

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# The Titanic: A True Story of Tragedy and Discovery

## Introduction

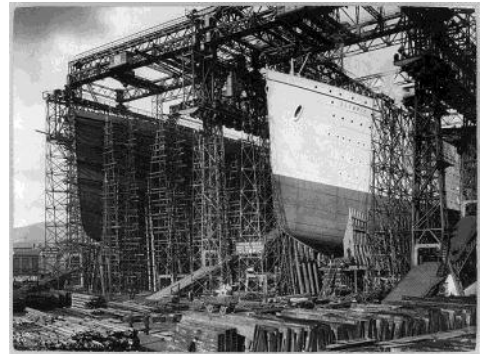
The RMS Titanic was the most magnificent ocean liner of its time. When it set sail in 1912, people called it a "floating palace" and believed it was too strong to sink. But just four days into its journey, the impossible happened. This is the true story of how the grandest ship in the world met its tragic end - and how we still remember it today.

## Building a Marvel

Construction on the Titanic began in March 1909 in Belfast, Ireland. Over 15,000 workers labored day and night for nearly three years to build this engineering wonder. The ship was part of the Olympic-class trio, which included two other large ships (Olympic and Britannic).

Some amazing facts about the Titanic's construction:

- It weighed 46,000 tons - as heavy as about 350 blue whales!
- The hull was held together with over 3 million rivets
- It had 4 enormous smokestacks (though only 3 actually worked)
- The ship cost 7 million to build (about 200 million today)



Titanic and Olympic being built

## Life On Board

When the Titanic left Southampton, England on April 10, 1912, it carried people from all walks of life:



Artist's drawing of inside the Titanic

**First Class:** The wealthiest passengers enjoyed luxurious cabins, a swimming pool, squash court, and even a Turkish bath. They dined on 10-course meals in a magnificent dining room with a glass dome ceiling.

**Second Class:** These passengers had comfortable cabins similar to first class on other ships. They had access to a library and their own promenade deck.

**Third Class:** Mostly immigrants traveling to America, they shared small cabins with bunk beds. Despite being called "steerage," their accommodations were better than on most ships at the time.

## The Fateful Night

On Sunday, April 14, the Titanic received several ice warnings from other ships. Captain Edward Smith slightly changed course but kept the speed at about 22 knots (25 mph).

At 11:40 PM, lookout Frederick Fleet spotted an iceberg dead ahead. He rang the warning bell three times and phoned the bridge. First Officer William Murdoch tried to turn away and reverse engines, but the massive ship couldn't turn fast enough.

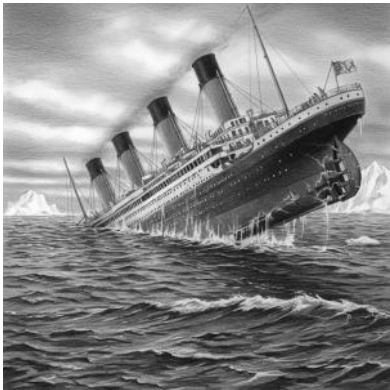
The iceberg scraped along the starboard side, popping rivets and opening seams below the waterline over a length of nearly 300 feet.



Drawing of Titanic scraping the iceberg

## The Sinking

At first, most passengers didn't realize the danger. The ship's designer, Thomas Andrews, inspected the damage and determined the Titanic would sink in 1-2 hours.



Drawing of Titanic's stern during sinking

Captain Smith ordered the lifeboats prepared, but there was terrible confusion:

- The ship only carried 20 lifeboats (enough for 1,178 people)
- Many boats were launched half-empty
- Some passengers refused to leave the "unsinkable" ship
- Third class passengers had trouble finding their way to the boat deck

By 2:00 AM, the ship's stern rose high out of the water as the bow filled. At 2:20 AM, the Titanic broke in two and disappeared beneath the icy Atlantic.

## Rescue and Aftermath

The nearby ship Carpathia raced to help, arriving around 4:00 AM. It rescued 706 survivors from lifeboats. Over 1,500 people perished in the disaster.

The tragedy led to important safety changes:

- The International Ice Patrol was created to monitor icebergs
- New laws required enough lifeboats for all passengers
- Ships had to maintain 24-hour radio watches
- Lifeboat drills became mandatory

## Discovering the Titanic

For 73 years, the Titanic rested undisturbed 12,500 feet below the surface. In 1985, Dr. Robert Ballard's team finally located the wreck using special underwater cameras.

What they found:

- The ship broke into two main pieces about 2,000 feet apart
- Personal items like shoes and china plates remained intact
- The bow section was surprisingly well-preserved
- The stern was completely destroyed from the impact

## Why We Remember

The Titanic teaches us important lessons about:

- Human ambition and the limits of technology
- The importance of safety regulations
- How people act in emergencies (both brave and selfish actions)

## Did You Know?

- The Titanic had only 37 seconds between iceberg sighting and collision
- If the ship had hit the iceberg head-on, it might not have sunk
- The last remaining survivor died in 2009 at age 97
- A first-class ticket would cost \$100,000 in today's money.

More than 100 years later, the Titanic continues to fascinate us. Its story reminds us that even the greatest human achievements must respect the power of nature. Museums, books, and movies keep the memory alive so we never forget those who sailed on that fateful voyage.

1. When did the Titanic sink? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many people could the Titanic's lifeboats hold? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What was the name of the ship that rescued survivors? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How would things have been different if the Titanic had more lifeboats? \_\_\_\_\_

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