

Setting Sail

Sailors have used sails to capture wind and propel their boats forward for thousands of years.

It's easy to understand how a sail works when the wind pushes on it from behind, but boats can also sail into the wind.

To do this, the wind must flow smoothly around both sides of the sail. As the wind travels around the curve of the sail, it creates different **pressures** on each side. The pressure on the "inside" of the sail is higher than the pressure on the "outside," pushing the boat toward the space with lower pressure. If you set your sail just right, this **difference in pressures will propel your boat forward.**



Sail Speak

"Sheets" are the ropes that control the shape and position of the sail, not the actual piece of cloth from which the sail is made.