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Education Service

Life Aboard the Titanic

Who travelled on the
fateful maiden
voyage?

Introduction

Lesson at a Glance

Suitable For: KS3

Time Period:

Early 20th Century
1901-1918

Curriculum Link:

Challenges for Britain,
Europe and the wider
world 1901 to present
day

- Social, cultural and technological change in post-war British society
- The inter-war years

English Literature

Contextual background to
'An Inspector Calls'

Learning Objective:

To investigate the records
of the passengers of the
Titanic

To examine the class
system of the early 1900s

Resources needed:

Printed sources

The Titanic

The Titanic was built at a cost of around £1.5 million, in Belfast, for the White Star shipping line. She was the largest passenger steamer of her day, at over 46,000 tons, and supposedly the most up to date. Special watertight compartments made her 'practically unsinkable', claimed the owners. They also advertised the luxurious First Class accommodation, with large state-rooms, a Parisian café, a swimming pool and restaurant.

Titanic set sail from Southampton on her maiden voyage on Wednesday 10 April, 1912, calling at Cherbourg in France and Queenstown in southern Ireland before heading out across the Atlantic, on course for New York. Late on the night of Sunday 14 April she struck an iceberg and was holed below the waterline. Less than three hours later she sank. Only 705 people were rescued from over 2,200 on board.

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Background

The first ship to cross the Atlantic by steam power alone was the Sirius, in 1838, taking 18 days to make the journey. However, early iron steamships were inefficient and the next 50 years saw the last flowering of ocean-going sailing vessels. Only the invention of the steam turbine in 1884 and production of cheap steel enabled steam to overtake sail at last. In the opening years of the 20th century a new design of vessel, the 'liner' appeared. They were much bigger and faster, with more carrying capacity: the Mauretania crossed the Atlantic in less than five days in 1907. More space meant more room for passengers to travel in luxury and, until air travel superseded them in the 1950s, the Atlantic liner was the last word in comfortable, speedy travel. The publicity given to the quality of First Class accommodation on the Titanic was therefore typical.

Throughout the 19th century millions of Europeans left the continent for new lands in Australia, South America, Africa and, especially, North America. The peak was reached in the first decade of the 20th century, when 11 million Europeans crossed the Atlantic to settle in the USA, 3.2 million of them from the UK and Ireland.

Not surprisingly, emigrants were usually poor: one of their main reasons for emigrating was to build a better life in America, which was seen as a 'land of opportunity'. Back in the 19th century, shipowners had crammed emigrants below decks with inadequate facilities in order to keep fares low. The White Star Line, ironically, was one of the first to offer decent, although still cheap, accommodation to emigrant passengers.

The sinking of the Titanic with the loss of 1,500 lives caused an uproar on both sides of the Atlantic. Newspapers blamed the owners for inadequate safety arrangements. Others blamed the captain for going too fast and too carelessly in waters known to be iceberg-infested.

An enquiry in the US Senate fixed on the fact that there were not enough lifeboats for the number of passengers, although the owners certainly provided more than they were required to by law at the time. It was also pointed out that not all the lifeboats that were on board could be launched in the time it took to sink. Many passengers anyway refused to get into the lifeboats, some of which left the ship half full.

Safety regulations had not caught up with these new massive liners and were rapidly changed. A new regulation of 1913 required all vessels to carry enough lifeboats for every passenger. An iceberg patrol was set up by the US Coastguard.

Useful links:

[Survivors of the Titanic](http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/titanic/index.shtml) (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/titanic/index.shtml>)

Survivors of the tragedy tell their stories of that fateful night

[Titanic Journey](http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/titanic/) (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/titanic/>)

Explore the wreck of the Titanic online with this site from BBC Belfast.

[Titanic – Built in Belfast](http://www.nmni.com/titanic/) (<http://www.nmni.com/titanic/>)

Find out more about Belfast's most famous ship from the Ulster Folk and Transport museum.

Teacher's notes

This lesson uses the story of Titanic to open a window on to pre-First World War society.

It certainly was, for some, a glamorous time. Great wealth, which some passengers in the First Class accommodation on the liner did indeed possess, could buy leisure and luxury in new and different ways, of which trans-Atlantic travel was just one. But as the Titanic set sail, their world was heading for an even greater disaster than the sinking of the liner. In only just over two years time the First World War would sweep away millions of lives and shake the politics of their world to its foundations.

As this enquiry reveals, not all the people of Europe, nor all the passengers on the Titanic, shared in this luxury. The fact that 11 million people were prepared to uproot themselves for an uncertain new life in America between 1901 and 1910 suggests that all was not well for many. They went to escape poverty, lack of political rights, religious persecution, nationalist bigotry, class prejudice. The years up to the First World War were years of unrest and political ferment, as well as great wealth for a few. The immense contrast of life-styles on the Titanic reveals this.

Using the source documents in this lesson, the pupils can find out about the passengers on the Titanic. Source 4 requires a little statistical skill. Both the table, and the figures for who was drowned and who survived could be displayed for analysis using ICT.

Sources

Illustration : COPY 1/362

Sources 1 and 2 BT 100/260

Source 3 Ulster Folk and Transport Museum

Source 4 MT 9/920F

Source 5 MT 9/920C

Tasks

1. Look at Source 1. This is a list of passengers who were killed in the sinking.
 - What clues are there from this list that this is the First Class passenger list, not the Third?
 - Most of the people on this list do not have an occupation listed, why do you think this is?
 - This list shows HJ Allison, his wife and his daughter. We know that JJ Astor travelled with his wife Madeline, but she is not listed beside him. Why do you think this is?
2. Look at Source 2. This is also a list of passengers killed in the sinking.
 - What countries have these people come from?
 - How many different occupations are there listed?
 - What other differences can you see between the 1st and 3rd class lists? Why do you think this is?
3. Look at Source 3a and b. These are images of the Titanic's cabins in 1st and 3rd class.
 - Compare the two types of accommodation shown here. Write three sentences to describe the differences
 - What does this tell you about differences between rich and poor at that time?
 - Which of these cabins would you have preferred to stay in? Give your reasons why

4. Look at Source 4. This is a page from a document headed 'Survey of an Emigrant Ship: Certificate of Clearance'. Use the simplified transcript to answer the questions below.

- Where did most people embark?
- Which class of passenger made up the majority of those embarking at Cherbourg?
- Which class of passenger made up the majority of those embarking at Queenstown?
- Which class of passenger were in a majority of all those on board when the Titanic set off for New York?
- Look at the title of the document on which the table is based. What does this tell you about who all these steerage passengers were?

5. Look at Source 5. This is a telegram received by the Russian liner Birma.

- When was it received?
- If you were the wireless operator on the Birma, how would you report this message to the Captain?
- If you were the Captain of the Birma, what would you do?

6. The Titanic has the reputation of being a luxury ship. Is this reputation justified?

7. 705 of those on board the Titanic when she struck the iceberg survived.

Of the survivors:

- 381 were cabin class passengers, including all the children in this class
- 270 were steerage passengers, including 26 of the children in this class
- 52 were crew

What does this tell you about the safety arrangements for different types of passengers?

Source One

To be filled in when an Official Log is not delivered.

MARRIAGES, BIRTHS, DEATHS AND INJURIES

that have occurred on board during the voyage.

MARRIAGES.

Date when married.	Christian and Surnames of both parties.	Age.	State whether Single, Widow or Widower.	Profession or Occupation.	Father's Christian and Surname.	Profession or Occupation of Father.

BIRTHS.

Date of Birth.	Christian Name (if any) of Child.	Sex.	Christian Name and Surname of Father.	Rank, Profession or Occupation of Father.	Christian Name and Surname of Mother.	Maiden Surname of Mother.	Nationality and last place of abode.		Signature of Father or Mother.	Signature of Master.
							Father.	Mother.		

FIRST CLASS PASSENGER DEPT

Date.	Place.	Christian Name and Surname of deceased.	Sex and Age.	Rank, Profession or Occupation.	Nationality (Stating Birthplace).	Last place of Abode.	Cause of Death. See footnotes.
1912							
✓ 1 April 15 th	about	H. J. Allison	m		Passenger Member of Crew	152 Abbey Rd West Hampstead London N.W.	Struck Drowning
✓ 2 do.	44-16 Lat.	Mrs H. J. Allison	f.				"
✓ 3 do.	50-14 Long	Miss Allison	f.				"
✓ 4 do.	do.	Thomas Andrews	m	Ship Builder	Irish	Harland & Wolff Delfast	"
✓ 5 do.	do.	Ramon Artagaveytia	m			26 Rue Casquier Paris	"
✓ 6 do.	do.	J. J. Astor	m		U.S.C.	Hotel Ritz Paris	"
7 do.	do.	J. Baumann	m		U.S.C.	Grand Hotel	"
8 do.	do.	Quigg Baxter	m		U.S.C.	Elysee Palace Hotel Paris	"
9 DEATHS	do.	Y. Beattie	m		U.S.C.	Hotel Majestic, Nice	"
10 do.	do.	Stephen West	m		Passenger		"
11 do.	do.	Blackwell	m		Eng.		"
12 do.	do.	John B. Brady	m			Elysee Palace Hotel Paris	"
13 do.	do.	B. Brandeis	m				"
14 do.	do.	Arthur Jackson	m		U.S.C.		"
15 do.	do.	Brewer	m		U.S.C.		"
16 do.	do.	Archibald W. Butt	m		U.S.C.		"
17 do.	do.	Frank Carlson	m		U.S.C.		"
18 do.	do.	J. M. Carran	m		U.S.C.		"
19 do.	do.	J. P. Carran	m		U.S.C.		"

Source Two

To be filled in when an Official Log is not delivered.

MARRIAGES, BIRTHS, DEATHS AND INJURIES

that have occurred on board during the voyage.

MARRIAGES.

Date when married.	Christian and Surnames of both parties.	Age.	State whether Single, Widow or Widower.	Profession or Occupation.	Father's Christian and Surname.	Profession or Occupation of Father.

BIRTHS.

Date of Birth.	Christian Name - (if any) of Child.	Sex.	Christian Name and Surname of Father.	Rank, Profession or Occupation of Father.	Christian Name and Surname of Mother.	Maiden Surname of Mother.	Nationality and last place of abode.		Signature of Father or Mother.	Signature of Master.
							Father.	Mother.		

THIRD CLASS.

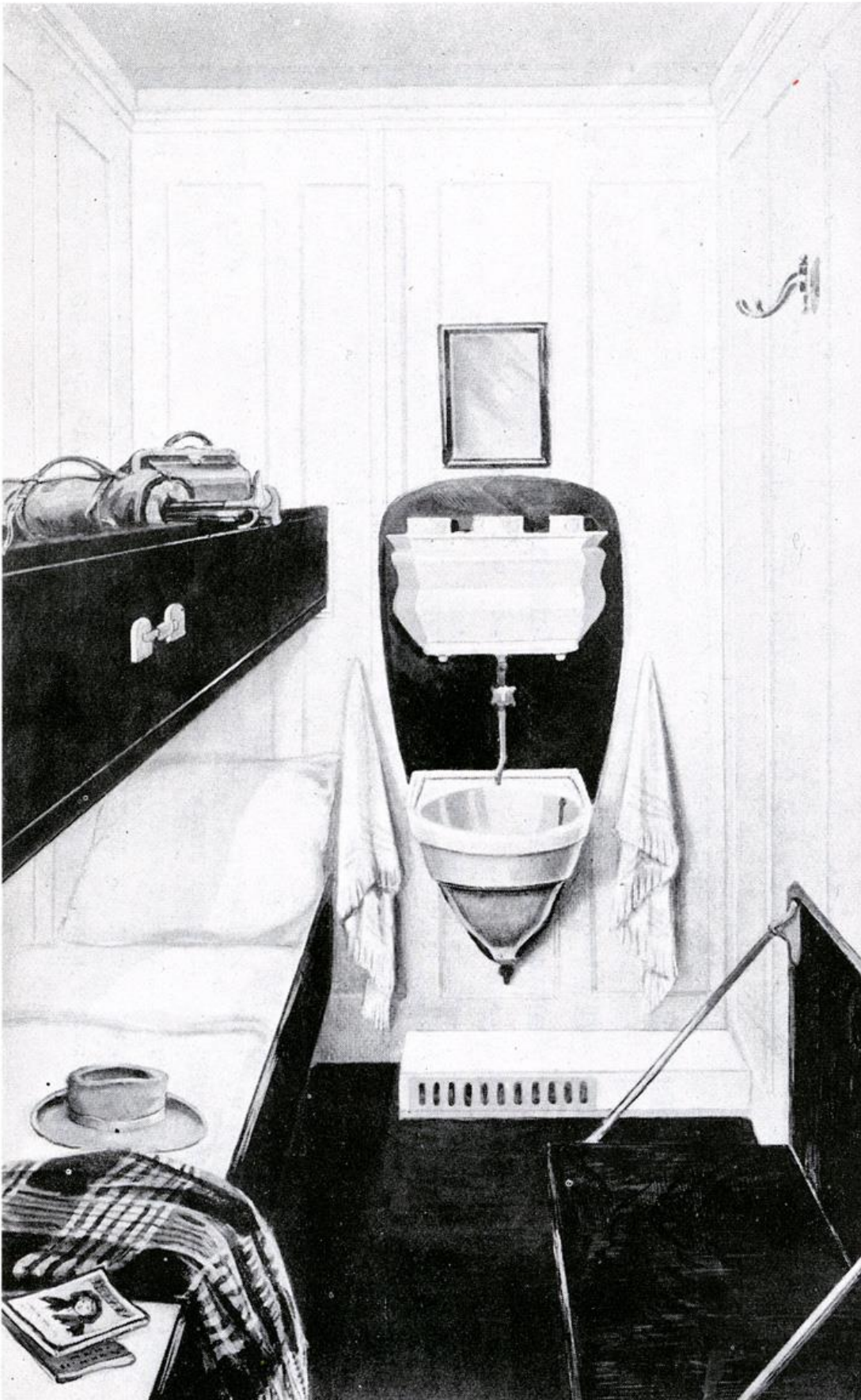
Date.	Place.	Christian Name and Surname of deceased.	Sex and Age.	Rank, Profession or Occupation.	Nationality (Stating Birthplace).	Last place of Abode.	Address	Cause of Death.	Cause of Death.	
1912										
				PASSENGERS.						
291	April 15	Mr. Anthony Abbott	m 42	Blacksmith	U.S.A.	Southampton			Supposed drowning	
292	do.	Mr. Eugene Abbott	m 13	Scholar	"	London	Salvation Army			
293	do.	Mr. Rosemary Abbott	m 16	Jeweller	"	"	London			
294	do.	Mr. Maurice Adahl	m 30	Labourer	Sweden	Copenhagen				
295	do.	Mr. Adam Adams	m	Farm Labr.	English	Yeovil	West College, Alum Chapel Rd, Bournemouth			
296	do.	Mr. Johanna Ahlin	f 40	Wife	Sweden	Gothenberg				
297	do.	Mr. Ali Ahmed	m 24	Labr.	Syria	Buenos Ayres				
298	do.	Mr. William Alexander	m 23	Labr.	England	St. Yarmouth	10. Roperders Place, Kingsway Rd, St. Yarmouth			
299	do.	Mr. J. J. Alhama	m 20	Labr.	Finland	Finland				
300	do.	Mr. William Alhama	m 25	Labr.	Syria	Buenos Ayres				
301	do.	Mr. William Allen	m 35	Tool-maker	England	Birmingham	40. 7. Hunt, 78. Suez's Rd, Extington, Black			
302	do.	Mr. Owen George Alluv	m 18	Gardener	England	London	22. Oswald Rd, Southall			
303	do.	Mr. Anthon Azzad	m 30	Farm Labr.	Syria	Syria				
304	do.	Mr. Albert Andersen	m 33	Engineer	Norway	Bergen				
305	do.	Mr. Thor Andersen	m 20	Labr.	Norway	Christiania				

Source Three (a)



HITZ O.
P. W.

Source Three (b)



Source Four

Surveys 32.



ISSUED BY THE BOARD OF TRADE.

SURVEY OF AN EMIGRANT SHIP.

Certificate for Clearance.

Handwritten calculations:
 404
 92 1/2
 110 1/2
 666 1/2
 1735 1/2
 1794
 600
 468

Ship's Name and Official Number. (1.)		Port of Registry, and Tonnage. (2.)		Name of Master. (3.)					
Titanic 13/47A		Gross. 40328	Register. 27/831	E. J. Smith					
Port of Departure. (4.)		Ports of Call. (5.)		Destination. (6.)					
Southampton		Belfast, Queenstown		New York					
CABIN PASSENGERS.									
Adults (15 years and upwards).				Children.				Total Cabin Passengers. (15.)	Equal to Adults computed by Part III. M. S. Act, 1894. (16.)
Married.		Single.		Between 1 and 12.		Under 1 Year.			
Male. (7.)	Female. (8.)	Male. (9.)	Female. (10.)	Male. (11.)	Female. (12.)	Male. (13.)	Female. (14.)	(15.)	(16.)
52	52	196	101	10	12	4		427	412
STORAGE PASSENGERS.*								Total Storage Passengers. (26.)	Equal to Adults computed by Part III. M. S. Act, 1894. (27.)
Adults (12 years and upwards).				Children.					
Married.		Single.		Between 1 and 12.		Under 1 Year.			
Male. (17.)	Female. (18.)	Male. (19.)	Female. (20.)	Male. (21.)	Female. (22.)	Male. (23.)	Female. (24.)	(26.)	(27.)
25	25	315	74	22	28	3	3	495	464
2	2	50	57	5				113	110 1/2
Deck Department. (27.)		Engine Department. (28.)		Stewards' Department. (29.)		Total Crew. (30.)		Equal to Adults computed by Part III. M. S. Act, 1894. (31.)	
73		325		494		892		892	
Total Number actually on board, including Crew								1814	1768
* Total Number of Statute Adults (as Storage Passengers), exclusive of the Master, Crew, and Cabin Passengers, which the Ship can legally carry according to space allotted								1735	1134
								Clear Space in Sq. Ft.	26992
								Number of Beds fitted.	1134

Handwritten note: 1794 + 215 = 2009

I hereby certify that the particulars inserted in the foregoing are correct. I also certify that all the requirements of the Merchant Shipping Act relating to emigrant ships, so far as they can be complied with before the departure of the ship, have been complied with, and that the ship is, in my opinion, seaworthy in all respects, and in all respects fit for her intended voyage; that she does not carry a greater number of passengers than in the proportion of the statute adult to every five superficial feet of space clear for exercise on deck; and that her passengers and crew are in a fit state to proceed.

Dated at Southampton this 10th day of APR 1912
 M. A. Clarke
 Emigration Officer, or Assistant Emigration Officer.

Source Five

M16307

The Russian East Asiatic S.S. Co. Radio-Telegram.

S.S. "Birma".

No	Words.	Origin.Station.	Time handed in.	Via.	Remarks.
0	bg to S.	Titanic	11 H.45M. April 14/15 1912.		distress call Ligs Loud.

Cgd - Sos. from M. G. Y.

We have struck iceberg sinking fast come to our assistance.

Position Lat. 41.46 n. Lon. 50.14. w.

M.G.Y.

Transcripts

Transcripts of Source One and Two are available as Excel Spreadsheets via the links below.

[Source One Transcript](#)

[Source Two Transcript](#)

Transcript Source Four

This is a very simplified transcript of the document MT 9/960f.

"Cabin passengers" were First or Second Class passengers. "Steerage" passengers were in Third Class berths or slept in open rooms.

Port of embarkation	Number of cabin passengers embarked	Number of steerage passengers embarked	Crew
Southampton	427 (26 children)	495 (56 children)	892
Cherbourg	172 (5 children)	102 (17 children)	892
Queenstown	7 (0 children)	113 (5 children)	(7 deserted)
Total	606 (31 children)	710 (78 children)	885

Transcript Source Five

The Russian East Asiatic S.S. Co. Radio-Telegram
S.S. "Birma"

No Words	Origin Station.	Time handed in.	Via.	Remarks
bg to 6.	Titanic	11 H.45M.April 14/15 1912.		Distress Call Ligs Loud

Cgd – SOS. from M. G. Y.

We have struck iceberg sinking fast come to our assistance.

Position Lat. 41.46 n. Lon. 50.14. W.

M. G. Y.

[MGY was the codename for the TITANIC]