



## Comprehension activity

# CAPTAIN COOK'S JOURNAL

By James Cook

The few days' delay we met with in getting out of Rio de Janeiro gave me an opportunity of Drawing a Plan or Sketch of great part of the Bay, but the Strict watch that was kept over us during our whole stay hinder'd me from taking so accurate a Survey as I wisht to have done, and all the Observations I could make was taken from on board the Ship. This Plan hath no pretensions to accuracy, yet it will give a very good idea of the place, differing not much from the truth in what is Essential.

The Bay of Rio de Janeiro, by some called a River--which its Name Signifies--but this I think is improper, it being nothing more than a Deep inlet of the Sea, into which no considerable fresh water River Emptys itself that I could hear of. Be this as it will, it is Capacious and Capable of Containing a vast Number of Shipping where they may ride in perfect Security. The Entrance is Situated West by North 18 Leagues from Cape Frio, and may be known by a remarkable Hill in the Form of a Sugar Loaf, at the West Entrance of the Bay; but as all the Coast is exceeding high, terminating at the top in Peaked Hills, it is much better known by the Islands laying before it, one of which (called Rodonda) is high and round in form of a Hay Stack, and lies South by West 2 1/2 leagues from the Sugar Loaf or Entrance of the Bay. A little without the East Entrance of the Bay, and near the shore, lay 2 Islands near each other: 3 leagues from the Eastward and 4 miles from the Shore are 2 low Rocky Islands, which are the first you meet with in coming from the Eastward or from Cape Frio.

To sail into Rio de Janeiro there is not the least Danger until you are the length of the Fort of Santa Cruze, which stands on the point that forms the East Entrance of the Bay or River; on the West Entrance is Fort Lorio, built upon a Rock which lies close to the Main Land, the distance from one Fort to the other is 3/4 of a mile East and West, but the Channel for Shipping is not quite so broad by reason of Sunken Rocks laying off each of the Forts; these rocks may not be properly placed in the plan, being only laid down from the information of the Pilot. The Narrowness of the Channell here causeth the Tides both Flood and Ebb to run pretty strong, insomuch that you cannot Stem it without a fresh breeze of Wind, nor is it safe Anchoring because the bottom is foul and Rocky. By keeping in the Middle of the Channell you will not only avoid being forced to come to an Anchor, but all other Dangers. Being got within the entrance your Course up the Bay is North by West 1/2 West and North-North-West something more than one League; this brings you the length of the great Road, and North-West and West-North-West one league more carrys you the length of the Ilha dos Cobras, which lies before the City. Keep the North side of this Island close on board and Anchor above it in 5 fathoms of water, where you see most Convenient before the Monastery of Benedictines, which stands upon a hill at the North-West End of the City. Small Ships and Vessels generally lay between the Town and the Ilha dos Cobras, but in order to get there they must come round the North side of the Island. I shall now give the best description I can of the Different Forts that are Erected for the Defence of the Bay. The first you meet with coming in from Sea is a Battery of 22 Guns, seated in the Bottom of a sandy Bay, which is on the South side of the Sugar Loaf, and can be designed for no other use than to hinder an Enemy from landing in that valley, from whence I suppose they may March up to the Town or round by the West side of the Sugar Loaf to attack the Forts that are on that side of the Entrance into the Bay, the first of which is Seated under the foot of the Sugar Loaf on a low Isthmus which joyns the Peninsula or point of the Bay with the Land of the Sugar Loaf. It appears to be a square of Stone Work without a Ditch, with Bastions and furnished with Cannon.



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A little within this fort are 2 battrys of 5 or 6 Guns each. They are designed to play upon Shipping, but neither these battrys or the Fort are out of reach of a Ship's Cannon. Hard by these batterys stands Fort Logie. It is an irregular hexagon, built of Stone upon a Small Rock standing at the west Entrance of the Bay, and is surrounded on all Sides by the Sea. It is mounted with 14 or 15 guns, which are placed so as to play upon Shipping going in and out of the Harbour. There is only one way to go into it, which is by Steps Leading up to a Sally Port on the North-West side. Opposite this is the Fort of Santa Cruze, built upon a low rocky point that forms the East Entrance of the Bay.

The city of Rio de Janeiro is supplied with Water from 2 Different parts of the Adjacent Mountains. That which comes from the Southward is Convey'd a Cross a Deep Valley by an Acquiduct, which Consists of a great Number of Arches placed in 2 Rows, one upon the other; from thence in pipes to a fountain which stands in the Middle of the Square before the Vice-Roy's Palace. At another part of the City is a Reservoir, to which the water is conveyed much in the same manner. From these 2 places, but mostly from the former, the inhabitants fetch all they want, where there is always a Centinel to keep order: and it is likewise here that the Ships Water. They land their Casks upon a Smooth sandy beach about 100 yards from the Fountain, and upon application to the Vice-Roy you have a Centinel to look after them and to clear the way for to come to the fountain to fill water. Upon the whole, Rio de Janeiro is not a bad place for Ships to put in at that want refreshments, not only because the Harbour is safe and Commodious, but that Provision and all manner of Refreshments may be had in tolerable plenty. Bread and Flour are, however, Scarce and Dear, being brought hither from Europe, and are never the better for that Passage. In lieu of these are to be had Yams and Casada. All sorts of Grain--though it may be the produce of this Country--is Dear. Fresh Beef (tho' bad) is to be had in plenty at about 2 1/4 pence per pound, and Jurked Beef about the same price. This is cured with Salt, and dryd in the shade, the bones being taken out, and the Meat cut into large but very thin slices. It eats very well, and if kept in a dry place will remain good a long time at Sea. Rum, Sugar, and Molasses are all good and Cheap. Tobacco is Cheap, but not good. Mutton they have very little. Hogs and all sorts of Poultry are to be got, tho' in no great plenty, and of Course rather dear. Garden Stuff and Fruit in plenty, but none that will keep long at Sea except Pumpkins.



1. What obstacle did the author face when attempting to survey Rio de Janeiro's bay?

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2. How is the Bay of Rio de Janeiro described in terms of its classification as a river?

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3. What is the distinctive landmark marking the entrance to Rio de Janeiro's bay?

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4. How does the author use descriptive language to convey the topography of Rio de Janeiro's bay?

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5. What precaution is necessary when sailing near the forts of Santa Cruze and Lorio at the entrance of the bay?

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6. Identify instances of metaphor or simile used by the author in the description of Rio de Janeiro's landmarks.

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7. How is the city of Rio de Janeiro supplied with water, and where are the water sources located?

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8. How does the author use first-person narrative and personal reflections to enhance the reader's understanding of the surveying process and the challenges faced?

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9. What refreshments and resources are available for ships in Rio de Janeiro, and what challenges might they face in obtaining certain supplies?

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10. What is the significance of the term "Sugar Loaf" in the description of Rio de Janeiro's bay, and how does it contribute to the reader's understanding?

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Answers:

1. The strict watch kept over them during their stay hindered the author from taking an accurate survey, and all observations were made from on board the ship.
2. The author disagrees with calling it a river, as it is a deep inlet of the sea with no significant fresh water river emptying into it.
3. A remarkable hill in the form of a Sugar Loaf, located at the west entrance of the bay, serves as a recognisable landmark.
4. The author employs vivid imagery to describe the bay, including terms like "remarkable hill in the form of a Sugar Loaf," "deep inlet of the sea," and "peaked hills."
5. Care is required due to sunken rocks off each fort, making the channel narrow and causing strong tidal currents.
6. The author describes an island as "high and round in the form of a Hay Stack," creating a simile to help readers visualise the island's shape.
7. Water is supplied from two parts of the adjacent mountains, conveyed through an aqueduct with numerous arches to fountains in the city square and a reservoir.
8. The author's use of first-person narrative, expressing personal experiences like the strict watch and limited survey opportunities, adds a subjective element that provides insight into the challenges faced during their stay in Rio de Janeiro.
9. Rio de Janeiro offers a safe harbor, abundant provisions, and good quality rum, sugar, and molasses, but bread and flour are scarce and expensive, being imported from Europe.
10. The term "Sugar Loaf" refers to a remarkable hill at the west entrance of the bay. It serves as a vivid descriptor, likening the hill's shape to a conical pile of refined sugar. This metaphorical use of vocabulary enhances the reader's visual understanding, creating a mental image of the distinct and recognisable landmark in Rio de Janeiro's topography.