

If you traveled to a coastline this summer,

Before boats and ships had motors, it was

Lighthouses were built to help sailors know

you might have visited or seen a lighthouse.

often difficult for them to change direction

they could smash against the rocks.

swiftly. If they got too close to certain shores,

where they were and avoid dangerous waters.

foreign coasts. They are also found along

the Great Lakes and in waterways such as

they were without modern technology, like

Chesapeake Bay and the Hudson River.

During the day

lighthouses, called daymarks.

At night, lighthouses

have their own special

pattern of flashes. For

off the coast of Maine, uses a code of one flash/

darkness/four flashes/

flashes. People began thinking of this pattern as

reading, "I love you.'

Too foggy to see

noises to alert the ships.

darkness/three

example, Minots Ledge,

Lighthouses stand all along the U.S. and

Sailors had trouble knowing exactly where

satellites and radar. Along the East Coast, they

often could learn their location during the day

by the different colors and patterns painted on

Sometimes it can be so foggy that sailors

cannot see the light. Then keepers used loud

Mini Fact:

The Cape Mears light in Oregon has red and clear sides of its lens, which produce red and white beams of light.

Keepers have shot off cannons, rung bells and blown steam whistles, trumpets and sirens. Today, lighthouses sound automatic foghorns.

Lightships

In some areas where there was no good place to build a lighthouse, lightships were anchored at sea. These ships carried lanterns at the top of their masts.

Today, floating structures, or warning buoys, have replaced many lightships.

Lighthouse keepers

Before the use of electricity, lighthouses used open fires, candles (protected from wind by a lantern room), lamps, oil burners and reflectors to create their bright beacons. This meant someone had to light the lamp at sunset and make sure it shone all night.

Many lighthouses are far away from cities and towns, and keepers would have to stay for months without seeing other people. Those who were married might bring their families with them.

The job was also dangerous; storms could damage the light or their home. Some had to rescue drowning sailors.

The only U.S. lighthouse that still has a keeper is Boston Light in Boston Harbor, Massachusetts. It is the oldest lighthouse in the United States. originally built in 1716. In Canada, there are more than 50 lighthouses with active keepers.

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photo by C Hanchey



This is the Fresnel lens inside the Boston Light. The light flashes white every 10 seconds and can be seen from 27 nautical miles away. The lens is about 13 feet tall by 5 feet around.

Making the light

In 1822, a French scientist, Augustin-Jean Fresnel (fray-NEL), invented a lens that made the light shine brighter. It gathers many light rays into one very bright beam.

It is made of hundreds of pieces of specially cut glass, with a magnifying glass in the middle.

The Fresnel lens made it possible for a beam of light to be seen from more than 20 miles away.



The light in Cape Hatteras, N.C., is the tallest brick lighthouse in the United States, standing at 210 feet tall. Its distinctive diagonal stripes and red base make it easy to recognize.

Resources

On the Web:

uslhs.org/fun/kids-corner

At the library:

- "Hello Lighthouse" by Sophie Blackall
- "How Does a Lighthouse Work?" by Roman Belyaev

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of lighthouses are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

BUOY, COAST, DANGEROUS, DAYMARK, FLASH, FOGHORN. LIGHTHOUSE, LIGHTSHIP, MAST, PATTERN, RADAR, REFLECTOR, SAILOR, SATELLITE, SHIPS, STRIPES.



Mini Spy Classics

Mini Spy and her friends are at a beach with a lighthouse. See if you can find the hidden pictures. Then color the picture.



 frog word MINI knife

· man's face

fork

spoon

toothbrush

strawberry

squirrel

number 7

ladder

seahorse

 bear's head broom

apple

Mini Jokes

Leslie: What instrument do lighthouse keepers play? Liam: The foghorn!

Eco Note

A species of butterfly migrates thousands of miles from sub-Saharan Africa to Europe during years when the weather is favorable. The painted lady's 8,700-mile migration is the longest known in the insect world. "We know that the number of painted lady butterflies in Europe varies wildly, sometimes with 100 times more from one year to the next," said Tom Oliver of England's University of Reading. The weather may also affect other insects as the climate warms.

For later:

Look in your newspaper for articles about ships.

Teachers: For standards-based activities to accompany this feature. visit: bit.ly/MPstandards. And follow The Mini Page on Facebook!



