

The Sinking of the Titanic

In 1912 an American shipping company launched a new ship called "Titanic". It was the largest and the most luxurious ocean steamer of that time. It weighed 46 000 tons and carried about 2200 passengers. Experts called it unsinkable.

On April 14th 1912 the Titanic sailed on her maiden voyage. It was going across the Atlantic from England to New York. It was carrying 2224 passengers - men, women and children. It was a very special occasion and the passengers were celebrating it. There was much rejoicing on board. Celebrations went on all the evening.

Suddenly, just before midnight, the ship struck an iceberg. It was a terrible collision. The iceberg made a great hole in the ship's hull and the "unsinkable" Titanic began to sink.

There was much excitement on board. The Titanic was sinking. The alarm bells rang out. Everyone rushed to the lifeboats, but there wasn't enough room for everybody. There was room for only 1178 passengers. The lifeboats took mostly the women and children. It was a terrible scene. Wives were crying because they had to leave their husbands to die; children were crying because they had to say goodbye to their fathers; the men had to stay on the ship. The Titanic signalled for help, but no help came. Another ship, the "Californian" was just 20 miles away, but her radio operator was sleeping and did not hear the distress signals.

At 2:20 , in the early hours of the morning, the Titanic sank while her band was playing bravely on deck. Twenty minutes later, another liner, the "Carpathia" arrived on the scene and helped to rescue survivors from the icy waters. But of the 2224 passengers, only about 700 survived.

It was a terrible disaster. But many good things happened as a result of the sinking of the Titanic. In 1913, there was a meeting of a committee of inquiry into the disaster. This committee created many rules for shipping companies. Since then every ship must have lifeboat space for each passenger and has to organize lifeboat exercises during every voyage. Every ship has to carry enough radio operators so that one of them does not sleep. Another important result of the sinking of the Titanic was the formation of an international ice patrol. This patrol warns ships about ice and icebergs in the North Atlantic.

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A. Are these statements true or false? Give the line (5)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|-------|
| 1. The Titanic was unsinkable. | T | F | _____ |
| 2. The Titanic carried 46,000 passengers. | T | F | _____ |
| 3. The Titanic struck an iceberg after midnight. | T | F | _____ |
| 4. The Titanic sailed from England to New York. | T | F | _____ |
| 5. The Titanic and Carpathia were both ocean liners. | T | F | _____ |

B. Choose the correct answer (5)

1. The Titanic struck:
- a. a reef b. an iceberg c. a rock
2. The Titanic sank on her:
- a. third voyage b. last voyage c. first voyage
3. The Carpathia rescued:
- a. the survivors b. all the passengers c. only the crew
4. There was room in the lifeboats for _____ passengers.
- a. 2200 b. 1178 c. 2224
5. The Californian did not hear the distress signals because:
- a. her radio operator was asleep b. there was a mist
c. her signals did not work

C. Choose and write the correct meaning from the box. (5)

<i>a terrible happening</i>	<i>state of danger</i>
<i>saved</i>	
<i>expressing happiness</i>	<i>investigation</i>

- | | |
|--------------|-------|
| 1. rejoicing | _____ |
| 2. distress | _____ |
| 3. rescued | _____ |
| 4. disaster | _____ |
| 5. inquiry | _____ |

D. What/whom do the underlined pronouns refer to: (5)

1. It was carrying 2224 passengers. _____
2. They rang out and all rushed out. _____
3. He was sleeping and did not hear the distress signals. _____
4. Children were crying and had to say goodbye to them. _____
5. It warns ships about icebergs. _____

E. Answer in complete sentences. (10)

Attention à la formation des phrases !

1. What was the largest ocean liner in 1912?

2. Where did the passengers rush when the alarm bells rang?

3. Who got into the boats?

4. At what time did the Titanic sink?

5. Name the ship which was only 20 miles away.

F. Fill each blank with one word. (10)

Titanic was an _____ ocean steamer. It _____ on her maiden _____, on the 14th of _____. Before midnight it _____ an iceberg which made a great _____ in the ship's _____ and it began to _____. Everyone rushed to the _____, but there wasn't _____ for them all.