Suggested levels for Guided Reading, DRA™, Lexile® and Reading Recovery™ are provided in the Pearson Scott Foresman Leveling Guide.

**Genre Comprehension Skills and Strategy**

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**Text Features**

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**TITANIC:**

**The “Unsinkable” Ship**

by Sharon Franklin
TITANIC: The “Unsinkable” Ship

BY SHARON FRANKLIN

Vocabulary

cramped
debri
interior
ooze
robotic
sediment
sonar

Word count: 1,403

Note: The total word count includes words in the running text and headings only. Numerals and words in chapter titles, captions, labels, diagrams, charts, graphs, sidebars, and extra features are not included.
There were many other ocean liners, but this one was special. For those going on the *Titanic*’s first trip, April 10, 1912, was an exciting day. Friends and family lined the docks to get a glimpse of the ship called “a floating palace.” Others came to wave good-bye to loved ones. Many rich and famous people were on board. There were also families who hoped to begin a new life in America.

Nine-year-old Frank Goldsmith was especially excited. He, his parents, and some neighbors, including his best friend, Alfred, were on the boat. They were leaving England to sail to New York and then on to Michigan, to start a new life. It was the beginning of a great adventure.
Building the Titanic

At the turn of the century, Britain’s two largest shipping companies were Cunard and White Star. They competed with each other for passengers. They each had ocean liners that carried people over the North Atlantic route to New York.

In 1902, White Star was sold to an American company. White Star’s Chairman, Bruce Ismay, wanted to get rid of all competition for the North Atlantic route. His idea was to build a huge luxury ship, a large floating palace, that could carry more people than any other ship. He thought that sailing one huge ship would save money over taking care of three or four smaller ships. This new ocean liner, the Titanic, would be the largest and fastest liner in the world.
The *Titanic* had many new safety features. It had a double-bottomed frame. The ship’s bottom had sixteen divided sections said to be watertight. The *Titanic*’s size, double bottom, and watertight rooms made the ship nearly unsinkable.

The ship’s size and safety features led Ismay to decide to carry only enough lifeboats for about half of the people aboard. Some say Ismay removed twenty-eight lifeboats because he thought the deck was too cluttered.

The ship also had wireless communication. This was a new technology. Before this, ships had no way to communicate easily until they reached land. The wireless communication system on board the *Titanic* became very important on the night of April 14, 1912.

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**Titanic Facts**

- ** Builders:** Harland and Wolff of Belfast, Ireland
- **Length:** 882.5 feet (nearly four city blocks long)
- **Width:** 92.5 feet
- **Weight:** 24,900 tons
- **Propellers:** 3
- **Boilers:** 29
- **Anchor:** Each link weighed 175 pounds
- **People on board:** about 2,200
- **Capacity:** 3,547 (2,603 passengers and crew of 944)
- **Lifeboats:** 20 total (16 wooden, 4 collapsible) to hold 1,178 people
A Look Inside

The Titanic’s first-class passengers enjoyed a luxurious interior. The eleven-story high ship had a luxury bath, gym, libraries, a heated swimming pool, cafés, a crystal chandelier, a grand staircase, and a darkroom for photographers. Some rooms had four-poster beds and fireplaces.

In the third-class quarters, things were not so nice. Many immigrants starting a new life in America were packed into cramped quarters. Locked doors kept them separate from the fancy areas open to only first and second-class passengers.

There was also unusual cargo on board the Titanic. There were 3,364 bags of mail, a car, fifty cases of toothpaste, a box of china, five grand pianos, and thirty cases of golf clubs.

The grand staircase was 16 feet wide and more than 60 feet high.
The Journey

On Sunday, April 14, the passengers were relaxed and enjoying the voyage. The day was sunny with calm seas. People read, strolled the decks, and played cards.

Then the weather began to turn cold. The Titanic received wired warnings of icebergs from other ships. Captain Smith handed one warning message to Ismay, who stuffed it in his pocket. Another warning message never made it to Captain Smith. The Titanic received seven iceberg warnings in all throughout the day and that night.

The ship chugged along at its fastest speed yet. By about 9:00 P.M., it was only one degree above freezing. The night was clear, but there was no moon. The calm seas made it hard to spot icebergs in the blackness because no waves splashed up in warning.

Before it sank, the Titanic sent its last message by wireless telegraph to the S.S. Carpathia.
Iceberg Ahead!

Captain Smith went to bed. By about 11:30 P.M., most passengers were in their rooms. At 11:40 P.M., a voice rang out from the crow’s nest.

“Iceberg, right ahead!”

The Titanic tried to stop and turn, but the big ship could not act quickly. Alarms rang out as the ship struck the iceberg and began taking on water.

In less than ten seconds, five of the watertight sections began filling with water. As the water began to seep in, the weight started to pull down the liner’s bow. The ship quickly sent out a distress signal. The California was only twenty miles away but didn’t get the message. The Carpathia responded right away but was fifty-eight miles away.
Shortly after midnight, Captain Smith issued an order to release the lifeboats. On deck, members of the crew loaded the lifeboats with first-class women and children passengers first. Third-class passengers were kept below until most of the lifeboats had already been launched. Bruce Ismay jumped into a lifeboat to save himself.

As the men were being separated from the women and children, Frank’s father squeezed his shoulder. “So long, Franky,” he said. “See you later.”

Frank’s friend, Alfred, had just turned sixteen and chose to stay behind with the men. It was the last time Frank saw his father and his good friend.

Eighteen lifeboats were loaded and lowered into the water, but most of them were only half full. Two small boats were forgotten. Many more people could have survived had each lifeboat been filled to its limit.

Passengers in the lifeboats saw the huge ship disappear under the water.

“Sinking of the Titanic” 1932 by Willy Stoewer.
As the ship sank, people began to panic. On deck, an eight-man band was playing, trying to calm people. The bandleader told the musicians to stop and save themselves, but they refused and kept playing.

By 2:10 A.M., the Titanic’s stern began to rise out of the water. Then, everything on the ship crashed forward as the Titanic reached an almost upright position. With a great shudder, the ship broke apart. Then it disappeared into the water.

At 2:17 A.M., less than three hours after striking the iceberg, the unsinkable Titanic sunk to the bottom of the ocean.

People in the freezing water were screaming for help. Pieces of wood and other debris were floating on the surface. Large icebergs were everywhere.
The “Unsinkable” Molly Brown

The *Carpathia* finally arrived an hour and twenty minutes after the *Titanic* sank. It rescued 705 people, including Frank and his mother. A woman, later known as “the Unsinkable Molly Brown,” was also rescued.

Millionaire Margaret Molly Tobin Brown was traveling with friends. When the ship hit the iceberg, the impact threw her out of bed. Molly, thinking the worst, put on six pairs of wool stockings, a wool suit, a fur coat, a hat, and a muff. She stuck $500 cash in one pocket and a good-luck charm in the other.

On lifeboat No. 6, Molly took charge. She told the women to row toward the light of a ship in the distance. She shared her stockings with the other women and had them take turns rowing to keep warm.

After her own rescue, she helped direct rescue efforts. Once back in New York, Molly raised $10,000 to help the women who had survived, especially those who had lost family members and were now alone.
The Titanic’s Discovery!

In 1985, scientist Robert D. Ballard set out to find the Titanic on the ocean floor. Using sonar to find the ship was not working, so he looked for debris near where the Carpathia found the lifeboats. Still, he found nothing. He began to doubt whether the ship could be found.

On the night of September 1, 1985, everything changed. There it was! Their first views were of the Titanic’s huge boiler, portholes, and a railing. At that time, Ballard left the area in peace, just taking a few photographs.

A year later, Ballard revisited the site. He hoped to use a remote-controlled robotic submarine to explore the wreckage and take pictures of the small interior spaces. At 13,000 feet, the hull suddenly appeared before them. As they made their way through mud, ooze, and sediment, the bow came into view.
Titanic Artifacts

In the years since the Titanic’s discovery, the site has been stripped of many artifacts, which have become part of museum collections all over the world.

On the next page, you will see some of the thousands of items recovered. The items recovered include a section of railing, part of the hull, a running light, chairs, dishes, crystal, a life jacket, and menus. Many personal items belonging to passengers have also been recovered. These include journals, a suitcase, a hat, letters, men’s shoes, a pocket watch, and sample perfume bottles. The site of the wreckage is now a memorial.
Glossary

**cramped** adj. crowded.
**debris** n. wreckage, remains of something that has been destroyed.
**interior** n. the inside of a structure.
**ooze** n. a soft mud or slime, especially at the bottom of a body of water.

**robotic** adj. mechanical or computerized.
**sediment** n. material that settles at the bottom of a liquid.
**sonar** n. a device that uses sound waves to find the position of unseen objects underwater.

Reader Response

1. The author provides a sidebar of “Titanic Facts” on page 7. How is this graphic source useful?

2. How do you think Frank felt as he watched the Titanic sink? Describe in detail what you think he experienced. Use a web like the one below to help organize your description.

3. On page 17, the text describes the stern rising out of the water. The word stern is used as a noun here. Look up stern in a dictionary. What other part of speech can this word be? Use stern in a sentence.

4. The Titanic’s musicians chose to continue to play instead of getting in a lifeboat. Why do you think they made such a choice?