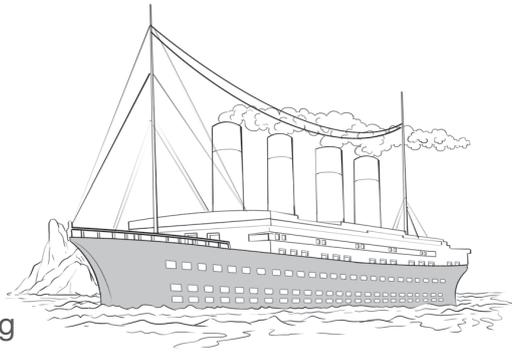


## Titanic Tragedy

Read the passage below, then answer the questions that follow.

### That Famous Ship

Think of a story about a ship and an iceberg, and you will almost certainly think of *Titanic*. At the time of her launch, *Titanic* was the biggest ship in the world, weighing over 46000 tons and capable of carrying more than 3500 passengers and crew. Built in Belfast for the White Star Line shipping company, *Titanic* was designed to be the last word in luxury, with first-class accommodation that rivalled the most opulent of hotels. This magnificent vessel set sail on 10 April 1912, from the English port of Southampton, to begin her maiden voyage across the Atlantic Ocean to New York. Some of the richest and most famous members of society had paid thousands of pounds to be amongst the first to occupy the stylish suites aboard the ship. However, the passenger list reflects society at the time, and included approximately 285 second-class passengers and 706 travelling in 'steerage' (third-class accommodation), many of whom were looking forward with optimism to starting new and better lives in America. For all these reasons, it is no wonder that *Titanic* has been referred to as 'the ship of dreams'. Sadly, for many of those who sailed on *Titanic*, their dreams were never realised, since it is neither the size nor the luxury of *Titanic* that ultimately made her famous, but the tragedy that struck on her one and only voyage.



### The Disaster and Rescue

After setting sail from Southampton, *Titanic*'s first stop was at Cherbourg, on the coast of France, where some passengers disembarked and others joined the ship. From here, she sailed to Queenstown in Ireland; the final photographs of *Titanic* afloat were taken here. As she began her transatlantic journey, we can only imagine that the last thing on the minds of most passengers was the likelihood of the ship sinking, particularly since it was widely believed that *Titanic*'s design made her 'unsinkable'. Indeed, all appeared to be well three days into the voyage, as they made record time across the Atlantic.

1



# Unit A

During this time, *Titanic* had received messages from other ships warning of icebergs, but a combination of factors meant that they were not acted upon and so as night fell on 14 April 1912, the mighty *Titanic* sailed on, oblivious to what fatal danger lay in her path.

At 11.40 p.m., the ship's lookouts spotted the outline of a dark shape looming in 35 front of them. "Iceberg right ahead!" one is reported to have called; the ship's warning bell was rung. However, by this point, moving at the speed they were, it was too late: manoeuvring a ship the size of *Titanic* took time and space, neither of which they had. The ship struck the iceberg under the water, causing a long gash in the hull. Although *Titanic* had water-tight compartments 40 which could be shut off individually if they became flooded, no one had anticipated this happening to several of them at once. As water poured from one compartment to the next, the ship became unstable. The Captain, Edward J. Smith, gave orders that the lifeboats were to be put into action. Many 45 accounts from survivors mention the chaos, as the bewildered passengers and even the crew, gradually became aware of what had happened. One of the most shocking facts about the *Titanic* tragedy was that there were not enough lifeboats to save all those on board. In total, only 705 people were rescued, with women and children being taken first. Far more first-class passengers 50 were saved than third-class, perhaps because the steerage accommodation was further from the lifeboats and access to first-class areas was restricted. Within three hours of hitting the iceberg, *Titanic* had sunk under the icy water, splitting in two as she did so. Several ships heard the distress calls sent by *Titanic* and came to help, the first of which was *Carpathia*, but it took several 55 hours to arrive. The survivors in the lifeboats were taken aboard and eventually arrived in New York, shocked and traumatised by their ordeal.

In the days before satellites, the internet and 24-hour broadcasting, news of the tragedy emerged slowly and the 'facts' reported at first were somewhat muddled. One London newspaper even had a headline which read 'Everyone Safe'. The truth eventually became clear and the tragic story of *Titanic* has 60 continued to be written about extensively ever since.



- A Using the information in the first paragraph, describe what *Titanic* was like for first-class passengers. [2]

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- B Which word below could NOT be used to replace *opulent* in the first paragraph and keep the same meaning? [1]

Tick **one**.

richly-decorated

expensive

luxurious

old

- C *looking forward with optimism to starting new and better lives in America*. What does this suggest about the lives third-class passengers were leaving behind and their attitude towards their new lives? [2]

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- D Look at the first paragraph. Give **two** ways in which *Titanic* could be thought of as a 'ship of dreams'. [2]

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- E In the first paragraph, what does the noun phrase *maiden voyage* tell you? [1]

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- F Read the section entitled *The Disaster and Rescue*.

*it was widely believed that Titanic's design made her 'unsinkable'*

Underline a word or phrase in this line which shows you that this was an opinion rather than a fact. [1]



# Unit A

G Match the places to the correct event in *Titanic's* history. [1]

Southampton

Dockyard where *Titanic* was built

New York

Set off from here on 10 April 1912

Belfast

Last photographs of the ship afloat taken here

Queenstown

Final scheduled destination

H Tick to show which statements are true and which are false. [1]

	True	False
<i>Titanic</i> was crossing the Atlantic faster than previous ships.		
<i>Titanic's</i> crew were not warned about the ice.		
The lookouts saw the icebergs when they were too close.		
The damage to the ship was below the waterline.		

I In the section entitled *The Disaster and Rescue*, what do the words *bewildered* and *chaos* suggest? [1]

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J Give **two** reasons why a third-class male passenger may have been less likely to survive. [2]

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K How do you think the passengers' feelings changed during their voyage? Use evidence from across the text to support your opinions. [2]

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