

20,000 Leagues Under the Sea

 shmoop.com/20000-leagues-under-the-sea/title.html

Analysis: What's Up With the Title?

It's pretty simple, really. A league is an old-fashioned measurement of distance that's roughly equivalent to three miles. $3 \times 20,000 = 60,000$ miles. This is the distance Aronnax, Nemo, and company travel *under* the sea, not the *depth* they go while traveling.

To put things in perspective, 20,000 leagues is about a quarter of the way to the moon when the moon's closest to earth (Verne wrote about that trip in his book *From the Earth to the Moon*). On the other hand, the deepest part of the ocean, found in the Pacific's Mariana Trench, is less than seven miles. Yeah, it's a pretty darn long way.

So, we think the title serves as a reminder of how epic and extensive the gang's journey is. And the whole "*under* the sea" part of the title is important because it points to what separates the *Nautilus* from a regular old boat; it can travel beneath the waves and give its passengers a fish's-eye-view of the ocean.

If you want to avoid confusion, perhaps it's best to look at the original French title, *20,000 Lieues Sous les Mers—20,000 Leagues Under the Seas*. That plural, "seas," makes it clear that Verne's writing about a trip *through* the world's seas, not into their darkest depths.