

Comprehension 7

The Sinking of the RMS Titanic

The RMS Titanic, a British passenger ship, sank on 14 April 1912 in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. The sinking of the Titanic is often considered to be one of the worst ever maritime disasters. There were approximately 2,224 people on board the ship and 1,500 of these people drowned at sea. At the time, the Titanic was the largest passenger ship in the world.

The boat was divided into sections according to the social class of the passengers. The richer the passenger was, the better the nicer the room that they had to stay in was. The richest passengers had access to a swimming pool, a library, a gym and delicious restaurants. They also had beautiful cabins to stay in, with their own living room, bedroom and balcony. The poorest passengers had to share a room with other people. Many of the poorer passengers were heading to America in search of 'the American dream'. 'The American dream' was the hope of better jobs, better housing and a better lifestyle than they could have in England. They had spent all of the money that they had on buying a ticket to travel on the Titanic and hoped that their dreams would come true.

Four days into the ship's journey, the Captain, Edward John Smith, received an emergency call telling him that there were icebergs in the sea. Captain Smith had been a sailor for forty years, and had been the captain of many other ships. He had been told that the Titanic was an 'unsinkable' ship, so he chose to ignore the warning and keep on sailing at full speed. A few hours later, the Titanic crashed into an iceberg which tore a huge hole in the side of the ship. Water flooded into the ship.

There were not enough lifeboats on the ship to save all of the passengers because the man who had designed the ship also believed it to be 'unsinkable'. Women and children were allowed to climb onto the lifeboats first, so many men were left on the ship and died. Many lifeboats left without being full because people were so desperate to escape the sinking ship. Only 705 people survived the disaster. Two hours after the ship sank, the HMS Carpathia arrived to collect the survivors from the lifeboats.

Read the following article and answer the questions in complete sentences.

1. Where did Titanic sail from and what was her destination? (2)

2. Give three differences between the conditions that the richest and poorest passengers were staying in. (3)

3. What is the 'American Dream'? (2)

4. Was Captain Smith an experienced sailor? How do you know? (2)

5. Why didn't Captain Smith listen to the emergency warning about the icebergs? (2)

6. What happened when the ship crashed into the iceberg? (2)

7. What was Carpathia and what was her mission? (2)

8. If you were Captain Smith, what would you have done to save more people on Titanic? (2)
