





Why did the Titanic Sink?

"We have struck an iceberg ... sinking fast ... come to our assistance."

The ship was doomed and it was slowly sliding into its watery grave.
But why did the largest, most advanced ship of the century sink?

It was Captain Smith's fault	It was the shipbuilder's fault
 <p>This was Captain E.J. Smith's retirement trip. All he had to do was get to New York in record time. Captain E.J. Smith said years before the Titanic's voyage, "I cannot imagine any condition which would cause a ship to founder. Modern shipbuilding has gone beyond that."</p> <p>Captain Smith ignored seven iceberg warnings from his crew and other ships. If he had called for the ship to slow down then maybe the Titanic disaster would not have happened.</p>	 <p>About three million rivets were used to hold the sections of the Titanic together. Some rivets have been recovered from the wreck and analysed. The findings show that they were made of sub-standard iron.</p> <p>When the ship hit the iceberg, the force of the impact caused the heads of the rivets to break and the sections of the Titanic to come apart. If good quality iron rivets had been used the sections may have stayed together and the ship may not have sunk.</p>
It was Bruce Ismay's fault	It was Thomas Andrew's fault
 <p>Bruce Ismay was the managing director of the White Star Line and he was aboard the Titanic. Competition for Atlantic passengers was fierce and the White Star Line wanted to show that they could make a six-day crossing.</p> <p>To meet this schedule the Titanic could not afford to slow down. It is believed that Ismay put pressure on Captain Smith to maintain the speed of the ship.</p>	 <p>The belief that the ship was unsinkable was, in part, due to the fact that the Titanic had sixteen watertight compartments. However, the compartments did not reach as high as they should have done.</p> <p>The White Star Line did not want them to go all the way up because this would have reduced living space in first class. If Mr Andrews had insisted on making them the correct height then maybe the Titanic would not have sunk.</p>

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Name _____ Group _____ Date _____

Comprehension Questions

1. Why was Captain Smith to blame for the sinking of the Titanic?

2. Why were the shipbuilders, Harland and Wolffe to blame for the sinking of the Titanic?

3. Why was Bruce Ismay to blame for the sinking of the Titanic?

4. Why was Mr. Andrews responsible for the sinking of the Titanic?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Do you think that Captain Smith was past his best? Explain your answer.

2. Can you find any evidence to suggest that money was a key factor in the Titanic disaster?

3. Using the evidence on this sheet, who do you think was to blame for the sinking of the Titanic? Explain your answer.
