

## Discussion Questions for *Captain Phillips*

**Some of the major characters to watch for:** Captain Rich Phillips, the pirates: Muse, Bilal, Najee, and Elmi

1. This story may be viewed as a contrast in leadership abilities, insofar as good leadership gets good results. Contrast the leadership of Rich Phillips, captain of the *Maersk Alabama*, and Muse, the captain of the pirates, and the results that each leader ultimately produced.
2. Both Phillips and Muse experienced conflict with their crew. Compare and contrast how they handled it.
3. A number of times Phillips seems to positively influence the pirates (e.g., comments like “You said you were a business man! Is this how you do business?” and “There’s got to be something other than being a fisherman or kidnapping people” or his compassion toward the pirate with an injured foot). Comment on his approach and his poise in these moments.
4. Comment also on the influence abilities of the two different negotiators for the US—the negotiator from the USS *Bainbridge* and the negotiator from the Navy Seal team.
5. At a telling moment, Muse laments: “It was supposed to be easy. I take ship. Ransom. Nobody get hurt.” Why do you think it did not play out so easily for him and what might we learn from that?