



ENGLISH

COMPREHENSION PASSAGE

Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: VIII Sec: ____

1. *In the newspaper article the writer reports on how the Titanic, a cruise ship, sank on her first voyage.*

2. **The Sinking of the Titanic, 1912**

On April 10, 1912, the *Titanic*, largest ship afloat, left Southampton, England on her maiden voyage to New York City. The White Star Line had spared no expense in assuring her luxury. A legend even before she sailed, her passengers were a mixture of the world's wealthiest basking in the elegance of first class accommodations and immigrants packed into steerage.

4. She was touted as the safest ship ever built, so safe that she carried only 20 lifeboats – enough to provide accommodation for only half her 2,200 passengers and crew. This discrepancy rested on the belief that since the ship's construction made her "unsinkable", her lifeboats were necessary only to rescue survivors of other sinking ships. Additionally, lifeboats took up valuable deck space.

5. Four days into her journey, at 11:40P.M. on the night of April 14, she struck an iceberg. Her fireman compared the sound of the impact to "tearing of calico*", nothing more." However, the collision was fatal and the icy water soon poured through the ship.

6. It became obvious that many would not find safety in a lifeboat. Each passenger was issued a life jacket but life expectancy would be short when exposed to water four degrees below freezing. As the forward portion of the ship sank deeper, passengers scrambled to the stern. John Thayer witnessed the sinking from a lifeboat. "We could see groups of almost fifteen hundred people still aboard, clinging in clusters or bunches, like swarming bees; only to fall in masses, pairs or singly, as the great after part of the ship, two hundred and fifty feet of it, rose into the sky, till it reached a sixty-five or seventy degree angle." The great ship slowly slid beneath the water two hours and forty minutes after collision.

7. The next morning, the liner *Carpathia* rescued 705 survivors. One thousand five hundred and twenty-two passengers and crew were lost. Subsequent inquiries attributed the high loss in life to an insufficient number of lifeboats and inadequate training in their use.

8. **Questions:**

9. From the second paragraph, give two reasons why the Titanic only carried 20 lifeboats.



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10. In paragraph one, the writer contrasts the wealthy passengers with the poor ones. Pick out two phrases from this paragraph which show this contrast.

11. In paragraph three we are told that when the ship struck the iceberg, the fireman on board compared the sound to "the tearing of calico". Explain what this phrase implies about how serious the collision sounded to the fireman.

12. In paragraph four, an eyewitness in a lifeboat uses a simile to describe the people left on board as the ship sinks.

13. Write down the simile*

Explain the effect this simile has on the reader.

14. -----

