Vlogging History
WITH MILES

Teacher lesson pack

EPISODE 01 · TITANIC, 1912

AGES	VIDEO	LESSON	COST
7–13	About 12 minutes	About 60 minutes	Free

Learning objectives

- Describe what life on board Titanic was like for different people (first class, third class and crew).
- Explain several reasons why Titanic sank and why so many people died.
- Use evidence from the 1912 inquiries to decide what we know for sure, and what we can't know.

Curriculum fit

- **England KS1–2:** events beyond living memory that are significant nationally or globally; local history (Belfast, Southampton).
- **Northern Ireland KS2:** The World Around Us, change over time.
- **KS3 / US grades 5–8:** using primary sources and weighing evidence.

What's in the pack

- This lesson plan, with timings and pause points
- Case file activity sheet (page 3)
- Answers and vocabulary (page 4)
- Fact sheet, word search and two colouring sheets (separate PDFs)

Handling sensitive content

The episode is honest that around 1,500 people died, but shows nothing graphic. Before watching, you might tell pupils that it is a true story with a sad ending, and that the people Miles meets were real. Afterwards, give space for questions and focus on the rescue, the people, and what changed so ships became safer.

Real history, AI-made visuals

Miles is a fictional character and the pictures are AI reconstructions. The people, places and events are real and checked against the 1912 inquiries. This is a great opportunity to ask: how do we know what happened, and what has to be imagined?

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Lesson plan

ABOUT 60 MINUTES

TIME	STEP	WHAT TO DO
5 min	**Starter**	What do pupils already know about Titanic? Collect ideas on the board in two columns: “I’m sure” and “I think”.
12 min	**Watch**	Play the episode. Suggested pauses: **02:00** Boiler Room 6 (what would it feel like?), **03:40** the missing ice warning, **06:25** the half-empty lifeboats.
15 min	**Case file**	In pairs, pupils complete the Case file sheet: what does the evidence show about each ice warning? Reveal answers (page 4) or use the interactive version on the episode page.
10 min	**Discuss**	Choose two talking points: Why was the iceberg so hard to see? Why were there only 20 lifeboats, and was that legal? How do we know what happened?
8 min	**Quiz**	Pop quiz on the episode page (or read it aloud). Revisit the starter columns: what moved from “I think” to “I’m sure”?
10 min	**Extension**	Word search or colouring for younger pupils; for older pupils, write a short Marconigram home from the ship in 20 words or fewer.

Ages 7–9

- Watch in two halves, pausing at 05:15.
- Do the Case file together as a class, reading each telegram aloud.
- Focus on feelings and people: who would you like to meet, and why?
- Colouring and word search to finish.

Ages 10–13

- Pairs complete the Case file, then justify each answer.
- Sort the evidence: what is proved, what is likely, what is unknown?
- Compare first-class and third-class life using the episode guide.
- Debate: who was most responsible for the missed warning?

Talking points, with guidance

- **Why was the iceberg so hard to see?** Look for: flat calm sea, no moon, no binoculars in the crow’s nest.
- **Why didn’t the Mesaba warning reach the bridge?** Phillips was busy with passengers’ messages; he died, so we can’t ask him. Good answers recognise what we can’t know.
- **Why only 20 lifeboats?** The rules were written for much smaller ships. After Titanic, rules required boats for everyone.
- **How do we know?** Survivors gave evidence to two inquiries in 1912, and you can still read every word.

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Case file: the missing warning

ACTIVITY SHEET

On 14 April 1912, Titanic's wireless room picked up at least six warnings about ice. Read each telegram and its clue (both summarised from the 1912 inquiries). Did it reach the officers? Tick what the evidence shows. If the evidence isn't clear, "uncertain" is a good answer.

SHIP'S TIME	TELEGRAM	WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE SHOW?
9:00 am	**SS Caronia** Icebergs, growlers and field ice reported ahead. *Clue: Captain Smith replied to thank the Caronia. Second Officer Lightoller said he saw it.*	☐ Reached ☐ Not shown ☐ Uncertain
1:42 pm	**SS Baltic** A steamer passed icebergs and large amounts of field ice. *Clue: Smith read it, then handed it to Bruce Ismay, who kept it in his pocket until the evening.*	☐ Reached ☐ Not shown ☐ Uncertain
1:45 pm	**SS Amerika** Two large icebergs, south of the track (for the US Hydrographic Office). *Clue: It was for the US Hydrographic Office, so the operators passed it on to shore. No officer mentioned it.*	☐ Reached ☐ Not shown ☐ Uncertain
7:30 pm	**SS Californian** Three large icebergs five miles south of the Californian. *Clue: Harold Bride said he gave it to an officer on the bridge, but couldn't say which. No officer remembered it.*	☐ Reached ☐ Not shown ☐ Uncertain
9:40 pm	**SS Mesaba** Heavy pack ice and many large icebergs right where Titanic was heading. *Clue: Titanic's wireless room acknowledged it. Phillips was busy with passengers' messages. No surviving officer had seen it.*	☐ Reached ☐ Not shown ☐ Uncertain
About 11:00 pm	**SS Californian** Stopped for the night, surrounded by ice (informal call). *Clue: Phillips told the Californian's operator to keep out because he was busy. The operator went to bed.*	☐ Reached ☐ Not shown ☐ Uncertain

What does the evidence prove?

What can't we know for sure? Why?

Name: _____ **Class:** _____

Answers & vocabulary

FOR THE TEACHER

Pop quiz answers

1	Where was Titanic built?	**Belfast** At the Harland & Wolff shipyard; launched 31 May 1911.
2	How many funnels carried smoke from the boilers?	**Three** The fourth was mostly for ventilation (and some kitchen smoke).
3	Why was the iceberg so hard to see?	**Flat calm sea and no moon** No waves broke at its base, and there was no moonlight.
4	What did Frederick Fleet call to the bridge?	**"Iceberg, right ahead!"** He rang the bell three times and telephoned the bridge at 11:40 pm.
5	About how many lifeboat seats were there?	**1,178** For about 2,200 people, which was legal under the out-of-date 1912 rules.
6	Which ship came to the rescue?	**Carpathia** Her operator Harold Cottam caught the distress call; she arrived around 4:00 am.

Case file answers

9:00 am	SS Caronia	**REACHED** · Captain Smith received it and replied; Lightoller saw it.
1:42 pm	SS Baltic	**REACHED** · Smith read it that afternoon, then gave it to Bruce Ismay; it was only posted in the chart room around 7:15 pm.
1:45 pm	SS Amerika	**NOT SHOWN** · Relayed to shore; no sign an officer saw it.
7:30 pm	SS Californian	**REACHED or UNCERTAIN** · Bride said he took it to an officer but couldn't say which; no officer remembered it. Both answers are fair.
9:40 pm	SS Mesaba	**NOT SHOWN** · The inquiry found it never reached the officers on watch.
About 11:00 pm	SS Californian	**NOT SHOWN** · Phillips was busy working Cape Race and cut him off.

Vocabulary

Bulkhead	A wall inside a ship that divides it into watertight compartments.
Crow's nest	A lookout platform high up the front mast.
Fireman (stoker)	A crew member who shovelled coal into the furnaces.
Trimmer	A crew member who wheeled coal to the firemen and kept the coal piles level.
Marconigram	A message sent by wireless (radio) telegraph, named after Guglielmo Marconi.
Maiden voyage	A ship's very first trip.
Third class (steerage)	The cheapest tickets, mostly for emigrants starting new lives in America.
Inquiry	An official investigation. Britain and the USA both held one in 1912.
Primary source	Evidence from the time, like inquiry testimony, letters or photographs.