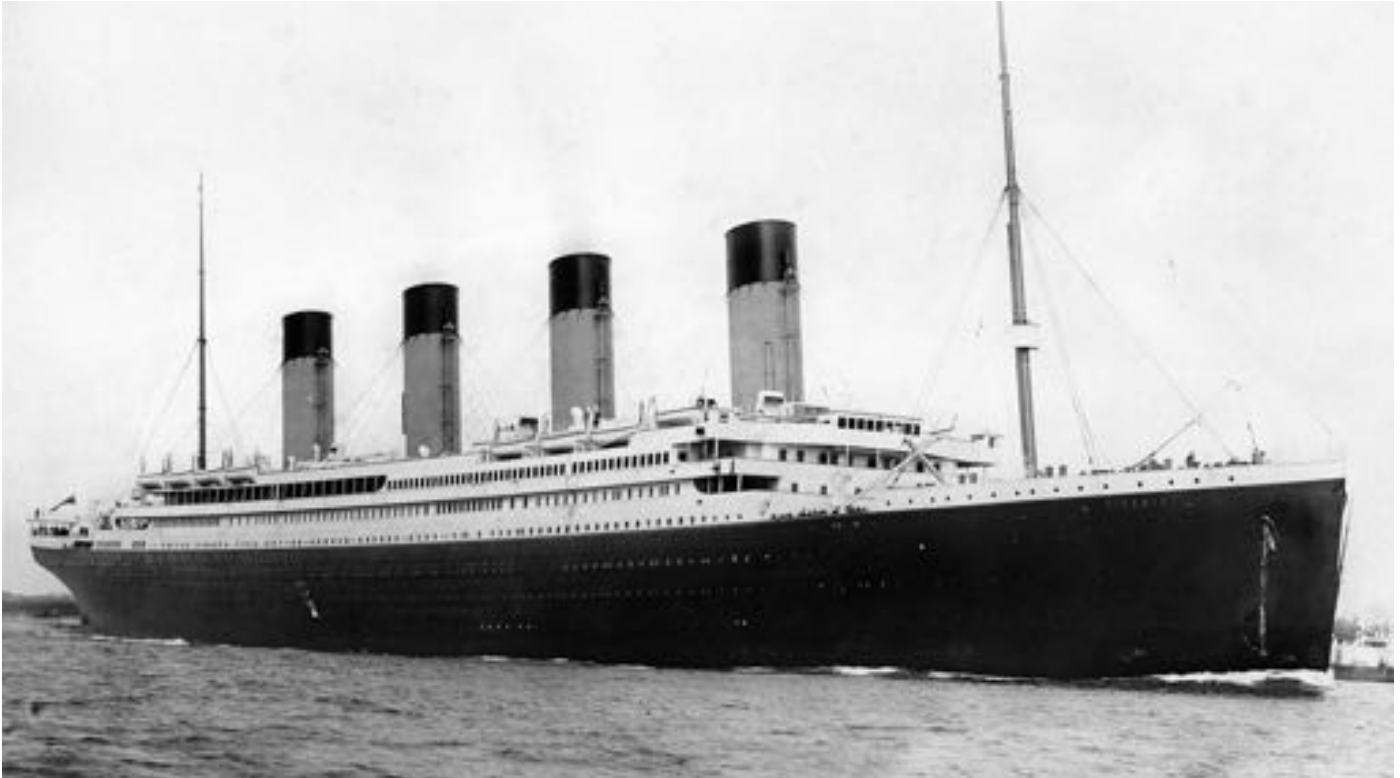


The Sinking of the *Titanic*

By Michèle Dufresne



- 1 On April 10, 1912, a passenger ship named the *Titanic* began its voyage from England to New York. More than 2,000 passengers and crew members were on board. In the first-class section were some of the world's wealthiest people. This area was designed to be a luxurious travel experience. First-class passengers slept in large rooms with fancy furniture and ate on fine china. In the third-class section were hundreds of immigrants seeking a new life in the United States. This area was more cramped than first-class, and there were fewer windows and decorations.
- 2 On April 14, a lookout noticed that they were heading toward an iceberg. The lookout rang the warning bell and called the bridge. The crew reversed the engines and turned the ship to avoid a crash. The ship did not crash directly into the iceberg, but it grazed the edge. Ice fragments showered onto the deck of the ship.
- 3 The ship settled, and the lookouts believed they had avoided disaster. They couldn't see that, underwater, the iceberg had a jagged spur. When the ship passed it, the spur tore a 300-foot gash into the hull. Seawater began to flood the ship from below. The weight of the water caused the front of the ship to pitch down, allowing more water to flood in.



4 The captain quickly realized that the ship was going down. He placed a call for help. It took about an hour for the first lifeboats to be loaded. Altogether there were 20 lifeboats on the ship, enough to hold only half the people on board. Women and children were supposed to board first, but the evacuation did not go according to plan. Some men ignored the procedures and boarded the lifeboats before it was their turn. Some of the boats launched before they had even been filled.

5 During all of this confusion, the ship gradually filled with water. There were many people still on board when the *Titanic* finally sank into the ocean. Of the more than 2,000 passengers and crew who left England, only 705 survived.



First-class smoking room



Stateroom



View of the bow on the Titanic wreck

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Test Questions

Circle the correct answer.

1) **How does the author of this secondhand account of the sinking of the *Titanic* present the information about the experience?**

- a) By describing the sequence of events on the night the *Titanic* sank.
- b) By comparing the accommodations of the first-class and third-class passengers.
- c) By explaining step-by-step how the *Titanic* hit an iceberg.
- d) By presenting a plan to search for survivors of the *Titanic*.

2) **At first, the lookouts believed the *Titanic* was safe. Why did the lookouts believe the ship had avoided danger?**

- a) They rang the warning bell and called the bridge.
- b) They were unable to see under the ship to diagnose the damage to the hull.
- c) They knew the *Titanic* was known as the safest ship to cross the Atlantic.
- d) They knew there were enough lifeboats for half of the passengers and crew.

3) **What is the meaning of the word *spur* as it is used in the following paragraph?**

The ship settled, and the lookouts believed they had avoided disaster. They couldn't see that, underwater, the iceberg had a jagged **spur**. When the ship passed it, the spur tore a 300-foot gash into the hull. Seawater began to flood the ship from below. The weight of the water caused the front of the ship to pitch down, allowing more water to flood in.

- a) spike
- b) speed
- c) sink
- d) skim

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Test Questions (continued)

- 4) **What information did Washington Dodge include in his firsthand account that isn't found in the secondhand account?**
- a) The lookouts saw an iceberg sticking out of the water and alerted the men on the bridge.
 - b) The *Titanic* eventually filled with water and sank into the ocean.
 - c) My son was quiet, but other children around us were crying as the ship crew rushed about.
 - d) The *Titanic* only had enough lifeboats for about half of the passengers and crew.
- 5) **How is the information from Washington Dodge's firsthand account different from the information from the secondhand news article?**
- a) His account named both the number of passengers and the number of survivors of the *Titanic*.
 - b) His account contains only facts and details about what happened the night the *Titanic* hit the iceberg.
 - c) His account describes his emotions and the details of his experience on the *Titanic* during the night of the tragedy.
 - d) His account explains why some of the *Titanic's* lifeboats were launched before they were full.