



ACTIVITY

Telling Time Aboard Ship

A ship's bell played a crucial role for timekeeping on board a ship and was rung every half hour to mark the passage of time in each four-hour watch (shift). Using a half-hour glass to measure 30 minutes, a sailor struck the bell for eight half-hour intervals, adding an additional strike for every half hour. Eight strikes of the bell signified four hours had passed and the watch was over. Students can view the ship's current bell, installed in 2012, and the bell that was purportedly removed from HMS *Guerriere* and used as a substitute for *Constitution's* bell when it was destroyed during the battle on August 19, 1812.



Ship's Bell

A ship's bell played a crucial role for timekeeping on board a ship, and was rung every half hour to mark the passage of time in each watch. This bell was purportedly removed from HMS *Guerriere* and used as a substitute for *Constitution's* bell, which was destroyed during the battle on August 19, 1812. The story of the bell as a prize from *Guerriere* dates only to 1897 and is not confirmed by firsthand accounts.



The current bell on USS *Constitution* is from 2012. It reads: "Presented on behalf of all who have served in "Old Ironsides" to commemorate the bicentennial of the War of 1812.