

The Sinking of the Titanic and the Wreck That Remains

Parent Q&A; Sheet

Introduction

The Titanic parent Q&A; is designed to help you answer the tricky questions that might come up when learning about this famous maritime disaster. Whether your child is asking how such a massive ship could sink, why it happened so fast, or what happened to the people onboard, this page offers straightforward answers you can use at home.

We know it can be tough to explain complex topics like buoyancy, water pressure, and cold shock without a science background. This Parent Q&A; page is here to support you, with clear explanations in plain English — no jargon, no lectures. Everything's been broken down in a way that makes sense and relates to real-world situations. There's also a complete lesson plan available if you want to explore the topic in more depth.

Understanding how and why the Titanic sank matters because it shows how science, design, and human decisions all come together — sometimes with tragic results. It's not just history. It's also a way to talk about safety, consequences, and how we learn from mistakes. This parent Q&A; page will give you the confidence to guide your child through thoughtful conversations and spark curiosity that lasts long after the lesson ends.

Q: What exactly caused the Titanic to sink?

A: The Titanic hit an iceberg that tore open several of its watertight compartments. Water flooded in, the front of the ship dipped lower, and the back eventually rose out of the water and broke apart. It wasn't just the iceberg — design choices and safety oversights also played a role.

Q: Was the Titanic really “unsinkable”?

A: No ship is truly unsinkable. That phrase was used by some people before the voyage, but not officially by the shipbuilders. The Titanic was well-built, but key safety features — like enough lifeboats — were missing. Many believed it was safer than it actually was.

Q: Why didn't they avoid the iceberg?

A: The lookout didn't spot the iceberg in time. It was a moonless night with very calm seas — no waves were breaking around the iceberg to make it stand out. Plus, the lookout didn't have binoculars because they'd been accidentally locked away.

Q: How cold was the water and why was that so dangerous?

A: The water was around -2°C (below freezing). Salt water doesn't freeze at 0°C, so the sea stayed liquid — but deadly. At that temperature, people lost muscle control within minutes. Most died from cold shock or hypothermia.

Q: Why weren't all the lifeboats used properly?

A: The Titanic had only 20 lifeboats — enough for just over half of the people onboard. Some boats were launched half full on purpose, in hopes of picking up others from lower gangways. But the ship tilted too fast for that plan to work.

Q: Were third-class passengers trapped?

A: No, they weren't locked in. But many had difficulty reaching the upper decks in time. The layout was confusing, and families with small children or who didn't speak English struggled the most.

Q: Did the captain do anything wrong?

A: Captain Edward Smith was experienced and respected. Some think he should have slowed down, but at the time, many ships kept full speed in icy areas. He helped with the evacuation and went down with the ship.

Q: What happened to the Titanic's owner?

A: J. Bruce Ismay was chairman of the company that owned the Titanic. He helped others into lifeboats and got into one himself near the end. He survived but was heavily criticised by the public.

Q: Who was Thomas Andrews?

A: Thomas Andrews was the ship's designer and was on board for the maiden voyage. He helped organise the evacuation and didn't try to save himself. Survivors said he remained calm and heroic until the end.

Q: How deep is the Titanic now?

A: The wreck lies about 3,800 metres (nearly 2.4 miles) under the sea. That's too deep for divers. Only specially designed submersibles can reach it due to the extreme pressure.

Q: Can the Titanic be brought back up?

A: No. The ship is far too fragile and deep. It's been slowly breaking apart over time due to bacteria and deep-sea corrosion. Experts believe it could collapse entirely within a few decades.

Q: Did the disaster change anything?

A: Yes. The sinking led to major safety changes, like more lifeboats, lifeboat drills, and 24/7 radio communication. These became international rules to protect passengers.

Q: Is the wreck protected today?

A: Yes. The Titanic is under international protection. Scientists can explore the site with robotic submarines, but taking souvenirs or damaging the wreck is not allowed.

Q: Why does the Titanic story still matter?

A: It teaches us about science, technology, and human choices. It also shows how one event can change safety rules for the better. That's why people are still drawn to it over 100 years later.

Q: Where can I learn more?

A: You can visit Titanic museums, watch documentaries, or read survivor accounts. This Parent Q&A; is based on our topic page: <https://lenara.uk/history/world-history/the-sinking-of-the-titanic-and-the-wreck-that-remains>.

Final Question to Ask Your Child

What do you think people should have done differently — and how would YOU have helped if you were there?