



# SWALLOWS and AMAZONS



## About the Book

### 'Swallows and Amazons for ever!'

The Walker children – also known as Captain John, Mate Susan, Able-Seaman Titty, and Ship's Boy Roger - set sail on the *Swallow* and head for Wild Cat Island. There they camp under open skies, swim in clear water and go fishing for their dinner. But their days are disturbed by the Blackett sisters, the fierce Amazon pirates. The Swallows and Amazons decide to battle it out, and so begins a summer of unforgettable discoveries and incredible adventures.



## About the Author

Arthur Ransome was born in Leeds in 1884. He had an adventurous life – as a baby in he was carried by his father to the top of the Old Man of Coniston, a peak that is 2,276ft high!

He went to Russia in 1913 to study folklore and in 1914, at the start of World War I he became a foreign correspondent for the *Daily News*. In 1917 when the Russian Revolution began he became a journalist and was a special correspondent of the *Guardian* newspaper. He knew many of the leading Bolshevik figures, including Lenin, Trotsky and the latter's secretary, Evgenia Shvelpina. These contacts led to persistent but unproven accusations that he 'spied' for both the Bolsheviks and Britain.

Ransome married Evgenia and returned to England in 1924. He bought a cottage near Windermere in the Lake District in the late 1920s and worked as a foreign correspondent and highly-respected angling columnist for the *Manchester Guardian*.

He wrote *Swallows and Amazons* in 1930. And that was just the beginning of a series of twelve books which feature the same beloved characters and adventures with boats.

Arthur Ransome died in 1967 and is buried at Rusland in the Lake District.



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# SWALLOWS and AMAZONS

## Design your own Pirate Flag

To join the Swallows and Amazons on the river you'll need a ship and flag.  
What will your flag look like and what will you call your boat?

Name .....

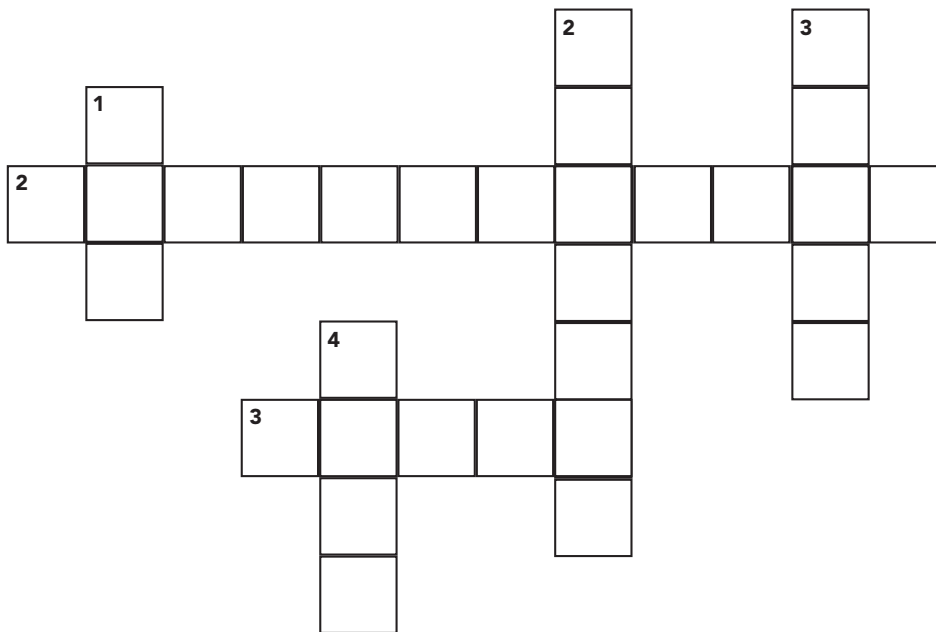
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# SWALLOWS and AMAZONS

## Crossword time



**Do you know the Swallows from the Amazons?  
See if you can answer all of these crossword clues.**

### Across

- 2. The name the children give the Blackett's Uncle Jim (7,5) See chapter 10
- 3. Ship's boy and the youngest crew member of the Swallow (5) See chapter 1

### Down

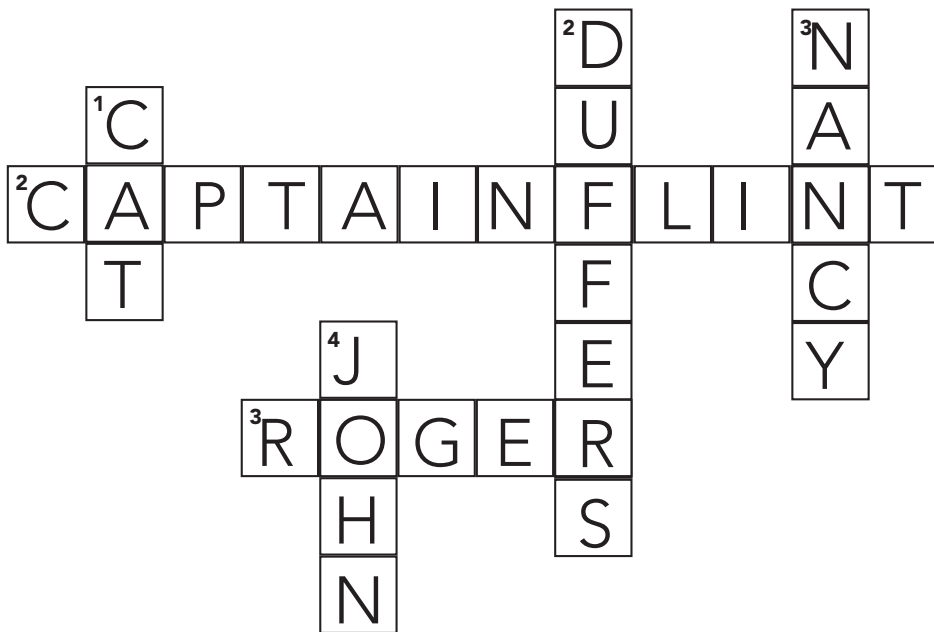
- 1. Wild ... Island (3) See chapter 10
- 2. Better drowned than ..... (7) See chapter 1
- 3. Captain of the Amazon (5) See chapter 10
- 4. Captain of the Swallow (4) See chapter 1



# SWALLOWS and AMAZONS



## Crossword time - answers



**Do you know the Swallows from the Amazons?  
See if you can answer all of these crossword clues.**

### Across

2. The name the children give the Blackett's Uncle Jim (7,5) See chapter 10
3. Ship's boy and the youngest crew member of the Swallow (5) See chapter 1

### Down

1. Wild ... Island (3) See chapter 10
2. Better drowned than ..... (7) See chapter 1
3. Captain of the Amazon (5) See chapter 10
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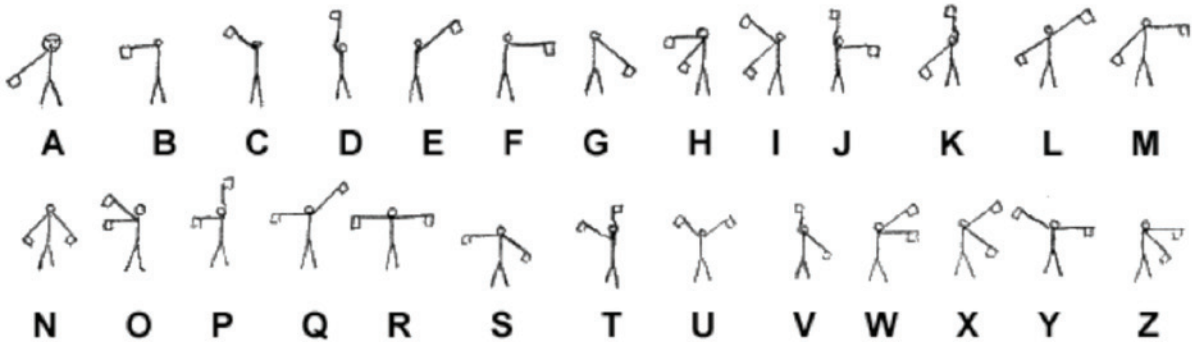




# SWALLOWS and AMAZONS

Crack the Swallows and Amazons' code!

Semaphore is a system of signalling used by sailors. The positions of the flags represent letters of the alphabet. Can you crack the code?



1) What is Titty is trying to say?



2) What is Captain Flint asking for?



3) What is Captain John suggesting?



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# SWALLOWS and AMAZONS

## Facts about *Swallows and Amazons*

- Chess was Arthur Ransome's favourite game. His grandmother taught him and he played with famous people such as Lenin.
- The skull and crossbones symbol was first used around 1700 by French pirate Emanuel Wynne, who set it above an hourglass. Some pirates used the skull and crossbones on a red background and some on black.
- 'The grog' the children drink in *Swallows and Amazons* is a mixture of ginger beer and lemonade. It isn't alcoholic! Pemmican is corned beef.
- The character of Titty was based on Mavis Altounyan, the daughter of Arthur Ransome's friend. She loved the story of 'Titty Mouse and Tatty Mouse' and identified with Titty Mouse.
- 'Tidley' is naval slang for looking smart
- In 1936 Arthur Ransome won the first ever Carnegie Medal for his book, *Pigeon Post*. The award has been won by authors such as CS Lewis, Philip Pullman and Anne Fine since then.

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