over the bow, and unfortunately the spray regularly \_\_\_\_ (12) **(to come)** down on us. It's a bit like being caught in torrential rain, only much colder due to the wind. The salt really \_\_\_\_ (13) **(to sting)** your face - but it beats being stuck in an office and, as they say, variety \_\_\_\_ (14) **(to be)** the spice of life.

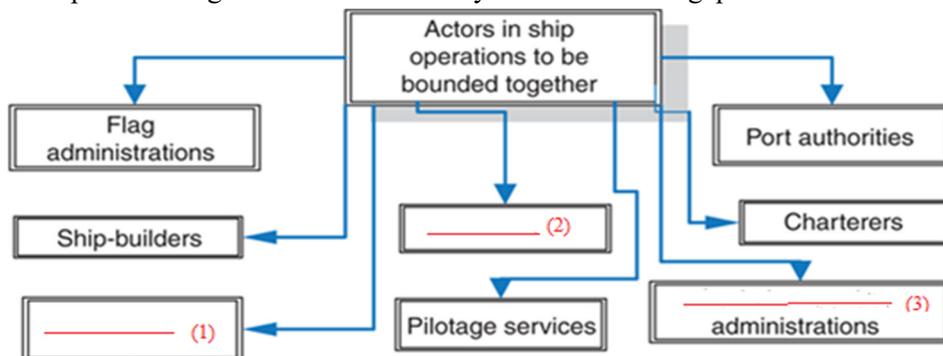
When in port, once you've finished your watch and there's no further work to be done, you can often go ashore. I \_\_\_\_ (15) **(to find)** it fascinating how in different countries things can look and feel so different, yet essentially the people \_\_\_\_ (16) **(to go)** around doing the same things as we \_\_\_\_ (17) **(to do)** in the UK, working, shopping, socializing and so on.

### Word building skills

There are various systematic ways of describing the similarities and differences between words in the same semantic field.

For example, trying to make the difference between terms such as walking (to walk) and **running (to run)** one would have to include terms such as **move, by feet, on land** for both verbs and terms such as **quickly** only for the verb **run**.

It is possible to show the contrast among words visually with the words located according to their place between extremes of the scale. It is important to see new words presented in example sentences and/or collocational grids. Below is an example of such grid. Examine it closely and then fill the gaps.



Actors that have to play their role correctly to produce safety. Source: <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?articleid=17038922&show=html>

**Listening Activity: The Merchant Navy Reality Show**

When joining a community of practice (like the seafarers) it is important to understand the “norms of interaction” i.e. the special way its members talk.

*The Merchant Navy* is a reality television program following the daily operations of professional seafarers, generally new recruits (cadets in their first sea voyage etc.), aboard various types of UK registered ships. The cameras follow maritime college cadets on their first sea phase on board

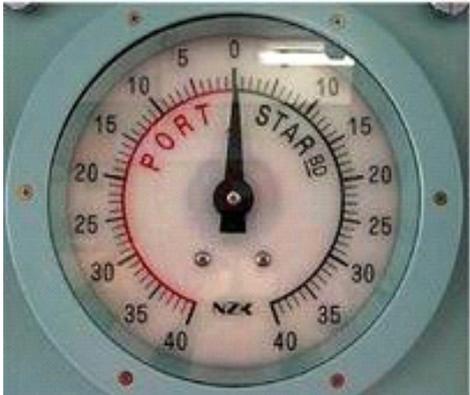
- 1) a Maersk container ship, the MV Gateshead, departing from Miami and transiting the Panama Canal,
- 2) the MT British Progress, a modern VLCC, in wet-dock period, in Singapore before proceeding to Iraq, to take on a full load of crude oil
- 3) and the P&O’s new ship Ventura, for its maiden voyage from Southampton.

The show gives a quick look at life on board and its challenges: large engine rooms, the hustle and bustle of shipyard days, the complexities of shipboard life, pirate infested water ways. Along the way, the show shadows various officers on their daily activities; supervising engine rebuild, boiler survey, steering through the Panama Canal and down time after work.

**Listening****Watch and decide whether the following statements are true or false.**

On the episode aired on Monday, October 27th, Part 2, onboard the *Gateshead* and from minute 01.15 on

1. The Captain asks over the walkie-talkie whether he can stop and drift because he intends to give the helm to one of the cadets.
2. The cadet will keep the helm while steering through the narrow Panama Canal lock
3. The Gateshead is heading for the lock on their port side
4. At 4.05 the Captains orders dead slow ahead
5. The Captain repeats a helm order of “hard to starboard”
6. On the same episode and from minute 04.15 on the Captain gives a helm order. Decide which of the following instrument readings corresponds to it.



7. On the episode aired on Monday, November 17, Part 1 onboard the British Progress and from minute 02.25 on the Captain Tim Johnston says that his ship is a single hull crude carrier.
8. And that she can carry more than 2 million barrels of crude oil
9. On the same episode from minute 04.22 on the Captain Tim Johnston remarks that there is a ship behind them and his interlocutor remarks that by accelerating the ship crosses ahead of them.
10. The tide is pushing the British Progress forward.
11. There is a containership taking advantage of the fact the British Progress is slowing down in order to decide what to do, to speed up.
12. On the episode aired on Monday, October 20th the fact that Cailean took over the Captain's chair is not a problem
13. On the episode aired on Tuesday, February 23, Part 4 and from min 06.20 on a dialogue takes place onboard the British Progress concerning an anchoring progress in which the Chief Officer asks the Third Officer to get the hydraulics ready.
14. In the same episode and according to the Third Officer the gipsy wheel is part of the problem.
15. The Chief Officer asks whether the Third Officer is in gear and the Third Officer confirms that this is so.