

Titanic

Titanic was a passenger liner and the largest ship of its time. It carried over 2000 passengers and crew. Its first voyage was from Southampton to New York, but tragically the ship never reached its destination.

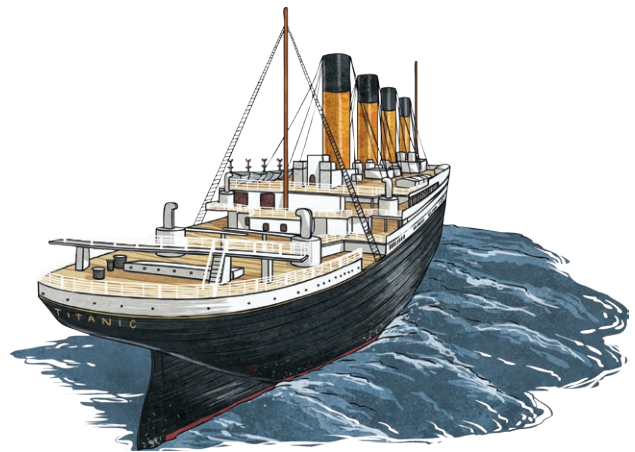
Construction

Titanic was built by Harland and Wolff in Belfast. Harland and Wolff were shipbuilders for the White Star Line. The ship took three years to build and cost \$7.5 million dollars.

This enormous vessel was constructed so that it had 16 watertight compartments. To keep the ship and passengers safe, these compartments included heavy metal doors which closed in around 30 seconds if any water seeped in. The doors closed slowly to give escaping crew members time to pass through.

Titanic had four funnels. Only three of these worked; the other was purely to make the ship look more impressive and powerful.

The ship also had three, huge propellers which powered the ship through the sea. They were made of bronze.



Facilities

The boat deck was the highest deck on Titanic. It was called the boat deck as it was where the lifeboats were stored. This was a large, open space where first and second class passengers could stroll, rest on benches and play games.



The grand staircase was the Titanic's crowning glory. It was made from polished oak and covered with an exquisite glass dome. The centrepiece of the staircase was a clock surrounded by a delicate oak carving. Passengers would walk down this staircase to enter the first class dining room. At the bottom of the staircase was a bronze statue of a cherub.

There was an A La Carte Restaurant for first class passengers, a Parisian-style restaurant and also first, second and third class dining saloons. In addition, there was a pool, two barber shops, two libraries, a gym, Turkish baths, a squash court and lifts. However, the use of these facilities strictly depended on your ticket class.

First Class

Titanic's first class passengers were rich members of the upper class. First class on the Titanic was a whole new level of transatlantic travel. This ticket class allowed access to all facilities on board.

First class passengers travelled with several suitcases and trunks; some even brought their butlers, maids, dogs or car. The most expensive suites included two lavishly decorated bedrooms, two dressing rooms, a sitting room, a bathroom and a private deck. Alternatively, there were 350 cheaper first class cabins.

First class, one way tickets started at roughly £25 (thousands of pounds in today's money) with a suite costing near to £900.

Second Class

There was a grand dining room for second class passengers. The room was very elegant.

Second class rooms were either two or four berth and had shared bathrooms. Second class on Titanic was comparable to first class standard on any other ship at the time.

Third Class

Third class travel was much less luxurious, but it was an improvement compared to third class facilities offered by other ships of the time.

These passengers were called 'steerage passengers' and didn't have access to the first and second class areas of the ship. This meant that they couldn't use many of the ship's facilities, including the swimming pool or squash court. They did however have access to two rooms where they were able to play cards and socialise. They could walk on deck but only at the back of the ship.

Cabins slept between two and ten people and there were only two bathtubs for all of the 712 third class passengers on board. This wasn't thought to be unreasonable because at the time, it was quite normal to only bathe once every week. It was believed that bathing too regularly could lead to lung problems.

Third class tickets cost between £3 and £8. An £8 ticket would be worth around £550 today. This class offered transportation rather than comfort.



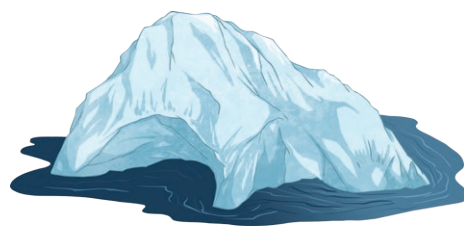
The Crew

The ship's crew was made up of almost 900 men and women. They were led by Captain Edward Smith and his commanding officers.

Almost 500 members of the crew had jobs such as chefs, restaurant managers, waiters and waitresses, shop assistants, cleaners, laundry staff and swimming pool attendants. The remaining crew members worked in areas such as the boiler rooms and mail room.

Tragedy

The Titanic sank in the North Atlantic Ocean on 15th April, 1912 after hitting an iceberg. Nobody knows the exact numbers of people on board the Titanic at the time it sank so estimations have been made. It is believed that the following numbers of passengers were saved:



- 202 of the 322 first class passengers
- 176 of the 709 third class passengers
- 115 of the 277 second class passengers
- 210 of the 898 crew members

Captain Smith went down with the ship.

Who Was Responsible?

There are many theories about why the disaster happened. One theory concerns the ship's captain, Captain Smith. He ignored several separate iceberg warnings from his crew and other ships. If he had slowed Titanic down, the disaster might not have happened.



Furthermore, there was a huge shortage of lifeboats on board to hold all passengers and crew. There were only enough lifeboat spaces for 1,178 people when the ship's total capacity was 3,547. Tragically, when the lifeboats were launched, they were not even full. Originally, 64 lifeboats had been proposed for the ship however this number was lowered to 32 and again, to 16. At the time, the British Board of Trade rules stated that the largest ships must have 16 lifeboats, therefore the Titanic followed the requirements. However, the rules were nearly 20 years old and at that time, the largest ships were four times smaller than that of Titanic.

Captain Lord was the captain of another ship called the Californian. His crew saw rockets being fired into the sky from the Titanic. Captain Lord was informed, but he didn't realise they were warning signals, therefore the ship didn't immediately rush to Titanic's assistance. Also, the Californian's radio operator had finished work for the night meaning the ship didn't pick up the Titanic's distress signals in time to help.

The British and American inquiries concurred that Captain Smith should have slowed the ship down when there was ice in the vicinity. Furthermore, lifeboats shouldn't have been launched half full. However, it was concluded that no one person was to blame for the tragedy. The tragedy was described as 'a combination of unlikely and unforeseeable circumstances'.

The events led to new safety precautions. Firstly, it was decided that all ships must slow down when entering icy areas. Secondly, they must carry enough lifeboats for everyone onboard and finally, wireless rooms were to be manned around the clock.

Questions

1. Where was Titanic sailing from?

2. How many watertight compartments were there?

3. What was the purpose of the propellers?

4. What was the purpose of the fourth funnel?

5. Can you explain why a second class passenger would have been impressed with their facilities?

6. Why do you think Captain Smith ignored several iceberg warnings and continued at speed?

7. Was Titanic breaking the rules by only having 16 lifeboats? Explain your answer fully.

8. Which fact tells us that the lifeboats were not used effectively? Why do you think this happened?

9. What do you think was to blame for the disaster? Explain your reasoning.

10. Give three words which describe how people might have been feeling when they discovered the ship was sinking. Explain your choices.

Answers

1. Where was Titanic sailing from?
The Titanic was sailing from Southampton.
2. How many watertight compartments were there?
There were 16 watertight compartments.
3. What was the purpose of the propellers?
The purpose of the propellers was to power the ship through the sea.
4. What was the purpose of the fourth funnel?
The fourth funnel didn't work. It was only added to make the ship look more impressive and powerful.
5. Can you explain why a second class passenger would have been impressed with their facilities?
Second class passengers would have been impressed with the facilities because second class on Titanic was comparable to first class standard on any other ship at the time
6. Why do you think Captain Smith ignored several iceberg warnings and continued at speed?
Various answers. For example, 'This was Titanic's maiden voyage. He wanted to make sure that the ship reached New York on time. This would show the world how powerful and reliable Titanic was.'
7. Was Titanic breaking the rules by only having 16 lifeboats? Explain your answer fully.
At the time, the British Board of Trade rules stated that the largest ships must have 16 lifeboats, therefore the Titanic wasn't breaking the rules. However, the rules were nearly 20 years old and at that time, the largest ships were four times smaller than that of Titanic.
8. Which fact tells us that the lifeboats were not used effectively? Why do you think this happened?
The lifeboats were not used effectively since when they were launched, they were not full. Various answers.
9. What do you think was to blame for the disaster? Explain your reasoning.
Various answers and reasoning.
10. Give three words which describe how people might have been feeling when they discovered the ship was sinking. Explain your choices.
Various answers and reasoning. For example, Terrified, because they did not know if they were going to live or die.