

**Pearson Edexcel**  
International Advanced Level

# English Language

International Advanced Level

Unit 3: Crafting Language (Writing)

Sample assessment material for first teaching  
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Paper Reference

**WEN03**

## Source Booklet

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**PEARSON**

## Topic: The sinking of the Titanic

### The following texts concern the sinking of the Titanic.

The Titanic was a British passenger ship that sank in the North Atlantic Ocean in the early morning of 15 April 1912 after colliding with an iceberg during her first voyage from Southampton, UK, to New York City, US. In her first voyage, she carried 2,224 passengers and crew. The sinking resulted in the loss of more than 1,500 passengers and crew. There were insufficient lifeboat spaces for the number of passengers on board.

The Titanic is famous for the great loss of life on a ship that had been celebrated as a great feat of engineering.

### Text A

**This text by Jennifer Rosenberg is an extract from the education section of the website [www.about.com](http://www.about.com).**

The first two days across the Atlantic, April 12–13, 1912, went smoothly. The crew worked hard and the passengers enjoyed their luxurious surroundings.

Sunday, April 14th 1912 also started out relatively uneventful, but later became deadly. Throughout the day on April 14th, the *Titanic* received a number of wireless messages\* from other ships warning about icebergs along their path. However, for various reasons, not all of these warnings made it to the bridge\*.

Captain Edward J. Smith, unaware of how serious the warnings had become, retired to his room for the night at 9.20pm. At that time, the lookouts had been told to be a bit more diligent in their observations, but the *Titanic* was still steaming full speed ahead.

### Glossary

\* wireless messages – messages received by radio communication

\* *bridge* – a platform from which the ship can be commanded

## Text B

**This text is an excerpt from a letter by Titanic stewardess Mary Sloan, a survivor of the sinking, to her sister.**

My Dear Maggie,

I expect you will be glad to hear from me once more and to know I am still in the land of the living. Did you manage to keep the news from Mother? I hope you got the cablegram all right.

I never lost my head that dreadful night. When she struck at a quarter to twelve and the engines stopped I knew very well something was wrong. Dr. Simpson came and told me the mails were afloat. Things were pretty bad. He brought Miss Marsden and me into his room and gave us a little whiskey and water. He asked me if I was afraid, I replied I was not. He said, "Well spoken like a true Ulster girl\*". He had to hurry away to see if there was anyone hurt. I never saw him again.

I got a lifebelt and I went round my rooms to see if my passengers were all up and if they had lifebelts on. Poor Mr. Andrews came along, I read in his face all I wanted to know. He was a brave man. Mr. Andrews met his fate like a true hero realizing the great danger, and gave up his life to save the women and children of the Titanic. They will find it hard to replace him.



Mary Sloan,  
Titanic Survivor

I got away from all the others and intended to go back to my room for some of my jewelry, but I had no time. I went on deck. I saw Captain Smith getting excited; passengers would not have noticed but I did. I knew then we were soon going. The distress signals were going every second. Then there was a big crush from behind me; at last they realized the danger, so I was pushed into a boat. I believe it was the last one to leave. We had scarcely got clear when she began sinking rapidly.

We were in the boats all night until the Carpathia\* picked us up, about seven in the morning. Mr. Lightoller paid me the compliment of saying I was a sailor.

Your Loving Sister,

Mary

## Glossary

\* Ulster girl – a girl from Northern Ireland

\* Carpathia – one of the ships that came to the rescue of the Titanic

## Text C

**This text is an extract from *The Titanic: From a Lifeboat* by Mrs D H Bishop taken from *The Faber Book of Reportage*.**

We did not begin to understand the situation till we were perhaps a mile or more away from the *Titanic*. Then we could see the rows of lights along the decks begin to slant gradually upward from the bow\*. Very slowly the lines of light began to point downward at a greater and greater angle. The sinking was so slow that you could not perceive the lights of the deck changing their position. The slant seemed to be greater about every quarter of an hour. That was the only difference.

In a couple of hours, though, she began to go down more rapidly. Then the fearful sight began. The people in the ship were just beginning to realise how great their danger was. When the forward part of the ship dropped suddenly at a faster rate, so that the upward slope became marked, there was a sudden rush of passengers on all the decks towards the stern\*. It was like a wave. We could see the great black mass of people in the steerage\* sweeping to the rear part of the boat and breaking through into the upper decks. At the distance of about a mile we could distinguish everything through the night, which was perfectly clear. We could make out the increasing excitement on board the boat as the people, rushing to and fro, caused the deck lights to disappear and reappear as they passed in front of them.

The panic went on, it seemed, for an hour. Then suddenly the ship seemed to shoot up out of the water and stand there perpendicularly. It seemed to us that it stood upright in the water for four full minutes.

Then it began to slide gently downwards. Its speed increased as it went down head first, so that the stern shot down with a rush.

The lights continued to burn till it sank. We could see the people packed densely in the stern till it was gone.

As the ship sank we could hear the screaming a mile away. Gradually it became fainter and fainter and died away. Some of the lifeboats that had room for more might have gone to their rescue, but it would have meant that those who were in the water would have swarmed aboard and sunk her.

### Glossary

\* bow – the forward part of a ship

\* stern – the rear part of a ship

\* steerage – the lowest part of a ship, which provided the cheapest accommodation for passengers

## Text D

**This text, from the archives of *The Guardian* newspaper, is a report on the sinking of the Titanic published on Tuesday 16 April 1912 23.51 GMT, one day after the sinking.**

### **The Titanic is sunk, with great loss of life**

The maiden voyage of the White Star liner Titanic, the largest ship ever launched, has ended in disaster.

The Titanic started her trip from Southampton for New York on Wednesday. Late on Sunday night she struck an iceberg off the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. By wireless telegraphy she sent out signals of distress, and several liners were near enough to catch and respond to the call.

Conflicting news, alarming and reassuring, was current yesterday. Even after midnight it was said all the passengers were safe. All reports, of course, depended on wireless telegrams over great distances.

Late last night the White Star officials in New York announced that a message had been received stating that the Titanic sank at 2.20 yesterday morning after all her passengers and crew had been transferred to another vessel. Later they admitted that many lives had been lost. An unofficial message from Cape Race, Newfoundland, stated that only 675 have been saved out of 2,200 to 2,400 persons on board. This was in some degree confirmed later by White Star officials in Liverpool, who said they were afraid the report was likely to prove true. Assuming that only 675 of the passengers and crew have been saved, and taking the smallest estimate of the number of people on board, the disaster is one of the most awful in the history of navigation, for at least 1,500 lives have been lost.

The stories of the disaster are more than usually conflicting, and it is quite impossible to reconcile the bulk of the earlier and optimistic reports with the sinister news received after midnight. There is unfortunately only too much reason to believe, however, that the latest and worse news is nearest the truth, for none of the later cables contradict each other.

The main hope that remains is that the *Virginian* or *Parisian* may have picked up more of the passengers and crew than those saved by the *Carpathia*. As to this there is no news at the time of writing. A list of the first class passengers (who are reported from New York to have been all saved) appears on page 6.

White Star statement in New York, 9.35pm. Mr Franklin said, "I was confident to-day when I made the statement that the Titanic was unsinkable that the steamship was safe and that there would be no loss of life. The first definite news to the contrary came in the message this evening from Captain Haddock".

9.50pm. The White Star officials now admit that probably only 675 out of 2,200 passengers on board the Titanic have been saved.

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**Source information:**

Titantic introduction: taken from: <http://history1900s.about.com/od/1910s/p/titanic.htm>

Text A: taken from: <https://www.thoughtco.com/sinking-of-the-titanic-1779225>

Text B: taken from <http://www.anusha.com/sloan-ma.htm>

Text C: taken from: 'The Titanic: From a Lifeboat by Mrs D H Bishop', Mrs D H Bishop, Faber Book of Reportage