

Sailing

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Have you ever been sailing? Do you sometimes go sailing (hacer vela)?

Sailing can be a sport or a hobby (pasatiempo), and many moons ago sailing boats (buques de vela, veleros) were a means of transport, carrying goods and people across the world.

Here the focus is on expressions:

- Life is not plain sailing (la vida no es coser y cantar). This is an idiom.

This means that life includes many difficulties - it is not always pleasant. Another similar expression is "life is not a bed of roses".

- How was the Cambridge First exam? "Plain sailing". This means that it was easy. A similar expression is "it was a piece of cake" (era pan comido). Click here to review the uses of the word "cake".
- Mr. Guillermo, the ship's captain, said the voyage was plain sailing. This means that it was a pleasant voyage, that is, no storms or rough seas (no había mares agitadas).
- Some mortals "sail close to the wind". This means that they are close to breaking a rule or law, or are just on the right side of the law.

An example: let's imagine that Alejandro Morales decides to set up a bank on the moon. People open savings accounts on the moon and receive interest on their deposits (depósitos). Is that part of their "world-wide income" (ingresos mundiales) for their tax return (la declaración de la renta)? Obviously not

(obviamente no). It sounds like a good idea (why has nobody done it?).

The moon is not part of the world - it is a part of the universe - so no tax is payable (pagable). However, some people may say that this is "sailing close to the wind" meaning that the idea is to pay tax on all your income, even from the moon.

- Ships sometimes "sail under false colours". The ships "fly" a flag that communicates that it is British, but the ship is under the control of pirates, for example. You can use this expression to say that someone is trying to deceive others or is pretending to be somebody he is not.

People and often politicians sail under false colours - they say one thing to attract your vote or pretend to have certain views, but in reality they want to do something quite different. The devil (el diablo) tries to sail under false colours, and some of us are deceived by this.