

RMS Titanic

The Invention that Shook the World

Builder	Harland & Wolff
Owner	White Star Line
Class	Olympic-class
Maiden voyage	10 Apr 1912

KEY DATES

timeline

1909	Keel laid at the Harland & Wolff shipyard, Belfast
31 May 1911	Titanic is launched into the water
10 Apr 1912	Leaves Southampton on her maiden voyage
14 Apr, 11:40pm	Strikes an iceberg in the North Atlantic
15 Apr, 2:20am	Titanic sinks, less than 3 hours later
15 Apr 1912	RMS Carpathia rescues the survivors
1912–1914	New international safety laws are agreed

FACTS & FIGURES

LENGTH
269 metres – nearly 3 football pitches
SISTER SHIPS
Olympic & Britannic
PEOPLE ABOARD
about 2,224
LIFEBOATS
only 20 – space for 1,178
SURVIVORS
about 710 (roughly 1 in 3)
TIME TO SINK
2 hours 40 minutes

DID YOU KNOW?

myth-busting

MYTH: THE ICEBERG ALONE SANK IT
Fact: human error, poor safety planning and too much trust in technology played a part too.

MYTH: EVERYONE DIED
Fact: about 710 people survived – roughly 1 in every 3 people aboard.

MYTH: IT WAS ONE-OF-A-KIND
Fact: Titanic had two sister ships, Olympic and Britannic, built to the same design.

Q1 BIG QUESTION

What does the story of the Titanic tell us about the Age of Invention?

- Titanic was built during a time of fast industrial and technological change.
- New inventions of the era included steam engines, radio and advanced shipbuilding.
- The White Star Line marketed Titanic as an 'unsinkable' modern marvel.
- Her story shows both the excitement *and* the overconfidence of the Age of Invention.

Q2 BIG QUESTION

Why did so many people die on the Titanic?

- Titanic had real strengths – watertight compartments, wireless radio, a steel hull – but also flaws.
- There were only enough lifeboats for about half the people on board.
- Overconfidence in her technology led to poor safety planning.
- Human errors, such as ignoring iceberg warnings, combined with these design limits.

Q3 BIG QUESTION

How do we know what really happened on the Titanic?

- Historians use sources: survivor accounts, photographs, newspapers, ship plans and the wreck itself.
- Some sources praise Titanic's invention; others criticise it – we compare them.
- Not every source is equally reliable – we ask who made it, when, and why.
- Using more than one source helps build the fullest, fairest picture of events.

Q4 BIG QUESTION

What changed after the Titanic sank?

- New international safety laws meant ships had to carry enough lifeboats for everyone.
- Ships had to keep a 24-hour radio watch, so distress calls were never missed.
- The International Ice Patrol began, warning ships about dangerous icebergs.
- The disaster changed maritime law and ship design, making sea travel safer worldwide.

KEY VOCABULARY

Titanic

The ship's name, meaning huge and powerful.

White Star Line

The shipping company that owned Titanic.

Maiden voyage

A ship's very first journey.

Olympic-class

A type of huge ocean liner; Titanic was one of three.

Transatlantic

Crossing the Atlantic Ocean.

Lifeboat

A small boat used to escape a sinking ship.

Watertight compartment

A sealed section built to stop water spreading.

Iceberg

A huge floating chunk of ice.

Lookout

A crew member whose job is watching for danger.

Captain

The person in charge of the ship.

Crew

The people who work on board a ship.

Passenger

Someone travelling on the ship.

1st / 2nd / 3rd class

Ticket type showing how much comfort you paid for.

Steerage

The cheapest tickets, on the lowest decks (3rd class).

Deck

A floor, or level, on a ship.

Hull

The main body of a ship that sits in the water.

SOS / Morse code

An emergency signal sent by radio using dots and dashes.

Survivor

Someone who lived through the disaster.

Casualty

Someone killed or hurt.

Innovation

A new idea, invention or way of doing things.

Design flaw

A mistake in how something was planned or built.

Safety regulation

An official rule made to keep people safe.

Steamship

A ship powered by steam engines.