

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.”

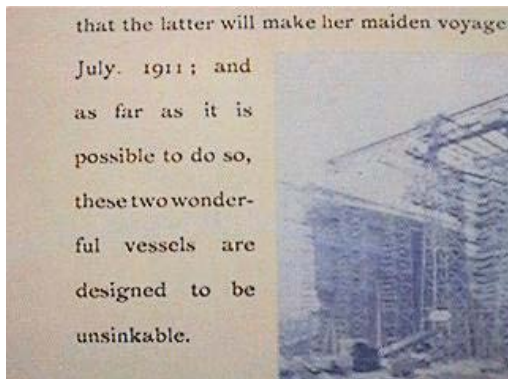
The *Titanic* was designed to stay afloat even with four of its watertight compartments being flooded, and passengers and crew alike had absolute faith that the steel-ship was positively unsinkable.

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

The image shows the front page of The New York Times newspaper from April 15, 1912. The masthead reads "The New York Times" in a large, bold, serif font. Below the masthead, the date "NEW YORK, TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 1912" is printed. The main headline is in large, bold, black letters: "TITANIC SINKS FOUR HOURS AFTER HITTING ICEBERG; 866 RESCUED BY CARPATHIA, PROBABLY 1250 PERISH; ISMAY SAFE, MRS. ASTOR MAYBE, NOTED NAMES MISSING". To the left of the main headline, there are several smaller headlines: "Col. Aster and Bride, Major Strauss and Wife, and Maj. Butt Aboard.", "RULE OF SEA FOLLOWED", "PICKED UP AFTER 8 HOURS", "FRANKLIN ROSEVELT, ALL OK", and "HEAD OF THE LINE ABOARD". To the right of the main headline, there are more headlines: "Biggest Liner Plunged to the Bottom at 2:20 A.M.", "RESCUERS THERE TOO LATE", "WOMEN AND CHILDREN FIRST", and "SEA SEARCH FOR BODIES". In the center of the page, there is a large black and white photograph of the Titanic ship, which is tilted and appears to be being towed. Below the photograph, the caption reads "The Lost Titanic Being Towed Out of Belfast Harbor." The newspaper page is filled with text, including the names of passengers and details of the rescue operation.

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

New	OLYMPIC	Sail	April 13³	P. M.
45,000		from	MAY 4, 25.	
Tons		NEW	APRIL 20¹²	Noon
Each	TITANIC	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.
Minneapolis..... Apr. 15 | Minneapolis, May 11
Minnetonka, 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
Lapland..... Apr. 30 | 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
Patrie..... Apr. 11, noon | Celtic..... Apr. 23
Cedric..... Apr. 18, noon | Adriatic..... May 7
FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN
BOSTON To The MEDITERRANEAN
CANOPIC, Apr. 27, 9 P. M. | GREYHOUND, May 18, 11 AM

CANADIAN SERVICE.

LARGEST STEAMERS FROM CANADA
MONTREAL VIA QUEBEC TO LIVERPOOL.
*CANADA May 4, June 1, June 29
*MEGANEO May 11, June 8, July 6
*TELETONIC 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.

