

# LIGHTSHIP

## K-3

Written and Illustrated by Brian Floca  
Introduced by Brian Floca

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### ***Story Summary***

Lightship is the story of the ships that were once anchored on waters across America, on the oceans and on the Great Lakes. They floated where lighthouses could not be built. They were smaller than most commercial ships, but more steadfast too. They held their spots through calm and storm to guide sailors through safe waters. You will hear the story of one lightship and her crew (and cat.) They run the small ship that guides the large ships. They are the crew that works to make the ocean safe so other ships can sail.

### ***Objectives***

1. To gain an understanding of the function and relevance of lightships.
2. To develop an appreciation for occupational hardships and hazards.
3. To develop an understanding of the variety of skills needed to operate a lightship.
4. To develop an understanding of some of the new vocabulary introduced in this book that is relevant to life on a lightship.

### ***Before viewing the video***

Tell the children that they will meet the author, Brian Floca, as they view this video. He often wondered what life was like aboard a lightship, and he decided to write a book about it! The children may have never heard of a lightship, because they have not been used for more than 20 years. Many of us have seen lighthouses when we go to the shore. They are tall towers of light built on land near the water. They warn approaching ships that they are getting close to the land and provide guidance into the harbors. Lightships were vessels that were anchored in the water and used to help guide ships through hazards and through channels. Working on a lightship was a dangerous job. As we view this video, you will see what life was like as a crew member of a lightship. Ask the children if they have ever been on a ferry or any other type of ship. Ask them to keep in mind how lightships are similar to and different from other kinds of ships.

### ***Questions to ask after viewing the video***

1. How do you know what this lightship is named?
2. What do we mean by “a ship that holds her place?”
3. This is a ship that does not sail from port to port. Why does she wait?
4. What are some of the jobs that need to be done on a lightship?
5. What are the jobs that are done down below the deck and deep inside the ship?
6. Why are the horn and the light high at the top of the ship so important?
7. Why is work on the ship harder when the waves are high?
8. What may happen if a large ship gets very close to the lightship?
9. Why do you think there is a cat on this ship?
10. What does the crew do when the fog rolls in?
11. How does the lightship help the larger ships get to their ports?

## **Activities**

1. Make a list of the jobs on a lightship and discuss what they mean. Include the following: helmsman, oiler, engineer, deckhand, fireman, radioman, cook.
2. Create a story about life on a lightship. Imagine that you are spending many weeks in one place, anchored in the water. Select a job that might be yours. Write “diary entries” telling of your daily activities on the ship.
3. Look at the illustrations of the lightship. Which jobs are more dangerous than others? Which jobs might be safer? Explain why you think this way.
4. Draw a picture of your own lightship. Give it a name. Paste a cut – out of yourself on the ship in a job you would like. Paste a cut-out of a pet you would like to take on the ship. Add some cut-outs of your friends who would also be crew members.