

Text-Based Writing

The Unsinkable Titanic

2016

4th & 5th Grade | Informative/Explanatory



Directions:

The following passages are about the sinking of the Titanic. Write an informative essay in which you explain how the Titanic sank, even though it was believed to be “unsinkable.” Use information from the sources to support your essay.

Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- Read the passages;
- Plan your response:
- Write your response:
- Revise and edit your response

Be sure to include:

- An introduction;
- Support for your controlling idea using information from the passages;
- A conclusion that is related to your controlling idea

Your writing should be in the form of a well-organized, multi paragraph essay.

Source #1

The Unsinkable Ship

After two years of construction, weighing in at a total of 52,310 tons, the British passenger ship the *Titanic* was finally launched on May 31, 1911. The ship was built by the White Star Line company, a leading cruise maker at the time, and was advertised as being “unsinkable” in design. An excerpt from Shipbuilder magazine (1911) writes about the different compartments under the ship, designed to close off if water somehow got on board. It claimed:

“Each door is held in the open position by a suitable friction clutch, which can be instantly released by means of a powerful electro-magnet controlled from the captain's bridge, so that in the event of accident, or at any time when it may be considered advisable, the captain can, by simply moving an electric switch, instantly close the doors throughout and make the vessel practically unsinkable.”

The *Titanic* was designed to stay afloat even with four of its watertight compartments being flooded, and passengers and crew alike had absolute faith that the steel-ship was positively unsinkable.

Unfortunately for both passengers and crew, this claim was only a myth.

The New York Times.

**TITANIC SINKS FOUR HOURS AFTER HITTING ICEBERG;
866 RESCUED BY CARPATHIA, PROBABLY 1250 PERISH;
ISMAY SAFE, MRS. ASTOR MAYBE, NOTED NAMES MISSING**

**Col. Astor and Bride,
Isidor Straus and Wife,
and Maj. Butt Aboard.**

"RULE OF SEA" FOLLOWED

Women and Children Put Over
in Lifeboats, and Men Supposed
to Be Safe on Deck.

PICKED UP AFTER 8 HOURS

Vincent Astor Called at White Star
Office for News of His Father
and Lament Missing.

FRANKLIN HOOPER, ALL DAY

Manager of the Line Declared
Titanic Was Absolutely Safe
After She Was Seen Sinking.

HEAD OF THE LINE ABOARD

A. Bruce Ismay, Managing Director of
the White Star Line, Was the
Last to Leave the Ship.

The Lost Titanic Being Towed Out of Belfast Harbor.

**Biggest Liner Plunged
to the Bottom
at 2:20 A. M.**

RESCUERS THERE TOO LATE

Except to Pick Up the Five Men
Who Were in the
Lifeboats.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN FIRST

Canadian Captain Rushing for
New York with His
Survivors.

U.S. SEARCH FOR OTHERS

The Government Sends by its
Fleet of Patrol Boats
Boats to Help.

COLLING SENDS THE NEWS

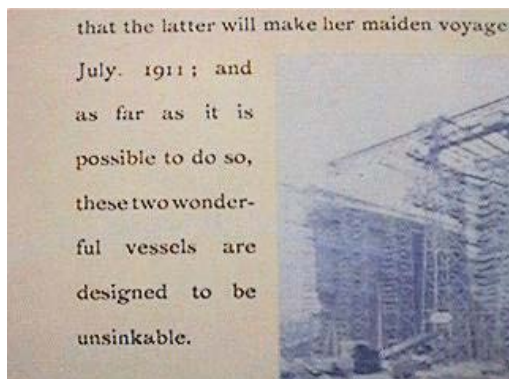
Only One of the Ship's Survivors
Reached the Coast After the
Disaster.

SATIS REPORT MADE FOR

THE WHITE STAR LINE
MANAGING DIRECTOR
AFTER THE DISASTER
THAT THE TITANIC WAS
ABSOLUTELY SAFE
AFTER SHE WAS
SEEN SINKING.

On April 15, 1912, the Titanic sank only 4 hours after accidentally striking an iceberg. On its maiden (1st) voyage, the \$7.5 million Titanic was reduced to nothing but a pile of rubble at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean.

People around the world were shocked! With so many claims referring to the safety of the ship, no one could possibly understand what had happened. But scientists, with the help of many survivors' stories, have helped us piece together what when so wrong on that chilly, April morning. Even now, over 100 years later, we find ourselves fascinated with the tale of the "Unsinkable Ship," and still spend countless hours learning and researching this tragic, yet alluring tale.



On the left: An excerpt from an advertisement by the cruise company claiming that the Titanic and its sister ship the Olympic were "wonderful vessels designed to be unsinkable." We know now that these statements were not true.

On the Right: A newspaper for the Olympic and Titanic ships advertise the safety and luxurious-nature of the two cruises. Dates for their maiden voyages appear, with no one expecting the ship leaving on April 13th would sink only two days into its trip to the Americas.

INTERNATIONAL MERCANTILE MARINE LINES
ALL OUR STEAMERS HAVE WIRELESS TELEGRAPH AND SUBMARINE SIGNALS

The Largest Steamers in the World

OLYMPIC Sails **April 13** 3 P. M.
from **MAY 4, 25, JUNE 15, JULY 6.**

TITANIC Sails **APRIL 20** 12 Noon
from **NEW YORK**

May 11, June 1
June 22, July 13

FRENCH A LA CARTE RESTAURANT, TURKISH & ELECTRIC BATHS, SWIMMING POOL, FOUR ELEVATORS, GYMNASIUM, VERANDAH CAFE, PALM COURT, SQUASH RACQUET COURT.

NEARBY SAILINGS

Baltic.....	April 11, 12:00 Noon
Vaderland....	April 13, 10:00 A. M.
Minnewaska..	April 14.
Cedric.....	April 18, 12:00 Noon

AMERICAN Pier 62, N. R.
9:30 A. M.
Plymouth—Cherbourg—Southampton
St. Paul..... May 4—St. Louis..... May 11

ATLANTIC TRANSPORT
New York—London Direct, Pier 58, N. R.
Minnewaska..... Apr. 10 | Minnewaska May 11
Minnewaska May 4, 10:30 AM | Minnewaska May 18

RED STAR Pier 61, N. R.
10 A. M.
London, Paris via Dover—Antwerp
Vaderland..... Apr. 13 | Kronland..... Apr. 27
Lagland..... Apr. 28 | Finland..... May 4

WHITE STAR Piers 59 & 60, N. R.
Plymouth—Cherbourg—Southampton
Titanic (new) Apr. 20, 6 P. M. | Titanic (new) May 11
New York—Queenstown—Liverpool
Baltic..... Apr. 11, noon | Celtic..... Apr. 23
Cedric..... Apr. 18, noon | Adriatic..... May 7

FROM BOSTON TO THE MEDITERRANEAN
CANOPIC, Apr. 27, 8 P. M. | GRETIQ, May 18, 11 AM

CANADIAN SERVICE.

LARGEST STEAMERS FROM CANADA
MONTREAL VIA QUEBEC TO LIVERPOOL.
*CANADA May 4, June 1, June 20
*MEDIANTIC May 11, June 8, July 6
*TEUTONIC May 18, June 15, July 13
*LAURENTIC May 25, June 22, July 20
*Only One Class of Cabin (1st) Passengers.

PASSENGER DEPARTMENT, 9 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

Source #2

Warning's Unheeded

How do you sink an unsinkable ship? A combination of poor navigation, bad weather, and warnings that went unheeded.

Climate



Ships tremendous weight bearing down on ice shelf, levering the above water portion of the berg toward its starboard side. The resulting brush depositing chunks of ice on the forward well deck.

One of the greatest factors to consider in the sinking of the Titanic was the weather. Sources claim that during that year in particular, the world was experiencing climate conditions that led to an increase number of icebergs. Moreover, based on the positions of the moon and Earth, the tides were favorable for an unusually high tide; an event that would have caused even more icebergs to be in the area or ocean

where the Titanic first encountered it's large adversary. While the conditions were not enough to cause the sinking of the ship alone, the climate and corresponding large blocks of ice in the water were the first of many steps in the recipe for disaster.

Human Error

While it is unfair to place blame on any one individual for what happened, there is significant evidence pointing towards human negligence as a contributing factor. Negligence is when something is not taken care of or paid attention to. During its maiden voyage, the captain and crew were warned many times about the unusually large and prolific icebergs in the area. The Titanic had received multiple warnings over the radio about these icebergs, but many of these messages were never passed on to the ship's captain. Along with ignoring these crucial warnings prior to the accident, construction teams also ignored warnings concerning the boat's emergency exit options. The Titanic was not equipped with enough lifeboats to

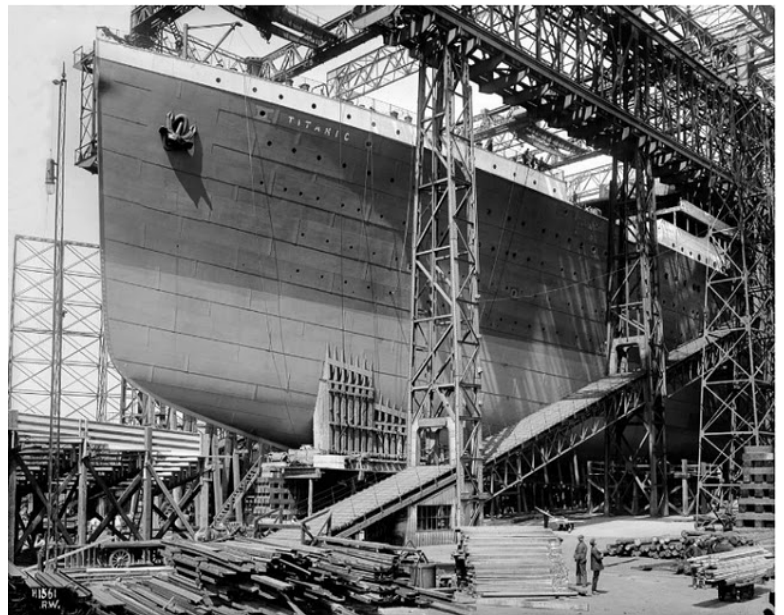
save all of its passengers in case of an emergency; leaving many people stranded when the ship went down.

Ship Malfunctions

Just before impact occurred, one of the first officers on board the ship telegraphed the engine room telling them to put the ship's engines in reverse. He had hoped this would help the boat avoid the iceberg, or at least mitigate (lessen) the damage.

Unfortunately, putting the ship in reverse was a fatal mistake, because the crew could not steer the ship as easily with the engine going in reverse. It's an ironic fact that had the crew not tried to slow the ship down, they may have been able to turn fast enough to avoid impact.

Regardless of this maneuver, however, was the fact that the ship was designed in a manner that was not strong enough to withstand the impact the ship faced when hitting the iceberg. Scientists went back and looked into the materials used to build the boat and found that even though the sides of the boat were constructed with high-quality, durable steel, the iron-rivets that held these pieces together were cheap, and low-grade. It was these low-grade, weak rivets that ripped apart during the collision and allowed for water to penetrate into 6 of the water-lock compartments; sinking the “unsinkable” ship in only 4 hours.



Source #3

Interviewing a Survivor

Below are several quotes from individuals who survived the sinking of the Titanic. They tell their versions of what they heard and saw that fateful April morning.

“I was on the whale deck in the bow calling the watch that was to relieve when the ice first came aboard. The collision opened the seams below the water-line but did not even scratch the paint above the line. I know that because I was one of those who helped to make an examination over the side with a lantern. I went down into the engine-room at 12:40am. We even made coffee, so there was not much thought of danger. An hour later I was still working at the light engines. I heard the chief engineer tell one of his subordinates that number six bulkhead had given way. At that time things began to look bad... I was told to go up and see how things were, and made my way up a dummy funnel to the bridge deck. By that time all the boats had left the ship, yet everyone in the engine-room was at his post. I was near the captain and heard him say, ‘Well boys, it’s every man for himself now.’” — **Alfred White, Greaser in the Engine Room**

Above: Alfred White, a crew member in one of the ship’s engine rooms writes about how even after the collision, no one on the ship seemed concerned. No one believed the ship could ever sink. How do you think this affected the overall tragedy of the Titanic? Could more have been done to protect passengers?

“When the Titanic struck the iceberg, I was in bed. However, for whatever reason I was awake and remember the jolt and cessation of motion. A steward knocked on the stateroom door and directed us to get dressed, put on life preservers and go to the boat deck, which we did... The steward as we passed was trying to arouse passengers who had locked themselves in for the night. Elevators were not running. We walked up to the boat deck. All was calm and orderly. An officer was in charge. ‘Women and children first,’ he said, as he directed lifeboat number 11 to be filled. There were many tearful farewells. We and Uncle Jim said good-bye... The lowering of the lifeboat 70 feet to the sea was perilous. Davits, ropes, nothing worked properly, so that first one end of the lifeboat was tilted up and then far down. When I awoke it was broad daylight as we approached the Carpathia. Looking around over the gunwale it seemed to me like the Arctic. Icebergs of huge size ringed the horizon for 360 degrees.” — **Marshall Drew Eight-year-old traveling with his Aunt and Uncle**

Above: Marshall Drew speaks of evacuating passengers from the ship and remarks on the large number of icebergs surrounding the site of the sinking.

“A number of us who were enjoyed the crisp air were promenading about the deck. Captain Smith was on the bridge when the first cry from the lookout came that there was an iceberg ahead. It may have been 30 feet high when I saw it. It was possibly 200 yards away and dead ahead. Captain Smith shouted some orders... A number of us promenaders rushed to the bow of the ship. When we saw he could no fail to hit it, we rushed to the stern. Then came a crash, and the passengers were panic-stricken.”— George Brayton - First Class Passenge

Above: George Brayton describes the whereabouts of the captain when the fatal iceberg hit the ship. Passengers were able to see the iceberg from the main deck, alluding to the fact that the captain was already aware and dealing with the issue from his point atop the bridge.

Below: A picture is taken of one of the life boats as a rescue ships comes to their aid.



Get To Planning!

Introduction:

Contention #1:

Contention #2:

Contention #3:

Conclusion:
