

ENGLISH LEARNING FOR CURIOUS MINDS



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Episode #309

The Titanic

25th Oct, 2022

[00:00:00] Hello, hello hello, and welcome to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:00:12] The show where you can listen to fascinating stories, and learn weird and wonderful things about the world at the same time as improving your English.

[00:00:21] I'm Alastair Budge, and today we are going to be talking about The Titanic.

[00:00:28] On the evening of April 14th 1912, passengers of all nationalities and classes were settling down¹ for another night on the largest ship ever built.

[00:00:39] However, after four days of straightforward² voyage, the truly unthinkable³ happened.

¹ making themselves comfortable

² without unpleasant events or difficulties

³ so shocking that it could not be imagined as possible

The Titanic

[00:00:45] The legendary ship struck a giant [iceberg](#)⁴.

[00:00:49] Water started pouring on board, and the [vessel](#)⁵ sunk to the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, taking over 1,500 passengers and crew down with it.

[00:01:00] So, let's get right into it, and tell the story of The Titanic.

[00:01:06] The start of the 20th century saw great competition between industrialists.

[00:01:11] The Industrial Revolution had seen great factories built, trains, and machines of all sorts.

[00:01:18] Buildings grew taller.

[00:01:20] The Flatiron Building in New York [turned heads](#)⁶ when, in 1903, its 22 floors towered over the city.

[00:01:29] And boats, of course, were no [exception](#)⁷.

[00:01:32] There was a rush to build the biggest and most spectacular [vessels](#)⁸ to have ever been put to sea.

⁴ a very large mass of ice that is mostly underwater and travels in the sea

⁵ large ship

⁶ attracted a lot of attention

⁷ something that was not included in this

⁸ large ships

The Titanic

[00:01:39] Britain was one of the great shipbuilding nations, and two companies, Cunard and White Star Line, were in [fierce](#)⁹ competition to build the biggest and most impressive ships.

[00:01:52] At the turn of the century, Cunard launched the fastest passenger ships ever, transporting passengers between Britain and North America.

[00:02:02] In response, White Star Line wanted something that would [blow the competition out of the water](#)¹⁰.

[00:02:09] So, it [commissioned](#)¹¹ a Northern Irish shipbuilding company to build three new Olympic-class [ocean liners](#)¹², instructing the company to spend whatever was required.

[00:02:20] As far as the construction of these ships was concerned, [money was no object](#)¹³.

[00:02:27] All three ships were given names appropriate to their owner's ambitions and [loyalties](#)¹⁴.

⁹ extreme, intense

¹⁰ destroy the competition completely

¹¹ ordered, authorised

¹² passenger ships that travel on the ocean

¹³ there was no limit on the amount of money that could be spent

¹⁴ feelings of support or loyalty to a country

The Titanic

[00:02:34] The first was called Olympic, the third Britannic, and the second, well, you've probably guessed, it was the Titanic, or RMS Titanic to give it its full name.

[00:02:48] RMS, by the way, means Royal Mail Ship, it means that the ship is registered to carry letters for the postal service, and these ships would carry mail between the UK and the United States.

[00:03:01] The Titanic took three years to build, and cost around €200m in today's money.

[00:03:09] By the time she was ready to launch, to take what's called her "[maiden voyage¹⁵](#)", the world was [captivated¹⁶](#).

[00:03:17] Now, let me quickly [interrupt¹⁷](#) this story to tell you something that might surprise you, and it's that most people think that English doesn't have [genders¹⁸](#), that a table isn't masculine or feminine, it's just "a table".

[00:03:31] And that is right, but there are some objects in English that do have [genders](#), and a ship is one of them. A ship is technically always feminine, so you should refer to one as "her", although it's not really wrong if you call it "it".

¹⁵ the first trip of a ship

¹⁶ very attracted and interested

¹⁷ stop for a short time

¹⁸ a set of grammatical categories applied to nouns based on sex

The Titanic

[00:03:48] OK, with that grammar point out of the way, let's talk a little bit more about this beast.

[00:03:55] By 1911, she was ready.

[00:03:59] She was the largest moving object ever built, her [anchor¹⁹](#) alone weighed 16 tonnes and required 20 horses to transport it.

[00:04:09] She was 270 metres long and 53 metres high.

[00:04:14] There were even [doubts²⁰](#) over whether she would fit in ports, with the New York Tribune writing, "How can we [dock²¹](#) this marine monster when she reaches the port of New York?".

[00:04:25] It wasn't just the size and luxury that attracted press attention either, which brings us onto one of the most [infamous²²](#) marketing claims to have ever been made.

¹⁹ a heavy metal object on a strong rope or chain dropped into the water to keep the vessel in place

²⁰ feelings of not being certain about it

²¹ bring it into the enclosed area of the port and tie it up

²² famous for something bad

The Titanic

[00:04:36] In a fatal [foreshadowing](#)²³, a [hint](#)²⁴ of what was to come, the vice-Chairman of White Star Line claimed. “We are perfectly satisfied that the Titanic is [unsinkable](#)²⁵”.

[00:04:50] Of course, this was [partially](#)²⁶ to try to get people to buy tickets, but White Star Line did have reason to believe it.

[00:04:59] Architects and engineers had installed 16 water-tight compartments across the [hull](#)²⁷, the bottom part of the ship, and the idea was that even if many of these did [flood](#)²⁸, did take on water, the Titanic would be able to stay [afloat](#)²⁹.

[00:05:18] So, the ship was built, the route from Southampton to New York was planned, and the proud passengers arrived, [eager](#)³⁰ to get onboard the world’s most luxurious [ocean liner](#)³¹.

²³ warning or indication

²⁴ warning or indication

²⁵ impossible to be sunk

²⁶ not completely

²⁷ the bottom part of the ship

²⁸ become covered with water

²⁹ floating, not sinking

³⁰ wanting to do it very much

³¹ passenger ship that travels on the ocean

The Titanic

[00:05:31] Who better then, to captain her [maiden voyage](#) than the so-called ‘Millionaires’ Captain’ himself; Edward Smith?

[00:05:40] The 62-year-old Smith was a [distinguished](#)³² Captain, and this was to be his final voyage before retirement.

[00:05:49] So, who was actually travelling on this ship? Who managed to get a ticket?

[00:05:54] Well, the very fact that it was the biggest ship in the world made it a luxurious and special experience.

[00:06:01] But how special it was depended on how much you were prepared to [fork out](#)³³, how much you paid for a ticket.

[00:06:09] Ticket prices for the trip were surprisingly similar to today’s rates.

[00:06:15] The cheapest option was a third class ticket costing around €500 in today’s money, with second class costing €1500, and first class costing €4500.

[00:06:29] But White Star Line wasn't satisfied with leaving it there.

[00:06:34] The wealthiest passengers, like billionaire John Jacob Astor, bought luxury [suites](#)³⁴ for today’s equivalent of well over €70,000.

³² successful, well-known

³³ pay

³⁴ sets of connected rooms

The Titanic

[00:06:45] For this you would have enjoyed two luxurious bedrooms, a sitting room, private bathroom, servants and the latest [trend](#)³⁵, a private balcony.

[00:06:57] The standards on the Titanic were so high that even 2nd class was like 1st class on pretty much any other ship.

[00:07:05] For the most expensive sections of the boat, the public areas were [modelled](#)³⁶ on The Ritz Hotel in London and stylish Parisian cafes, with a Grand Staircase as the [centrepiece](#)³⁷.

[00:07:19] The facilities included a heated swimming pool, a squash court, a gym, a barber shop, bands, dancers and the largest dining room ever seen on a ship, serving only the very best food.

[00:07:33] To feed all these hungry passengers, the kitchen store rooms contained 35,000 eggs, 34 tonnes of meat, and 15,000 bottles of ale - this was a [floating](#)³⁸ hotel like no other.

[00:07:48] But if you had bought the cheapest ticket, third class, it wasn't such a luxurious experience.

³⁵ popular thing, fashion

³⁶ made to look like

³⁷ an item placed in the middle as a focus of attention

³⁸ being on the surface of water

The Titanic

[00:07:55] Of the approximately 2,000 passengers, 700 travelled in third-class.

[00:08:02] This meant that the rooms had [bunk beds³⁹](#), beds on top of each other, there wasn't much space, and there were only two bathrooms between the entire 700 passengers.

[00:08:14] One for men, one for women.

[00:08:17] If that wasn't bad enough, the rooms were right next to the engines, which were, as you'd expect, rather loud.

[00:08:26] And what's more, as we'll find out shortly, the [consequences⁴⁰](#) of buying a third class ticket were, in many cases, lethal.

[00:08:36] Now, whilst their experience doesn't sound like the best, it's important to remember that this would have been the standard experience for most people on a TransAtlantic voyage.

[00:08:48] Most of these passengers wouldn't have had hot water at home, sharing a bathroom wouldn't have been particularly strange, and on other ships, they would have been expected to bring their own food on board.

[00:09:01] And although everyone on board was taking part in this magical experience, there was a very clear division between the classes of passengers.

³⁹ beds on top of each other

⁴⁰ results of that choice

The Titanic

[00:09:11] There was no **sneaking**⁴¹ upstairs for some Foie Gras or a swim.

[00:09:16] There were gates that closed off the different sections, and this will become sadly important later on in the story.

[00:09:24] So, to the story of the **fateful**⁴² voyage.

[00:09:28] It's the morning of April 10th, 1912 and the big day has arrived, the Titanic is waiting at Southampton. 100,000 **onlookers**⁴³ watch The Titanic fill up with crew and passengers, and Captain Smith departs at midday.

[00:09:47] She stops at Cherbourg, in France and Queenstown, in Ireland to pick up the remaining passengers before heading west towards the **vast**⁴⁴ Atlantic Ocean.

[00:09:57] She would be **due**⁴⁵ at New York on April 17th, exactly a week later.

[00:10:03] As we both know, she would never make it.

[00:10:07] The first 4 days, however, went as planned.

⁴¹ going secretly

⁴² having significant and negative consequences

⁴³ people who were just watching

⁴⁴ extremely big

⁴⁵ expected to arrive

The Titanic

[00:10:11] The upper classes enjoyed the luxuries and the less fortunate passengers waited [in anticipation](#)⁴⁶ for their new lives in America.

[00:10:21] April 14th is when things take a dark turn.

[00:10:26] The ship was in the Northern Atlantic Ocean.

[00:10:29] Warnings were beginning to come in [concerning](#)⁴⁷ the number of [icebergs](#)⁴⁸, so Captain Smith [plots](#)⁴⁹ a new [course](#)⁵⁰, he changes direction slightly.

[00:10:39] As the night [draws in](#)⁵¹, the temperature drops below freezing.

[00:10:44] There was no moonlight, only stars, and the waves were calm.

[00:10:49] The Titanic, which in sunny Southampton seemed like a giant feat of human engineering, now appeared almost insignificant compared to the huge, freezing, dark ocean.

[00:11:03] It's about 600km southeast of Newfoundland, in Canada and nearing midnight.

⁴⁶ feeling excited while waiting for it to happen

⁴⁷ being about

⁴⁸ very large masses of ice that are mostly underwater and travel in the sea

⁴⁹ arranges, plans

⁵⁰ direction

⁵¹ comes, closes in

The Titanic

[00:11:10] With a crew hard at work, and passengers either partying or getting to sleep, it's at this point that events begin to [unfold](#)⁵² very quickly.

[00:11:21] At 11:40PM, Sailor Frederick Fleet is positioned in the Crow's Nest, the ship's lookout point.

[00:11:29] As well as challenging weather conditions, his job is made even more difficult by the fact that the ship's [binoculars](#)⁵³ are locked in a box, and the keys are still in Southampton.

[00:11:42] Another officer, a man named Officer Blair, had been removed from the Titanic just before departure and he had forgotten to hand over the keys.

[00:11:54] Fleet spots the tip of an [iceberg](#), not too far in the distance, and [urgently](#)⁵⁴ rings the bell.

[00:12:01] He follows this up with a call to the ship's bridge, "ice right ahead!".

⁵² take place, happen gradually

⁵³ a pair of tubes with glasses at the end that makes it possible for you to clearly see far away things

⁵⁴ in a way which required immediate action or attention

The Titanic

[00:12:07] With great [haste](#)⁵⁵, with great speed, the ship is turned and a [head-on](#)⁵⁶ [collision](#)⁵⁷ is narrowly avoided.

[00:12:16] Whilst this may sound like good news, it isn't, but more on that later.

[00:12:22] The side of the ship had [scraped](#)⁵⁸ along the 122 metre [iceberg](#) ripping several holes below the water line.

[00:12:30] The Titanic itself is made of metal, and weighs nearly 50,000 tonnes.

[00:12:36] The [iceberg](#) may be made only of frozen water and is only 30 metres high, 20 metres shorter than the Titanic.

[00:12:46] But it would have extended about another 300m below the surface. Put simply, it is absolutely massive, and would have weighed millions of tonnes.

[00:12:58] As the [iceberg](#) crushed against the side of the ship, huge [fragments](#)⁵⁹ of ice were [chipped away](#)⁶⁰, landing on [deck](#)⁶¹.

⁵⁵ speed

⁵⁶ direct, face to face

⁵⁷ an accident that happens when two things hit each other with force

⁵⁸ pushed or dragged

⁵⁹ pieces

⁶⁰ broken, cut off

⁶¹ the upper floor of the ship

The Titanic

[00:13:08] Many of the passengers still [thought nothing of this](#)⁶² though, with one survivor saying, 'We picked up blocks and most of us played snowballs.'

[00:13:18] 10 minutes later, at 11:50PM, Captain Smith and a ship architect named Thomas Andrews inspect the damage. It's not good news.

[00:13:30] The mail room was [flooding](#)⁶³, but it wasn't just wet letters that they had to worry about.

[00:13:36] Five of the supposedly '[watertight](#)⁶⁴' compartments were already [flooding](#).

[00:13:41] The ship's architect, Andrews, who knew the ship's design inside out, he knew it thoroughly, [insists](#)⁶⁵ that because more than four compartments are [flooded](#)⁶⁶, the ship is, in fact, [sinking](#)⁶⁷.

[00:13:57] At midnight, 20 minutes after the collision, Captain Smith sends out his first [distress call](#)⁶⁸ over the radio, he calls for help.

⁶² didn't consider it unusual or dangerous

⁶³ filling with water

⁶⁴ closed tight so that no water enters or passes through

⁶⁵ states positively, repeats

⁶⁶ covered with water

⁶⁷ going under the water

⁶⁸ call asking for help

The Titanic

[00:14:06] The passengers are ordered to [board](#)⁶⁹ the lifeboats. The [unsinkable](#) ship is officially [sinking](#).

[00:14:13] It is only around this time that the metal gates [segregating](#)⁷⁰ the lower classes from the upper classes are opened up.

[00:14:22] Whilst the scene in the famous movie showing these passengers [frantically](#)⁷¹ trying to open them is slightly [fictionalised](#)⁷², this slight delay in opening them does mean that the first class ticket holders are already at the front of the lifeboat queue.

[00:14:39] And, tragically, just 20 of the possible 64 lifeboats had been installed on the boat.

[00:14:47] This was to try to keep the [deck](#), the upper area, looking nice and [tidy](#)⁷³.

[00:14:54] It might have made the ship look pretty, but it meant that there were only enough lifeboats for an absolute maximum of half of the ship's passengers.

⁶⁹ get on

⁷⁰ separating

⁷¹ in a hurried, disorganised way

⁷² imagined, not true

⁷³ arranged nicely and in order

The Titanic

[00:15:04] Shockingly, this actually met the minimal legal requirements of the time, as the idea was for the lifeboats to transport passengers to rescue ships and return to pick up more, not transport all passengers at the same time.

[00:15:21] As we'll find out, this simply wasn't possible for the Titanic.

[00:15:27] So, we're still at about midnight now.

[00:15:30] The ship continues to [transmit⁷⁴ distress signals⁷⁵](#), calling out for someone, anyone, to come to save it.

[00:15:37] The Carpathia, 107km away, receives the message, 'Come at once. We have [struck⁷⁶ a berg⁷⁷](#).' and it changes [course](#) to help.

[00:15:48] It would take another 25 minutes for the lifeboats to start [boarding⁷⁸](#).

[00:15:53] 'Women and children first' is the [protocol⁷⁹](#), but some officers think this means that no men at all are allowed to [board](#), whilst others think that men can fill up the remaining spots.

⁷⁴ broadcast, send

⁷⁵ calls asking for help

⁷⁶ hit

⁷⁷ iceberg (a very large mass of ice that is mostly underwater and travels in the sea)

⁷⁸ having people on them

⁷⁹ rule

The Titanic

[00:16:06] As a result of the confusion, the first lifeboat leaves with just 28 of the 65 spots filled. By 1 o'clock in the morning, the lower [decks](#)⁸⁰ are now totally flooded, and the [bow](#)⁸¹, the front of the ship [sinks](#)⁸² further and further below the icy surface.

[00:16:27] Water rushes in 15 times faster than it can be pumped out.

[00:16:32] [The writing is on the wall](#)⁸³ for the Titanic.

[00:16:36] 15 minutes later, at a quarter past one in the morning, the weight of the [flooding](#) in the [bow](#), the front part of the boat, causes the [stern](#)⁸⁴ and [propellers](#)⁸⁵ at the opposite end to [rise out](#)⁸⁶ of the water, and the [incline](#)⁸⁷ of the ship begins [tipping](#)⁸⁸ passengers towards the freezing cold ocean.

[00:16:57] By this time, it is total chaos. The last few lifeboats are departing, desperate passengers push their way to them.

⁸⁰ floors of the ship

⁸¹ the front of the ship

⁸² goes under the water

⁸³ there are clear signs that a situation is going to become very difficult

⁸⁴ the rear end of the ship

⁸⁵ the devices that caused the ship to move

⁸⁶ move to a higher position, go up

⁸⁷ the fact that it was turned away from her vertical position

⁸⁸ throwing or pushing over

The Titanic

[00:17:07] Some men, [in a bid to](#)⁸⁹ survive, do whatever they can to get on the boats.

Others accept their [fate](#)⁹⁰ and [stay put](#)⁹¹, rather than be [labelled](#)⁹² a [coward](#)⁹³ back home.

[00:17:19] At half past one, the signals continue from the ship's officers, with two writing “women and children in boats. Cannot last much longer”.

[00:17:31] One of the most famous stories from the Titanic’s [sinking](#) is that the band kept playing whilst the ship went down, and this features in the movie.

[00:17:41] Whilst they were playing to calm passengers when the lifeboats were being filled, they soon packed up and [strapped](#)⁹⁴ their instruments to their back.

[00:17:50] Sadly, none of the 8 musicians made it.

[00:17:53] By five minutes past two, the last lifeboat leaves.

[00:17:58] There are 1,500 passengers remaining on board, with no options left.

⁸⁹ in an attempt or try to

⁹⁰ end, destiny

⁹¹ stay where they were

⁹² called, named

⁹³ someone who is not brave and runs away from danger

⁹⁴ tied, secured

The Titanic

[00:18:05] The [deck](#), the upper part of the ship, is now at such a steep [angle](#)⁹⁵ that it becomes almost impossible to stand.

[00:18:12] Hundreds fall or jump into the freezing water.

[00:18:17] Now, the sea temperature was 2 degrees below zero. [Hypothermia](#)⁹⁶ would have [set in](#)⁹⁷ within minutes.

[00:18:25] Two minutes later, at 2.17am, the Captain of the ship, Captain Smith, announces “it’s every man for himself”.

[00:18:35] The ship [snaps in half](#)⁹⁸ and the [stern](#), the back bit, [sinks](#) to the bottom of the ocean.

[00:18:42] Following a [longstanding](#)⁹⁹ maritime tradition, Captain Smith goes down with his ship.

[00:18:49] [Accounts](#)¹⁰⁰ of his death vary widely.

⁹⁵ vertical position

⁹⁶ the condition of having a dangerously low body temperature

⁹⁷ begin and continue to happen

⁹⁸ breaks in half

⁹⁹ having existed for a long time

¹⁰⁰ reports, descriptions

The Titanic

[00:18:52] Some say they saw him swimming towards a lifeboat, some say he sat by the wheel whilst it flooded, and some say they saw him shoot himself with a [pistol](#)¹⁰¹. We'll never know.

[00:19:04] A minute later, at 2:18, all the lights go out on the ship, [plunging](#)¹⁰² the tragic scene into darkness.

[00:19:13] And by 2.20am, just two minutes later, the rest of the ship [sinks](#), [floating](#) to the bottom of the ocean.

[00:19:23] Some [resilient](#)¹⁰³ swimmers are pulled onto lifeboats.

[00:19:27] In one of the most remarkable survival stories, the Titanic's baker managed to survive long enough in the water to be pulled onto a boat.

[00:19:37] How did he manage it?

[00:19:38] Well, he says that he decided to drink a load of whiskey, and that this [enabled](#)¹⁰⁴ him to stay calm to focus on swimming.

[00:19:47] Unfortunately, almost everyone else who fell into that icy water never made it out alive.

¹⁰¹ a small gun

¹⁰² suddenly bringing it or causing it to be

¹⁰³ strong, tough

¹⁰⁴ made it possible

The Titanic

[00:19:55] The rescue ship, The Carpathia arrived at the scene 2 hours afterwards. It came as fast as it could, but it was 93km away when the Titanic **struck** the **iceberg**, and as you've heard, the entire tragedy was over very quickly.

[00:20:12] There was, however, a ship that was much closer, one that could perhaps have saved hundreds of lives.

[00:20:19] It was called The Californian, and it was only 25 kilometres away.

[00:20:25] The Captain of The Californian, and his lookouts did repeatedly see the lights and **distress signals** from The Titanic, but they thought them to be shooting stars.

[00:20:37] Others also **misidentified**¹⁰⁵ the ship and didn't believe it to be the Titanic.

[00:20:43] Crucially, the warning system wasn't set up by the radio operator before he went to sleep, meaning any **distress**¹⁰⁶ calls made by the Titanic **fell on deaf ears**¹⁰⁷, they weren't heard.

[00:20:56] The Californian did eventually arrive, but only at 8:30am, 8:30 the following morning.

[00:21:03] Nobody could have lasted that long in the freezing temperatures, and all it found was the Carpathia rescuing the lucky few who had managed to get on a lifeboat.

¹⁰⁵ didn't identify or examine correctly

¹⁰⁶ showing extreme anxiety and worry

¹⁰⁷ weren't heard

The Titanic

[00:21:15] Perhaps surprisingly, no one knows the exact figures of how many people died on the early morning of April 15th, but it's estimated that there were 703 survivors and 1503 deaths.

[00:21:31] And unfortunately, how much you paid for your ticket had a large [impact](#)¹⁰⁸ on how likely you were to survive.

[00:21:39] Some 61% of the first-class passengers survived, whereas less than 25% of third-class passengers survived.

[00:21:49] The evacuation [deck](#) was only [accessible](#)¹⁰⁹ at first to upper class guests so poorer passengers were [disproportionately](#)¹¹⁰ affected.

[00:21:59] There were also reports of [bribery](#)¹¹¹, like the so-called 'Money Boat', where it was [alleged](#)¹¹² that wealthy guests paid the lifeboat crew to sail away even though there was space for more people.

[00:22:12] Another reason that deaths were higher among third class passengers was that there were more families. When you consider the 'men saved last' policy, it's important to underline that boys as young as 13 were considered men.

¹⁰⁸ effect, influence

¹⁰⁹ able to be reached

¹¹⁰ to an extent that was too large in comparison with the upper class guests

¹¹¹ an attempt or try to make them do it by giving them money

¹¹² said without having proof

The Titanic

[00:22:28] As a result, mothers refused to leave their sons behind and [countless](#)¹¹³ families died together.

[00:22:35] As news of the disaster spread, the world was shocked.

[00:22:39] Within days, both British and American investigations were launched.

[00:22:44] Death [tolls](#)¹¹⁴ like this were extremely rare, and with so many wealthy passengers on board, powerful people wanted answers.

[00:22:53] So, what were the findings? Who is to [blame](#)¹¹⁵, if anyone at all?

[00:23:00] This is the subject of much historical debate but [by and large](#)¹¹⁶, it was considered to be just terrible misfortune, it was bad luck.

[00:23:10] No serious errors were found to have been made by the late Captain Smith, and the Titanic was on the correct [course](#) the entire time.

[00:23:20] More [contemporary](#)¹¹⁷ analysis shows that the North Atlantic Ocean was unusually icy at this time, which created strange weather conditions.

¹¹³ too many to count

¹¹⁴ number (of deaths)

¹¹⁵ be considered responsible

¹¹⁶ on the whole, generally

¹¹⁷ recent, present-day

The Titanic

[00:23:30] Without getting too technical, these unusual conditions created something called, 'abnormal refraction' which causes light to bend unexpectedly. Visibility would have been far worse than it actually appeared to be, so the ship was only able to see the [iceberg](#) far too late.

[00:23:51] Also, whilst turning away from the [iceberg](#) seems like the best decision, [peculiarly](#)¹¹⁸, a [full-frontal](#)¹¹⁹ impact, hitting the [iceberg](#) directly without changing [course](#) would likely have saved the ship.

[00:24:07] A Titanic architect gave evidence and said that in the event of crashing directly into the ice, the front of the ship would have [crumpled](#)¹²⁰, killing around 40 firemen, but the rest would have held [intact](#)¹²¹.

[00:24:23] It has to be said, however, that the other side of the debate judges those involved more [harshly](#)¹²².

¹¹⁸ in a strange or unusual way

¹¹⁹ completely direct

¹²⁰ been crushed, been destroyed

¹²¹ not damaged, as they were

¹²² in a stricter or more severe manner

The Titanic

[00:24:30] [Airtight](#)¹²³ areas weren't completely [sealed](#)¹²⁴, which meant [watertight](#) compartments were [anything but](#)¹²⁵.

[00:24:37] Also, the steel and iron of the [hull](#), of the bottom of the ship, were weakened by the freezing temperatures and speed of travel, which caused the [rivets](#)¹²⁶, the [screws](#)¹²⁷, to [pop out](#)¹²⁸ easily, which massively sped up the speed at which the ship sank.

[00:24:54] And we can't forget the [crucial](#)¹²⁹ fact that no one had the key to the [binoculars](#).

[00:25:00] Could spotting it seconds earlier have made all the difference?

[00:25:04] The story is filled with many [agonising](#)¹³⁰ 'what ifs?'

[00:25:08] In terms of the legacy of the Titanic, to this day it remains one of the worst peacetime maritime disasters, in terms of loss of life.

¹²³ completely closed so that no air could get in or out

¹²⁴ closed

¹²⁵ not at all like that

¹²⁶ metal pins used for holding together plates of metal

¹²⁷ metal pins used for holding together plates of metal

¹²⁸ come out suddenly with force

¹²⁹ extremely important

¹³⁰ causing extreme worry and anxiety

The Titanic

[00:25:19] In the immediate [aftermath](#)¹³¹, there were regulations that required all ships to have wireless equipment and [crucially](#)¹³², there had to be a 'lifeboat for every soul' on board.

[00:25:30] And as to the question of where the Titanic is now, the ship still sits at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean.

[00:25:39] Her [wreck](#)¹³³ was discovered in 1985, but experts say that bringing it 4km to the surface would be impossible.

[00:25:49] What's more, due to [rust](#)¹³⁴ and water pressure, what remains of the ship will likely [disintegrate](#)¹³⁵ within 30 years.

[00:25:58] So, while the physical remains of the ship will not be around for much longer, the tragic story of the Titanic will remain forever, a powerful reminder of the dangers of human [pride](#)¹³⁶, of the limits of engineering, or perhaps, simply of the [immense](#)¹³⁷ power of mother nature.

¹³¹ the period that followed the accident

¹³² in a way that was very important

¹³³ the destroyed ship

¹³⁴ the red or orange covering that forms on the surface of iron when exposed to air and moisture

¹³⁵ be destroyed by breaking into small pieces

¹³⁶ a feeling of pleasure and satisfaction someone gets because they have achieved something good

¹³⁷ extremely large

The Titanic

[00:26:18] OK, that is it for today's episode on The Titanic.

[00:26:24] I imagine you knew something of the story already, and perhaps you've seen the most famous film [adaptation](#)¹³⁸, but I hope that this went a little deeper into what really happened.

[00:26:34] As always, I would love to know what you thought about this episode.

[00:26:38] Have you ever read any of the [heartwarming](#)¹³⁹ stories from survivors of the Titanic?

[00:26:43] Have you heard any of the tragic stories about husbands and wives who wouldn't [abandon](#)¹⁴⁰ each other, and [perished](#)¹⁴¹ together in the freezing cold waters?

[00:26:52] Why do you think that this story continues to have such a cultural impact, well over 100 years later?

[00:27:00] I would love to know, so let's get this discussion started.

[00:27:03] The place for that is our community forum, which is at community.leonardoenglish.com.

¹³⁸ a story that has been changed to suit the purpose of the film

¹³⁹ causing feelings of happiness and pleasure

¹⁴⁰ leave

¹⁴¹ died

English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #309
The Titanic

[00:27:09] You've been listening to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:27:14] I'm Alastair Budge, you stay safe and I'll catch you in the next episode.

[END OF EPISODE]

Key vocabulary

Word	Definition
Settling down	making themselves comfortable
Straightforward	without unpleasant events or difficulties
Unthinkable	so shocking that it could not be imagined as possible
Iceberg	a very large mass of ice that is mostly underwater and travels in the sea
Vessel	large ship
Turned heads	attracted a lot of attention
Exception	something that was not included in this
Vessels	large ships
Fierce	extreme, intense
Blow the competition out of the water	destroy the competition completely
Commissioned	ordered, authorised

The Titanic

Ocean liners	passenger ships that travel on the ocean
Money was no object	there was no limit on the amount of money that could be spent
Loyalties	feelings of support or loyalty to a country
Maiden voyage	the first trip of a ship
Captivated	very attracted and interested
Interrupt	stop for a short time
Genders	a set of grammatical categories applied to nouns based on sex
Anchor	a heavy metal object on a strong rope or chain dropped into the water to keep the vessel in place
Doubts	feelings of not being certain about it
Dock	bring it into the enclosed area of the port and tie it up
Infamous	famous for something bad
Foreshadowing	warning or indication
Hint	warning or indication
Unsinkable	impossible to be sunk
Partially	not completely

The Titanic

Hull	the bottom part of the ship
Flood	become covered with water
Afloat	floating, not sinking
Eager	wanting to do it very much
Ocean liner	passenger ship that travels on the ocean
Distinguished	successful, well-known
Fork out	pay
Suites	sets of connected rooms
Trend	popular thing, fashion
Modelled	made to look like
Centrepiece	an item placed in the middle as a focus of attention
Floating	being on the surface of water
Bunk beds	beds on top of each other
Consequences	results of that choice
Sneaking	going secretly

The Titanic

Fateful	having significant and negative consequences
Onlookers	people who were just watching
Vast	extremely big
Due	expected to arrive
In anticipation	feeling excited while waiting for it to happen
Concerning	being about
Icebergs	very large masses of ice that are mostly underwater and travel in the sea
Plots	arranges, plans
Course	direction
Draws in	comes, closes in
Unfold	take place, happen gradually
Binoculars	a pair of tubes with glasses at the end that makes it possible for you to clearly see far away things
Urgently	in a way which required immediate action or attention
Haste	speed

The Titanic

Head-on	direct, face to face
Collision	an accident that happens when two things hit each other with force
Scraped	pushed or dragged
Fragments	pieces
Chipped away	broken, cut off
Deck	the upper floor of the ship
Thought nothing of this	didn't consider it unusual or dangerous
Flooding	filling with water
Watertight	closed tight so that no water enters or passes through
Insists	states positively, repeats
Flooded	covered with water
Sinking	going under the water
Distress call	call asking for help
Board	get on
Segregating	separating

The Titanic

Frantically	in a hurried, disorganised way
Fictionalised	imagined, not true
Tidy	arranged nicely and in order
Transmit	broadcast, send
Distress signals	calls asking for help
Struck	hit
Berg	iceberg (a very large mass of ice that is mostly underwater and travels in the sea)
Boarding	having people on them
Protocol	rule
Decks	floors of the ship
Bow	the front of the ship
Sinks	goes under the water
The writing is on the wall	there are clear signs that a situation is going to become very difficult
Stern	the rear end of the ship

The Titanic

Propellers	the devices that caused the ship to move
Rise out	move to a higher position, go up
Incline	the fact that it was turned away from her vertical position
Tipping	throwing or pushing over
In a bid to	in an attempt or try to
Fate	end, destiny
Stay put	stay where they were
Labelled	called, named
Coward	someone who is not brave and runs away from danger
Strapped	tied, secured
Angle	vertical position
Hypothermia	the condition of having a dangerously low body temperature
Set in	begin and continue to happen
Snaps in half	breaks in half
Longstanding	having existed for a long time

The Titanic

Accounts	reports, descriptions
Pistol	a small gun
Plunging	suddenly bringing it or causing it to be
Resilient	strong, tough
Enabled	made it possible
Misidentified	didn't identify or examine correctly
Distress	showing extreme anxiety and worry
Fell on deaf ears	weren't heard
Impact	effect, influence
Accessible	able to be reached
Disproportionately	to an extent that was too large in comparison with the upper class guests
Bribery	an attempt or try to make them do it by giving them money
Alleged	said without having proof
Countless	too many to count
Tolls	number (of deaths)

The Titanic

Blame	be considered responsible
By and large	on the whole, generally
Contemporary	recent, present-day
Peculiarly	in a strange or unusual way
Full-frontal	completely direct
Crumpled	been crushed, been destroyed
Intact	not damaged, as they were
Harshly	in a stricter or more severe manner
Airtight	completely closed so that no air could get in or out
Sealed	closed
Anything but	not at all like that
Rivets	metal pins used for holding together plates of metal
Screws	metal pins used for holding together plates of metal
Pop out	come out suddenly with force
Crucial	extremely important

The Titanic

Agonising	causing extreme worry and anxiety
Aftermath	the period that followed the accident
Crucially	in a way that was very important
Wreck	the destroyed ship
Rust	the red or orange covering that forms on the surface of iron when exposed to air and moisture
Disintegrate	be destroyed by breaking into small pieces
Pride	a feeling of pleasure and satisfaction someone gets because they have achieved something good
Immense	extremely large
Adaptation	a story that has been changed to suit the purpose of the film
Heartwarming	causing feelings of happiness and pleasure
Abandon	leave
Perished	died

We'd love to get your feedback on this episode.

What did you like? What could we do better?

What did you struggle to understand?

Let us know in the forum community.leonardoenglish.com