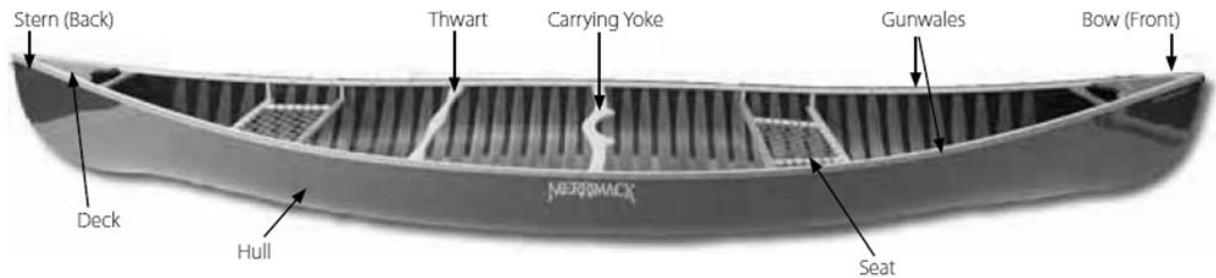


# Canoeing Jargon

Canoes are relatively simple crafts, but there are some technical terms you should become familiar with.



**Amidships:** The center or middle of a canoe.

**Bailer:** A scoop (usually made from an empty bleach jug by cutting off the bottom) for dipping accumulated water from the bottom of the canoe.

**Beam:** The width of the canoe, typically provided in three measurements: waterline, gunwale and maximum width.

**Belly:** The bottom of the canoe.

**Bilge:** The point of greatest curvature between the bottom and side of a canoe.

**Bow:** Front end of the canoe. The person sitting in the front of the canoe is referred to as the "bow" paddler.

**Broach:** To turn suddenly into the wind.

**Broadside:** A canoe, which is moving perpendicular to the current of a river, thus exposing its broad side to obstacles in the water.

**Deck:** Panels attached to the top edge at the bow and stern ends of the canoe.

**Depth:** The distance from the top of the gunnels to the bottom of the canoe when measured at the beam (sometimes called center depth, as opposed to the depth at the extreme ends of the canoe).

**Draft:** The amount of water a canoe draws.

**Entry Line:** Shape of the bow where it cuts through the water.

**Flare:** Occurs when the sides of the canoe are wider above the waterline, particularly at or near the gunwales.

**Flotation:** Buoyant material set into the ends (or other panels) of a canoe to make it float if upset.

**Foot-brace:** A wood or metal bar against which a paddler braces his or her feet. Foot-braces help secure the paddler in the canoe and so add to the efficiency of his or her strokes.

**Freeboard:** Distance between the gunwale and waterline at the lowest point.

**Gunnels:** Both outside and inside, top finished edges of a canoe. Also referred to as rails.

**Gunwale:** The upper edge of the canoe's sides. Each canoe has two of them that span the entire side of the canoe from bow to stern. The thwarts and yoke connect the two gunwales to provide the structural stability. Often the most mispronounced word in the boundary waters. It is pronounced like "gun-nul", and not "gun-whale" or "gun-wall".

**Hull:** Frame or body of the canoe.

**Keel:** Structural member of a canoe that runs lengthwise down the center of the canoe to provide balance and stability. On aluminum canoes, the keel protrudes from the hull. Most Kevlar canoes do not have a keel, while some canoes have a "V" shape that acts as a modified keel.

**Lead Boat:** The lead boat paddles ahead of other canoes or kayaks in a group. Usually the most experienced paddler.

**Leeward:** A sheltered place out of the wind. Also, the direction toward which the wind is blowing.

**Lining Rope:** Rope used to tie up a canoe or pull it around obstacles in the water. Also refers to working a canoe downstream around obstacles in the water with the aid of ropes (lines) attached to the bow and stern.

**PFD (Personal Flotation Device):** Also referred to as a Life Jacket or Life Vest. It is required that any vessel on the water must have at least one PFD for each person in the vessel. In most states it is required that children must wear a PFD while on water.

**Port:** The left side of a boat, as perceived by a person on the boat facing the bow (or front) of the boat. Port is not synonymous with "left." When facing the stern (or rear) of the boat, the port will be on your right side.

**Portage:** The physical act of carrying the canoe over land.

**Put-in:** The place you put your boat into the water.

**Rails:** The gunwales (gunnels) of a canoe.

**Ribs:** Lateral supports which run at angles to the keel on the inside of a canoe. Ribs provide hull rigidity and structural strength.

**Starboard:** The right side of a boat, as perceived by a person on the boat facing the bow (or front) of the boat. Starboard is not synonymous with “right.” When facing the stern (or rear) of the boat, the starboard will be on your left side.

**Stern:** Back end of the canoe. The paddler sitting in the back is the stern paddler and is in charge of the bulk of the steering and maneuvering of the canoe.

**Sweep Boat:** The last boat in a group of paddlers that is usually assigned to keep track of stragglers.

**Take-out:** The place at which you take the boat out of the water.

**Thwart:** Other structural support bars like the yoke that are located closer to the bow and stern ends of the canoe.

**Waterline:** The place to which water comes on the hull of the canoe when it is set in the water.

**Yoke:** A strong crossbar in the middle of the canoe designed for carrying the canoe on the shoulders. Often includes two yoke pads for more comfort.