

ENGLISH READERS

A2  
B1

PALIER 2

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# Titanic



## Before Reading

### 1. Quiz: how much do you know about the Titanic?

1. Where was the ship built?

☐ Liverpool

☐ Belfast

☐ Southampton

2. In which year did the Titanic sail for New York?

☐ 1910

☐ 1912

☐ 1916

3. Where did the Titanic set sail from?

☐ Southampton

☐ London

☐ Manchester

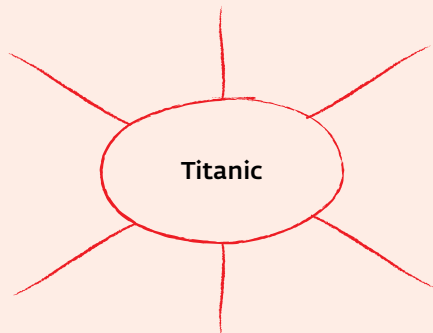
4. What caused the boat to sink?

☐ a big rock

☐ a hurricane

☐ a huge iceberg

### 2. Think of the adjectives that could best describe the Titanic and complete the spidergram.



## 1

# The Proud Departure



'In Greek mythology, the Titans were a family of giants. White Star's great new **liner**<sup>1</sup>, Titanic, is a giant, **the mightiest**<sup>2</sup> ever built, a ship that Britain can be proud of. She is 300 metres long, 30 metres broad, and weighs 46,000 tons. **She**<sup>3</sup> can carry 3,500 passengers and **crew**<sup>4</sup> and has a top speed of over 22 **knots**<sup>5</sup> (41 kilometres an hour). The luxury for first-class passengers is quite exceptional. Artists and **craftsmen**<sup>6</sup> have provided an extraordinary variety of styles.

**1. liner** un paquebot | **2. the mightiest** le plus puissant | **3. she** elle (en anglais les noms propres des bateaux et des voitures sont toujours féminins) | **4. crew** l'équipage | **5. knots** des nœuds (une unité de vitesse utilisée en navigation maritime. 1 nœud correspond à 1 mille marin, 1,852 km, par heure) | **6. craftsmen** des artisans

There is a **Georgian**<sup>1</sup> saloon, a Louis XIV saloon, a Louis XV saloon. **The staircases**<sup>2</sup> go down four **decks**<sup>3</sup>, with **the breadth**<sup>4</sup> and splendour of a luxury hotel, and there is even **a lift**<sup>5</sup>. One of **the wonders**<sup>6</sup> of the ship is that its lighting is all electric. Many of our hotels still do not have electric light. The Titanic also has a gymnasium and a **heated**<sup>7</sup> swimming-pool.'

This is a resume of the many articles that were written about the world's greatest ship before her **maiden voyage**<sup>8</sup> in April, 1912.

One of the most exciting pieces of information that the journalists had to report was the ship's very special construction:

'The Titanic is **the safest**<sup>9</sup> ship in the world. She has a **double bottom**<sup>10</sup> and 16 **watertight compartments**<sup>11</sup>. If there is a collision and **the bows**<sup>12</sup> of the ship are **holed**<sup>13</sup>, her **bulkheads**<sup>14</sup> can be shut immediately by the officer on **the bridge**<sup>15</sup>. All he has to do is **pull an electric switch**<sup>16</sup>. This magnificent ship is **unsinkable**<sup>17</sup>!'

1. **Georgian** le style georgien (Angleterre, XVIII siècle) | 2. **the staircases** les escaliers | 3. **decks** les ponts | 4. **the breadth** la largeur | 5. **a lift** un ascenseur | 6. **the wonders** les merveilles | 7. **heated** chauffée | 8. **maiden voyage** un voyage inaugural | 9. **the safest** le plus sûr | 10. **a double bottom** un double fond | 11. **watertight compartments** des compartiments étanches | 12. **the bows** les proues | 13. **(to be) holed** (avoir) un trou | 14. **bulkheads** des cloisons étanches | 15. **the bridge** la passerelle | 16. **pull an electric switch** appuyer sur un interrupteur | 17. **unsinkable** insubmersible

The Titanic was built by one of Britain's finest **ship builders**<sup>1</sup>, Harland and Wolff of Belfast, and the firm's managing director, Thomas Andrews, and eight of his workers were sailing with her. Not one of them ever saw Ireland again.

On Wednesday, April 10th, 1912, thousands of **sightseers**<sup>2</sup>, friends and relations came to Southampton to see the great ship off. Few ships have ever carried so many distinguished passengers. There was the American artist, Frank Millet, a **well-known**<sup>3</sup> British journalist, William Stead, an American novelist, American senators, and some of the richest men and women in British and American society. On board, too, was the managing director of the White Star Line, Bruce Ismay. For him, as others, it was a very great occasion.

In fact Bruce Ismay did not quite know whether he was a passenger or a member of the crew. After the ship sailed he sometimes suddenly **jumped up**<sup>4</sup> and **rushed up to the bridge**<sup>5</sup>, or down to the engine-room where he gave orders to the engineers without the Captain's **knowledge**<sup>6</sup>. Bruce Ismay must have seemed very sure of himself to his **fellow passengers**<sup>7</sup>, but he wasn't.

There were also on board 500 third-class passengers. Most of them were British, Dutch and Scandinavian emigrants who were leaving Europe to start a new life in America.

As **the tugs**<sup>8</sup> pulled the great liner out into Southampton Water, no one could possibly have believed that four days later the Titanic would be lying on the floor of the Atlantic, **two and a half miles**<sup>9</sup> down.

1. **ship builders** des constructeurs de navires | 2. **sightseers** les curieux | 3. **well-known** bien réputé | 4. **(he) jumped up** il s'est levé d'un bond | 5. **(he) rushed up to the bridge** il s'est précipité sur la passerelle du bateau | 6. **knowledge** connaissance, ici, à l'insu du commandant | 7. **fellow passengers** compagnons de voyage | 8. **the tugs** les remorqueurs | 9. **two and a half miles** 4,630 metres

## TERED THE LUXURY OF THE "TITANIC."



THE READING AND WRITING ROOM ON BOARD THE "TITANIC" NOW IN THE DEPTHS OF THE ATLANTIC.

The size and equipment of the *Titanic* was such that it was not easy for the minds of the passengers to quickly realize that the warm, beautiful rooms in which they had been spending a pleasant evening or the cabins in which they were enjoying the first hour of sleep would soon be sinking beneath them. Everything was at first quite leisurely. Colonel Grace says that when the vessel struck "the passengers were not alarmed, but joked over the matter. The few who appeared on deck had

## NUMBER OF PERSONS RESCUED FROM THE "TITANIC"

First class	-	-	-	-	202
Second class	-	-	-	-	115
Third class	-	-	-	-	178
Crew	-	-	-	-	206
Officers	-	-	-	-	4
Total number of saved					705
Number of persons who lost their lives					1,635

taken time to dress properly." Several of the male survivors were in the smoking-room at the time of the contact with the berg. It was probably the fullest public room at the moment. There would also probably have been one or two quiet readers sitting in the room shown above, scanning the pages of a novel before turning in. There had been music and singing during the evening. There were then 2,340 persons on board; of these no fewer than 1,635 perished.



After all, the Titanic was unsinkable, and in those days the public had complete faith in the inventive, **forward-looking**<sup>1</sup> British industrialists. Mr Andrews, however, was a little more **cautious**<sup>2</sup> about his ship. **He wandered about**<sup>3</sup> the ship, checking everything with expert eyes and making notes of small things that needed changing “Unsinkable, no!” he said. “But **it’ll take an awful lot**<sup>4</sup> to send her to the bottom.”

First the Titanic crossed the Channel to Cherbourg, where **she picked up more emigrants**<sup>5</sup> from the Continent. Then she went on to her last stop at Queenstown, Southern Ireland. A boat carrying more than a hundred Irish emigrants came out to meet her. Suddenly the people in the boat gave **a cry of horror**<sup>6</sup>. A black face **was grinning down at them**<sup>7</sup> from one of **the funnels**<sup>8</sup>. The superstitious Irish were certain it was **the devil**<sup>9</sup>, and a sure sign of catastrophe. Actually it was only **a stoker**<sup>10</sup>, who had climbed up inside the false funnel **to give them a fright**<sup>11</sup>.

**The Titanic nosed her way**<sup>12</sup> into the Atlantic, **gathering speed**<sup>13</sup> all the time. Soon she was doing 22 knots. There were now 2,207 people on board, of whom 898 were members of the crew. The sea was calm, so the passengers were able to enjoy all the luxuries that the floating palace had to offer. **The stewards and stewardesses**<sup>14</sup> were kept busy carrying coffee and drinks to the distinguished

1. **forward-looking** tourné vers l'avenir | 2. **cautious** prudent |  
 3. **he wandered about** il se promenait | 4. **it'll take an awful lot** cela prendra énormément de temps | 5. **she picked up more emigrants** elle a récupéré plus d'émigrants | 6. **a cry of horror** un cri d'effroi |  
 7. **(it) was grinning down at them** il leur faisait un large sourire |  
 8. **the funnels** des cheminées | 9. **devil** le diable | 10. **a stoker** une personne chargée d'alimenter en charbon les chaudières | 11. **to give them a fright** pour leur faire peur | 12. **the Titanic nosed her way** le Titanic est sortie avec précaution | 13. **gathering speed** en gagnant de la vitesse | 14. **the stewards and stewardesses** les stewards et les hôtesse

passengers in the different saloons. Some of these passengers had suites of rooms which included cabins for their personal servants. A suite of this kind cost £ 888, which in those days could **feed**<sup>1</sup> ten British families for a year.

5 Among the first-class passengers there were many American millionaires, among them Ben Guggenheim, John Jacob Astor, Martin Rothschild, Arthur Ryerson, George Widener. Then there was the English Countess of Rothes and Sir Cosmo Duff Gordon and Lady Duff Gordon.

10 Among the second-class passengers, mostly people of **moderate incomes**<sup>2</sup>, there was a young schoolmaster, Lawrence Beesley. He was soon to become famous as the author of a little book called '**The Loss**<sup>3</sup> of S.S. Titanic'.

The third-class passengers were **well looked after**<sup>4</sup>. They had  
15 cabins with comfortable **bunks**<sup>5</sup>, and spacious saloons. However, the White Star put third-class passengers on **the lowest deck**<sup>6</sup>, right forward and right **aft**<sup>7</sup>, very near **the waterline**<sup>8</sup>. The two parts were connected by a long passage, and 'To avoid trouble', they separated the unmarried women from the unmarried men,  
20 putting the men forward and the women aft.

On the evening of Saturday, April 13th, the ship's commander sat in the dining-room with his distinguished guests, smoking his after-dinner cigar. Captain Smith, an experienced and much admired officer **felt well pleased**<sup>9</sup> with his ship.

1. **feed** nourrir | 2. **moderate incomes** des revenus moyens |  
3. **the loss** la perte | 4. **well looked after** bien soignés | 5. **bunks**  
des couchettes | 6. **the lowest deck** ici, en bas | 7. **aft** l'arrière d'un  
bateau | 8. **the waterline** la ligne de flottaison | 9. **(he) felt well  
pleased** il était particulièrement content



## Chapter 1: The Proud Departure

### 1. Listen and find information about:

1. the company the ship belonged to

.....

2. her length

.....

3. her width

.....

4. her weight

.....

5. the number of persons she could carry

.....

6. her top speed

.....

### 2. Listen and match the words with their synonyms.

the lowest part of the boat

bulkheads

waterproof

watertight

the front part of a boat

unsinkable

walls

bow

that can't be sunk

bottom

3. Explain why the Titanic was known as “the safest ship in the world.” Use the previous exercise.

4. Circle the adjectives that best qualify her decoration.

modern

archaic

luxurious

plain

5. Look at your notes and say what you know about the Titanic.

6. Listen (track 1, from "The Titanic was built" page 7, line 1, to "a new life in America" page 7, line 21) and complete the chart.

500

the American artist

the firm's managing director

Bruce Ismay

Southampton

date

William Stead

	Wednesday, April 10th, 1912
departure place	
	Thomas Andrews
	Frank Millet
a well-known British journalist	
the White Star Line manager	
n° of third-class passengers	

7. Look at the map and draw the route the Titanic took to pick up her passengers.



8. How many people were on board the ship when “she nosed her way into the Atlantic”?

.....

9. Listen and tick ☒ the correct answers:

- ☐ 1. First-class passengers were mostly members of the Royal Family.
- ☐ 2. There was room-service for all the passengers.
- ☐ 3. Third-class passengers didn't have a private cabin.
- ☐ 4. Women and men shared the same cabins.

10. Spot the differences between the first and second-class decks.  
Pick out as many details as you can.
11. Recap orally on what you know so far.

## Chapter 2: Iceberg Straight Ahead

1. Read the whole chapter and find the following people's occupations on board the Titanic.

1. Mr Smith .....
2. Mr Phillips .....
3. Mr Murdoch .....
4. Mr Fleet .....

2. Read and find out:

1. the number of notifications they got about the icebergs  
.....
2. the story of the French liner Niagara  
.....
3. the reason why there were so many icebergs  
on the shipping routes  
.....

3. Circle the adjectives that best qualify the reaction of Captain Smith and Bruce Ismay.

worried

calm

anxious

nervous

confident

peaceful