In just a few hours, the *Titanic* would be at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean. Some 1,500 people—men, women, and children—would be dead.

Yet at 11:00 that evening, April 14, 1912, there was not the slightest hint of doom in the air. Jack Thayer, 17, had come outside to admire the brilliant sky before going to bed. The stars were shining so brightly that they reminded Jack of diamonds. The ocean was perfectly calm. All was quiet except for the steady hum of the ship’s engines and the whistle of a gentle breeze.

“It was the kind of night,” Jack would later recall, “that made one glad to be alive.”

Indeed, this bright and curious boy from Philadelphia had much to feel glad about. He and his parents were returning from a two-month trip to Europe. Everywhere Jack looked, he saw signs of a fast-changing world—a world made brighter by new electric lights, made faster by motorcars and powerful steam engines, made safer by breakthroughs in science.
Jack Thayer, 17, was on the voyage of a lifetime. But then disaster struck. As the Titanic began to sink, he was separated from his parents and lost almost all hope for survival.

WATER

BY LAUREN TARSHIS

The Titanic was a symbol of all of these changes—the biggest, most elegant, most technologically advanced ship ever built. How lucky Jack felt to be on its first transatlantic voyage.

Even the Thayers, a family of great wealth, were dazzled by the ship’s grandeur. Their large first-class cabins were as fancy as rooms in the finest hotels. There was a swimming pool with heated ocean water and an exercise room staffed with a professional trainer. Delicious meals were served on dishes etched with gold.

Jack, with his dapper wool suits and worldly confidence, mingled easily with the tycoons he met in the first-class lounge and dining rooms. He especially enjoyed his conversations with Thomas Andrews, the designer of the Titanic. Andrews was modest. But he couldn’t deny that the Titanic’s maiden voyage was a magnificent success. In three days, the ship was due to arrive in New York to great fanfare.
“Unsinkable”

It was almost 11:30 when Jack went back to his cabin, which was next to his parents’ suite. He called good night to his mother and father. Just as he was about to get into bed, he swayed slightly. He realized the ship had veered to the left—“as though she had been gently pushed,” he would later say.

The engines stopped, and for a moment, there was a quiet that was “startling and disturbing.”

Then Jack heard muffled voices and running footsteps. He threw on his overcoat and slippers, told his parents he was going to see what was happening, and rushed outside. Soon he was joined by a crowd of first-class passengers, including his father. Jack wasn’t worried. Indeed, there was a mood of adventure, especially after news spread that the ship had struck an iceberg. The men in the crowd joked and puffed on cigars as they craned their necks and squinted into the dark night. They all wanted to see the object that had dared interrupt the voyage of the great Titanic.

“Nobody yet thought of any serious trouble,” Jack would recall. “The ship was unsinkable.”

That’s certainly what most people believed: that the Titanic’s state-of-the-art safety features—16 watertight compartments to contain flooding—would keep the ship afloat no matter what. So it was with no sense of urgency that Jack and his father roamed the ship, trying to find out when they would again be under way.

But then Jack and his father saw Andrews standing with several of the ship’s officers. Andrews’s grave expression sent a stab of fear through Jack’s heart. If anyone understood the Titanic’s true condition, it was the man who knew the ship inside and out.

And the truth was terrifying. The iceberg’s jagged fingers had clawed through the steel hull. Water was gushing into the ship’s lower levels. “The Titanic will sink,” Andrews said. “We have one hour.”

That, though, was only half of the horrifying story. As Jack would soon learn, the Titanic had only 20 lifeboats, enough for about
half of the passengers and crew members.

The Titanic was 800 miles from New York. The temperature of the ocean was 28° Fahrenheit. Immersed in water that cold, a human body goes into shock almost immediately. The heart slows. The skin begins to freeze. Death comes within 80 minutes.

For those who couldn’t escape by lifeboat, there was almost no hope of survival.

**Lost in the Crowd**

Jack put on a warm wool suit and a sweater. He tied on his life preserver and slipped into his overcoat, then he rushed back up to the deck with his parents. What they found was confusion and deafening noise—people shouting, distress rockets being fired into the air. Jack was with his parents and his mother’s maid, Margaret Fleming. They were soon joined by a young man named Milton Long, whom Jack had befriended at dinner earlier that night. The group made their way through the ship, hoping to find a lifeboat.

Suddenly, they were in the middle of a surging crowd of panicked passengers. To Jack’s horror, he and Milton were separated from his parents and Margaret. He searched desperately but could not find them. He became convinced that they had all boarded a lifeboat, leaving him behind. And there were no lifeboats left.

Jack and Milton were on their own.

 Amid the noise and panic, the screams and shouts and explosions, Jack and Milton tried to bolster each other’s courage as the ship continued to sink. “I sincerely pitied myself,” Jack said, “but we did not give up hope.”

They determined that their best chance for survival was to wait until the ship was low enough in the water that they could jump in without injuring themselves.

That moment came at about 2:15 a.m. The ship lurched forward, its bow plunging deeper into the black waters of the Atlantic. Jack and Milton shook hands and wished each other luck.

Milton went first, climbing over the railing and sliding down the side of the ship. Jack would never see him again.

Jack threw off his overcoat and, he later said, “with a push of my arms and hands, jumped into the water as far out from the ship as I could. . . . Down, down I went, spinning in all directions.”

He struggled to the surface, gasping from the cold, his lungs near to bursting. He had been floating for only a few minutes when one of the ship’s enormous funnels broke free. In a shower of sparks and black smoke, it crashed into the water just 20 feet from Jack. The suction pulled him under the water once again. This time he barely made it back up.
But as he surfaced, his hand hit something—an overturned lifeboat. Four men were balancing on its flat bottom. One of them helped Jack up. From there, they watched the Titanic in its final agonizing moments—the stern rising high into the sky, hundreds of people dropping into the sea, the lights finally going out.

Then, in a moment of eerie quiet, the ship disappeared into the sea.

“A Wailing Chant”

The silence was broken by the first frantic cries for help. People—hundreds of them—were scattered everywhere in the water, kept afloat by their life vests. The individual cries became “a continuous wailing chant” of terror and pain and desperation, Jack said.

Over the next few minutes, he and the others on the lifeboat managed to pull 24 men out of the water alive. The group was “packed like sardines” on the boat, their arms and legs tangled together. Freezing waves washed over them. Nobody moved for fear of slipping into the water.

Little by little, the terrible wailing faded.

Floating in the silent blackness, numb with cold and fear, Jack waited for death.

But then came a light—at 4:30 a.m., a ship called the Carpathia broke through the darkness. Its captain had received the Titanic’s distress call and rushed his ship through the icy waters. Among the first faces Jack saw when he boarded the rescue ship was his mother’s. Margaret was also aboard.

The joy of their reunion was overwhelming—but so was the shock when Jack’s mother asked a simple question.

“Where is your father?”

As it turned out, Mr. Thayer had not boarded a lifeboat.

“Of course, I should have known that he would never have left without me,” Jack later said.

The Carpathia, carrying the Titanic’s 705 grief-stricken survivors, docked in New York City on April 18 and was greeted by a crowd of 30,000 people. Jack and his mother then returned to Philadelphia.

Jack went on to marry, have two sons, and attain a powerful position at the University of Pennsylvania. Years later, he wrote his own account of the sinking of the Titanic, dedicated to his father’s memory.

Today, more than 100 years after the ship’s sinking, stories of its survivors still fascinate and inspire. In this way, the mighty ship sails on.
HISTORY POEM CONTEST!

Poet Irene Latham turned the story of the Titanic into a beautiful poem. Let her poem inspire you to write your own poem and enter our contest!

Titanic Remembers, April 16, 1912

By Irene Latham

My maiden voyage interrupted by an iceberg clawing at my hull.

And still my engines chugged, unsinkable unsinkable unsinkable.

Alas, my armor could not hold: I tipped like a top and dipped ever so slowly lower and lower into the icy Atlantic.

Oh, my passengers and crew, how I failed you! Not enough lifeboats, not enough time for rescue. In the end, what could I do but sink and hide?

It’s true a ship cannot cry, but every day I mourn the many lives lost that bleakest blackest night.

Titanic Remembers, April 16, 1912

By Irene Latham

Pick an exciting event from history and turn the story into a poem. Your poem must include at least five factual details about the event. Send entries to “Storyworks History Poem Contest” by November 15, 2013. Five winners will receive a Storyworks prize. See page 2 for details.
STEP-BY-STEP LESSON PLAN

Preparing to Read

1 Watch a video (10 minutes, activity sheet available online)
Distribute our video questions and quickly preview them with the class. Show our "Storyworks Behind the Scenes" video, in which Lauren Tarshis discusses researching and writing this article. Have students pair up to answer the video questions.

2 Preview vocabulary (5 minutes, activity sheet available online)
Project or distribute our vocabulary activity sheet, which includes a glossary of the article’s highlighted words. Preview words and definitions with students. After they have read the article, they should complete part 2 of the activity, which will reinforce vocabulary. Highlighted words: grandeur, etched, dapper, veered, urgency, immersed, desperately, bolster, agonizing

3 Set a purpose for reading: Author’s craft (5 minutes)
Invite a student to read aloud the Up Close box for the class. Have students peruse the photos and captions that accompany the article and poem. Ask them what historical event the pieces are about. What do they already know about it?

Reading the Article

4 Have students read the article in small groups, pausing at the end of each section to share comments or questions. Then instruct groups to reread sections and discuss the close-reading questions. Afterward, they should answer the critical-thinking question in class or as homework.

QUESTIONS (activity sheet available online)

Close Reading (during second read, 15 minutes)

• What do you learn from the opening line of the article? Why do you think the author starts this way? (author’s craft) You learn that the Titanic is going to sink and that this article will deal with the ship’s last few hours. The author opens this way to create suspense and grab the reader’s interest.

• Which details in the third paragraph help you understand what the evening of April 14, 1912, was like? (text evidence) Details about what Jack Thayer saw, felt, and heard show that the evening was calm and bright, giving no cause for worry. He saw the “brilliant sky” and stars like “diamonds.” The ocean was “perfectly calm” and there was a “gentle breeze.” The only noise was “the steady hum of the ship’s engines.”

• What was Jack like? How do you know? (text evidence) Jack was a wealthy, confident, and sociable 17-year-old. He was returning from a two-month trip to Europe; his family had “great wealth”; he wore stylish suits and spoke confidently with wealthy adults and the ship’s designer in first-class areas.

• What was Jack’s first reaction to the trouble aboard the Titanic? What made him change his mind? (key detail) At first he thought the trouble was a fun adventure. He changed his mind when he saw the ship’s designer, who knew that the boat would sink.

• In the section “Lost in the Crowd,” what made Jack decide to jump into the water? What happened to Milton? (inference) Having been separated from his parents, Jack assumed that they had already boarded a lifeboat and that...
jumping when the ship sank close to the water was his best chance for survival. You can infer that Milton died.

- In “A Wailing Chant,” what can you infer from the sentence “Little by little, the terrible wailing faded”? (inference) People were gradually dying in the freezing water.

- Why was Jack’s reunion with his mother both joyful and shocking? (key detail) Jack was joyful to find his mother alive but shocked to learn that his father had died.

- Who narrates the poem “Titanic Remembers”? What emotions does the narrator show? (point of view) The Titanic narrates the poem. It shows grief and guilt that it failed its passengers and many died.

Critical Thinking (after reading, 10 minutes)
- Quotes from Jack Thayer, looking back on the tragedy, are woven throughout the article. Find and reread these quotes. Why do you think the author included them? (author's craft) The author probably included them to help readers understand what Jack was thinking and experiencing minute by minute as the tragedy unfolded. The quotes also make the story more personal.

Vocabulary & Core Skills Workout
(activity sheets available online; time will vary)
7 Direct students to return to the vocabulary activity you distributed before reading, and ask them to complete the second part. You will also find our Core Skills Workout online; this includes activities on nonfiction text features, text evidence, summarizing, and making inferences. More-scaffolded and less-scaffolded versions are available for some activities.

Common Core State Standards
This article and lesson support the following CCR anchor standards: R.1, R.3, R.4, R.9, R.10, W.2, W.3, W.4, W.9, SL.1, L.4, L.5, L.6
Go online to find specific grade-level correlations for grades 3 through 6.

ONLINE RESOURCES
Video: Behind the Scenes: Author’s Craft—Author Lauren Tarshis discusses her article.

Differentiation: Lower-Lexile version of this article; audio recordings of on-level and lower-Lexile articles

Activities to print or project:
- Video Questions
- Vocabulary in Context
- Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions
- Author’s Craft
- Poet’s Craft
- Core Skills Workout (4 activities)
- Comprehension Quiz—Interactive or Printable

www.scholastic.com/storyworks
Find the Evidence

This month’s nonfiction article “Into the Dark Water” tells the story of how one boy survived the sinking of the Titanic. In this activity, you’ll explore how details in the article help you understand the big picture of what happened during this terrible event.

Directions: Read each question below carefully. Some will ask you to select text evidence—or specific details in the story—to support a statement. Others will ask you to respond in your own words, supporting your ideas with text evidence.

1. When the Titanic first encountered trouble, Jack and the other passengers felt certain they were safe. Circle the letter of the piece of text evidence that best demonstrates that they were not worried:
   a. “The Titanic’s maiden voyage was a magnificent success.”
   b. “There was a quiet that was ‘startling and disturbing.’”
   c. “Indeed, there was a mood of adventure.”
   d. “Jack heard muffled voices and running footsteps.”

2. In your own words, describe why the Titanic was said to be “unsinkable.” Use specific evidence from pages 4–6 of the text.

   ______________________________________________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________________________________

3. Circle the letter for the two pieces of evidence that best explain the terrible situation all of the passengers were in once the ship began to sink:
   a. “Andrews’s grave expression sent a stab of fear through Jack’s heart” and “Water was gushing into the ship’s lower levels.”
   b. “Nobody yet thought of any serious trouble” and “The ship was unsinkable.”
   c. “Jack put on a warm wool suit and a sweater” and “Jack and Milton were on their own.”
   d. “The Titanic had only 20 lifeboats” and “The temperature of the ocean was 28° Fahrenheit.”

Continued on next page >
Find the Evidence, cont’d.

4. What does Jack’s quote “I sincerely pitied myself, but we did not give up hope” demonstrate about him?
   a. Jack had the will to survive.
   b. Jack was certain that he would die that night.
   c. Jack wished that his parents had stayed with him.
   d. Jack was ready to give up.

5. How does the author describe the final “agonizing” moments of the Titanic?
   a. “Nobody moved for fear of slipping into the water.”
   b. “The stern rising high into the sky, hundreds of people dropping into the sea, the lights finally going out.”
   c. “Of course, I should have known that he would never have left without me.”
   d. “Over the next few minutes, he and the others on the lifeboat managed to pull 24 men out of the water alive.”

6. Identify three pieces of evidence from the section “A Wailing Chant” that describe what passengers experienced from the time the Titanic sank to the moment the Carpathia arrived.
   1. __________________________________________________________________________________________________________
   2. __________________________________________________________________________________________________________
   3. __________________________________________________________________________________________________________

7. What conclusion could you draw from the article?
   a. Only people who could swim were able to survive the night.
   b. Mrs. Thayer was angry with Jack for leaving his father.
   c. Ships are unsafe methods of travel and transportation.
   d. The tragedy might not have been as bad if the ship had had enough lifeboats.

8. The author explains that “more than 100 years after the ship’s sinking, stories of survivors still fascinate and inspire.” Explain why this story is still interesting. Use examples from the article.
   __________________________________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________________________________

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Exciting Writing

What makes “Into the Dark Water” so thrilling to read? How does it grip your attention? The author, Lauren Tarshis, uses many writing techniques to make the article exciting. In this activity, you’ll take a close look at what they are.

We put some sentences from the article through our Drastically Dullifying Machine. Look what happened:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The stars were shining so brightly that they reminded Jack of diamonds.” (p. 4)</td>
<td>Jack thought the stars were very bright.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Their large first-class cabins were as fancy as rooms in the finest hotels.” (p. 5)</td>
<td>Their large cabins were really fancy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Andrews’s grave expression sent a stab of fear through Jack’s heart.” (p. 6)</td>
<td>Jack became scared when he saw the look on Andrews’s face.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. How do the sentences on the left help you imagine what it was like to be on the Titanic? How do they differ from the sentences on the right?

_______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Here are more parts of the article that went through the machine:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Everywhere Jack looked, he saw signs of a fast-changing world—a world made brighter by new electric lights, made faster by motorcars and powerful steam engines, made safer by breakthroughs in science.” (p. 4)</td>
<td>Jack saw progress all around him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Titanic was 800 miles from New York. The temperature of the ocean was 28° Fahrenheit. Immersed in water that cold, a human body goes into shock almost immediately. The heart slows. The skin begins to freeze. Death comes within 80 minutes.” “For those who couldn’t escape by lifeboat, there was almost no hope of survival.” (p. 7)</td>
<td>When the Titanic began to sink, people faced great danger. If they couldn’t escape by lifeboat, they had almost no hope of survival.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. What do the passages on the left include that the passages on the right do not?

_______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

3. How does this make the passages on the left more interesting?

_______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Continued on next page >
**Personification** is a tool authors sometimes use to enhance their writing. Personification is when an author describes or talks about a nonhuman object or animal as if it were human. We put the article through the Personification Identification Machine. This is what it found:

“They all wanted to see the object that had dared interrupt the voyage of the great Titanic.” (p. 6)

“The iceberg’s jagged fingers had clawed through the steel hull.” (p. 6)

4. What object is being personified, or given human qualities, in these sentences? How does this object seem human in each sentence?

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

**Suspense** is an anxious or uncertain feeling caused by not knowing what will happen. We know what will happen to the *Titanic* from the very first sentence—and from history. But as the tragedy unfolds, Jack doesn’t know what will happen to the ship, his family, or himself. Lauren tells the story in a way that makes us feel Jack’s uncertainty.

Look at these sentences that our Suspense Detection Machine found:

“The engines stopped, and for a moment, there was a quiet that was ‘startling and disturbing.’” (p. 6)

“‘The Titanic will sink,’ Andrews said. ‘We have one hour.’” (p. 6)

“Jack and Milton were on their own.” (p. 7)

5. Find two more sentences that create suspense. Write them below, along with their page numbers.

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

**Your turn!** Use at least two of the writing techniques you examined here to write an exciting paragraph about one of these topics:

- the most unusual or scariest thing that ever happened to you during recess
- a time you were lost someplace
- an encounter with an animal
- an exciting topic of your choice