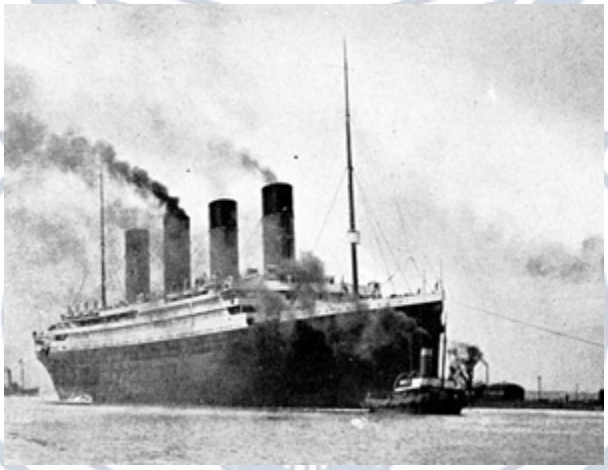
SPEC Titanic: Sinking of the Unsinkable

Thomas Jefferson Model United Nations Conference

TechMUN XXXII



High School Specialized Committee

Co-Chairs: Avni Patel & Pranav Kalidindi

Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology

April 11th-12th, 2025

Esteemed Delegates,

Welcome to the SPEC Titanic: The Sinking of the Unsinkable at TechMUN XXVI this April! We're excited for a weekend of lively debate. This committee will be centered on the two subtopics for the Titanic, as explained below in the background guide. Delegates will collaborate to write working papers that address the issues faced on the Titanic, including updates presented by the committee.

In regards to the types of delegates we're looking for, we want individuals who can bring creativity to the committee and make a strong impact, both in their speeches and in their backroom. Leadership matters, but we are looking for leaders who focus on collaboration and can uniquely bend others' ideas together. Please take this conference as an opportunity to think big - we are looking for unconventional approaches to large issues that highlight efficiency and practicality. Don't be afraid to take calculated risks and explore new approaches. Lastly, no forms of harassment, bullying, or plagiarism will be tolerated.

No matter your background or experience level, our goal is to make sure TechMUN XXXII is a conference you'll remember. If you have any questions don't hesitate to contact us at titanictechmun2025@gmail.com. Let's make this conference a memorable experience filled with teamwork and fun!

Best regards,

Avni Patel and Pranav Kalidindi

SPEC Titanic: The Sinking of the Unsinkable

Introduction of the Titanic

The RMS Titanic, launched on May 31, 1911, by the White Star Line, was a marvel of early 20th-century engineering and a symbol of human ambition. Billed as "unsinkable" due to its advanced design, including watertight compartments and a double-bottomed hull, the Titanic was the largest and most luxurious passenger ship of its time, measuring 882 feet in length and capable of carrying over 2,200 passengers and crew. On April 10, 1912, it embarked on its maiden voyage from Southampton, England, to New York City, carrying a mix of wealthy elites, middle-class travelers, and immigrants seeking new lives in America. The ship's opulent first-class accommodations, state-of-the-art amenities, and promise of speed captivated the public, cementing its status as an icon of the Gilded Age.

Tragically, the Titanic's maiden voyage ended in disaster on the night of April 14, 1912. At 11:40 p.m., while steaming through the North Atlantic at nearly 22 knots, the ship collided with an iceberg approximately 400 miles south of Newfoundland. The iceberg tore through the hull, compromising five of the ship's watertight compartments, more than the design could handle. Despite initial underestimations of the damage by Captain Edward J. Smith and naval architect Thomas Andrews, the Titanic began to sink, and the crew launched a frantic evacuation. With only 20 lifeboats—enough for about 1,178 people, far fewer than the 2,224 aboard—passengers faced dire odds. The "women and children first" policy was inconsistently applied, and class disparities exacerbated the crisis, as first-class passengers had better access to lifeboats while many in second and third class struggled with locked gates and poor communication.

By 2:20 a.m. on April 15, 1912, the Titanic had broken apart and slipped beneath the icy waters, leaving approximately 1,500 people to perish in the freezing North Atlantic, where

temperatures hovered around 28°F (-2°C). The RMS Carpathia, responding to distress calls, arrived over four hours later, rescuing 705 survivors. The disaster shocked the world, exposing critical flaws in maritime safety, including inadequate lifeboat provisions, overconfidence in technology, and insufficient iceberg warnings. Public outrage and subsequent inquiries in the U.S. and Britain led to sweeping reforms, such as the establishment of the International Ice Patrol and the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) in 1914.

The flaws causing the Titanic were avoidable, as the ship line prioritized aesthetics over safety measures. Additionally, the ship's leadership did not respond to the threats of an iceberg appropriately, causing the ultimate reason for the ship's sinking.The sinking of the Titanic remains a poignant symbol of human hubris and vulnerability, immortalized in history, literature, and film. It serves as a reminder of the importance of safety, preparedness, and humility in the face of nature’s power, ensuring its legacy endures as both a tragedy and a catalyst for change.

Topic A: Improving Safety Measures and Titanic's Technical Components

Background:

The Titanic was hailed as the pinnacle of modern engineering, with its design embodying confidence in technological advancement. Its construction featured watertight compartments intended to contain flooding, reinforcing the widespread belief that it was "unsinkable." However, this overconfidence led to critical oversights in emergency preparedness. The ship's crew was inadequately trained for crisis management, and the lack of effective protocols resulted in confusion and panic when disaster struck. This failure, combined with structural limitations, played a significant role in the tragedy that unfolded.

Current Situation:

As the Titanic sails through the North Atlantic, concerns about its safety measures and technical capabilities are beginning to emerge. The ship is traveling at high speeds despite known iceberg risks, and visibility conditions have made navigation increasingly difficult. In fact, the ship was traveling at nearly 22 knots, a speed that was far too fast for the icy waters they were navigating. The Titanic was equipped with a crow's nest—an elevated post from which lookouts would observe the horizon for icebergs, other ships, or potential hazards. Lookouts are stationed in the crow's nest but lack binoculars, limiting their ability to detect hazards in time. The crew remains largely unprepared for emergencies, operating under the assumption that disaster is unlikely. Additionally, while the ship's watertight compartments are a key feature, their limitations are not fully understood, leaving the vessel vulnerable in the event of significant damage.

Possible Solutions:

To prevent disaster, several areas must be addressed to improve the Titanic's safety. The crew was largely untrained in crisis management, and as a result, when disaster struck, they were unsure how to respond effectively. In a situation where quick thinking and decisive action were critical, the crew's lack of preparation contributed to confusion and panic, which ultimately worsened the situation. Communication protocols among crew members should be re-evaluated to ensure swift responses in emergency situations. Training and preparedness drills could help establish a more effective evacuation process. The ship's navigation and iceberg detection methods may also require improvement, particularly in enhancing visibility for lookouts. On the night of the collision, foggy weather conditions severely limited the lookouts' ability to spot dangers in time. Additionally, a reassessment of the Titanic's structural integrity and emergency equipment, such as lifeboat capacity and placement, may be necessary to ensure the safety of all passengers on board.

Questions to Consider:

- How can we properly prepare the ship's crew to handle a situation like this?
- How can we ensure no corruption in a time of crisis from those in power looking to survive?
- What measures can we implement that will decrease the likelihood of the ship sinking in the first place?
- How can the committee address the freezing temperatures (around 28°F or -2°C) and rough seas in the North Atlantic to protect survivors in lifeboats, potentially by improving insulation, heat sources, or clothing distribution on board?

- What improvements can be made to iceberg detection systems, such as binoculars for lookouts or enhanced radar technology, to prevent future collisions, even during this crisis?

Helpful Links:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wX6oR2pdZ50
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-ZFqjrMdSk

Works Cited:

"Lessons from the Titanic Disaster," *GG Archives*, https://www.ggarchives.com/OceanTravel/Titanic/12-Aftermath/LessonsFromTheDisaster.html (accessed March 15, 2025).

"Titanic's Innovation," *Ultimate Titanic*, https://ultimatetitanic.com/titanics-safety-features/ (accessed March 15, 2025).

Wikipedia contributors, "Changes in safety practices after the sinking of the Titanic," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Changes_in_safety_practices_after_the_sinking_of_the_Titanic (accessed March 15, 2025).

Topic B: Ensuring Class Equality and Titanic's Public Reputation

Background:

The Titanic was more than just a ship; it was a representation of early 20th-century class divisions, where wealth dictated the quality of life—and, as the disaster would reveal, the chances of survival. Marketed as a symbol of luxury and innovation, the Titanic was designed to cater to the elite while still accommodating lower-class passengers, particularly immigrants seeking a new life in America. However, this grand image came at the cost of fairness and safety. The White Star Line prioritized prestige over practicality, promoting the ship as unsinkable and failing to implement sufficient safety measures. When tragedy struck, these class-based disparities became glaringly evident, tarnishing the company's reputation and exposing the injustices ingrained in society.

Current Situation:

As the Titanic continues its maiden voyage, the rigid social hierarchy aboard the ship remains apparent. First-class passengers enjoy opulent amenities, while third-class passengers are confined to crowded quarters with limited access to the rest of the ship. In the event of an emergency, these class divisions pose a serious risk, as third-class passengers may face greater difficulty in reaching lifeboats due to locked gates and poor communication. Additionally, the ship's safety measures are insufficient for all passengers, with lifeboats capable of accommodating only a fraction of those on board. Meanwhile, the public perception of the Titanic remains overwhelmingly positive, with most passengers and observers believing in the ship's invincibility. However, should a disaster occur, the White Star Line's failure to prioritize safety over prestige could lead to severe backlash.

Possible Solutions:

To ensure fairness and improve the Titanic's public reputation, immediate actions must be taken. Communication barriers between crew members and passengers of all classes should be eliminated to ensure equal access to emergency information. Lifeboat protocols must be reassessed to guarantee fair distribution among all passengers, regardless of social standing. Additionally, the White Star Line should consider implementing more transparent safety measures, reinforcing the ship's preparedness rather than relying on its image of invincibility. By addressing these issues proactively, both the safety of passengers and the reputation of the Titanic can be preserved, preventing a tragedy that would expose the deep inequalities aboard the ship.

Questions to Consider:

- How can we improve the conditions on the Titanic to lessen the class inequality without outraging the first-class passengers?
- How can we adjust our advertisement of the Titanic to decrease the potential for spoiling the Titanic's reputation?
- What are key strategies to reduce the liabilities White Star Line will face?
- Should the traditional "women and children first" policy be adjusted to prioritize survival over class status?

Helpful Links:

- https://socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/worldhistory/titanic_passengers.htm#:~:text=First%2Dclass%20passengers%20included%20wealthy,in%20the%20U.S.%20or%20Canada
- https://reagan.blogs.archives.gov/2020/05/29/the-titanic-and-the-passengers-who-boarded-it-research-and-assignment-guide/

Works Cited:

"Class and Gender in Shaping the Memory of the Titanic Disaster Since 1912," *Encyclopedia Titanica*, https://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/class-gender-titanic-disaster-1912~part-2.html (accessed March 15, 2025).

Andrea Bijan, "Titanic and the People on Board: A Look at the Media Coverage of the Passengers After the Sinking," *Encyclopedia Titanica*, https://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/titanic-people-media-coverage-passengers-sinking.html (accessed March 15, 2025).

"Social Class and Survival on the S.S. Titanic," *Encyclopedia Titanica*, https://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/social-class-and-survival-on-the-ss-titanic.html (accessed March 15, 2025).

Titanic: The Sinking of the Unsinkable Dossier

Thomas Andrews Naval architect and managing director of Harland & Wolff shipyard that built the Titanic. He possesses complete technical knowledge of the ship's design, limitations of the watertight compartment system, and lifeboat capacity issues. Andrews is well-respected by the crew and White Star Line leadership for his engineering expertise.

Bruce Ismay Chairman and managing director of the White Star Line who prioritizes the Titanic's luxury image and reputation. He advocates for maintaining high speeds during the voyage and has significant influence over Captain Smith and operational decisions. Ismay is accompanied by his assistant engineer and primarily concerned with commercial success.

William Murdoch First Officer on the Titanic responsible for the bridge during night hours with direct control over navigation and emergency responses. He's an experienced naval officer with authority to order course changes and lifeboats, commanding respect from lower-ranking officers. Murdoch has access to all communication systems and navigational equipment.

Charles Lightoller Second Officer with significant maritime experience and strong adherence to naval protocol. He's responsible for safety drills and has specific knowledge of lifeboat operations and emergency procedures. Lightoller is respected by crew for his professional demeanor and strict following of maritime regulations.

Henry Wilde Chief Officer who recently joined from RMS Olympic to oversee deck operations and lifeboat assignments. He has authority over junior officers and extensive experience in passenger ship management and crisis coordination. Wilde is knowledgeable about maritime regulations and safety procedures.

Harold Lowe Fifth Officer with duties in navigation and passenger safety who carries a personal revolver for emergency situations. He has access to navigational instruments and is responsible for lifeboat inspections. Though young, Lowe is skilled in maritime operations and takes his responsibilities seriously.

Thomas Hardy Chief Engineer responsible for the Titanic's mechanical systems including power, propulsion, and utilities. He commands a large team in the engine room and controls the ship's speed and power distribution. Hardy understands the ship's structural vulnerabilities and how long systems can remain operational during emergencies.

Frederick Fleet Lookout stationed in the crow's nest responsible for spotting icebergs and other hazards. He lacks proper equipment (binoculars) for effective night observation and is limited by poor visibility conditions. Fleet serves as the first line of defense in hazard identification despite inadequate training.

Frederick Barrett Lead Stoker in Boiler Room 6 with firsthand knowledge of the ship's power systems. He's physically strong with access to boiler rooms and understands how hull damage might affect engine operations. Barrett works in harsh conditions with limited communication to upper decks.

Alfred Crawford First-Class Bedroom Steward with access to passenger cabins and service areas throughout the ship. He's knowledgeable about passenger locations and carries master keys to rooms. Crawford is familiar with the layout of first-class accommodations and serves as a direct link to wealthy passengers.

Atrim Smith Ship's janitor with access to most areas of the vessel, including service corridors and maintenance spaces. He's well-liked by crew members across departments and observant of ship operations. Smith has access to cleaning supplies and maintenance tools that might prove useful in emergencies.

John Collins Coal Trimmer with physically demanding responsibilities in the lower decks. He has formed close relationships with other engine room workers and understands coal management for maintaining power. Collins has limited communication with upper decks but strong connections with working-class crew.

Felix Dawson Experienced deckhand with decades of maritime experience and practical knowledge about previous shipwrecks. He has voiced concerns about current sailing practices and is familiar with North Atlantic conditions and iceberg threats. Dawson is respected by younger crew members for his experience.

Hilde Demai Stewardess responsible for passengers traveling with pets who has access to multiple cabin areas. She's knowledgeable about passenger movements and carries keys to various sections of the vessel. Demai is well-liked by first-class passengers for her attentive service and care for animals.

Wallace Hartley Bandleader and violinist in charge of ship entertainment with influence over passenger morale. He has access to first-class and second-class common areas and is well-known to passengers. Hartley's musical leadership could potentially help maintain calm during crisis situations.

Chief Baker Charles Joughin Head baker with access to the ship's food supplies, kitchens, and alcohol stores. He manages a team of kitchen staff and oversees food preparation for all passenger classes. Joughin maintains morale through food service quality and has knowledge of provisioning during emergencies.

John Jacob Astor IV Wealthiest passenger aboard with immense financial influence and connections to banking and industry. He's traveling with his young pregnant wife and has access

to ship officers and White Star Line management. Astor is a highly visible public figure whose actions influence other passengers.

Benjamin Guggenheim American industrialist from an influential business family with extensive connections in manufacturing and mining. He commands respect from crew and other first-class passengers due to his wealth and status. Guggenheim is familiar with shipping industries and has significant financial resources at his disposal.

Colonel Archibald Butt Military aide to President Taft with diplomatic experience and crisis management skills. He commands natural authority and is well-connected to U.S. government officials. Butt's military background makes him a potential leader and mediator between different interest groups during emergencies.

Margaret "Molly" Brown Wealthy socialite with progressive views on class and gender who is outspoken in advocating for social reform. She's skilled at persuasion and not afraid to challenge authority or traditional practices. Brown has connections to American press and political reformers that give her unique influence.

Sir Cosmo Duff-Gordon Scottish baronet with aristocratic connections and influence in British high society. He has personal wealth and business connections that give him authority among passengers. Duff-Gordon's experience in sporting organizations and management makes him accustomed to leadership roles.

Dorothy Gibson American actress and celebrity with public recognition and influence over media perception. She has access to first-class amenities and information networks as a prominent passenger. Gibson's performing background gives her the ability to command attention in social situations.

Asprid Olita First-class passenger with a reputation for arrogance who was recently involved in a public scandal. He's concerned with rehabilitating his image during this high-profile voyage. Olita's volatile temperament under pressure makes him unpredictable during tense situations.

Edgar Willoughby Reclusive novelist who observes and documents passenger activities and conversations. He has access to first-class areas while remaining relatively unnoticed among the social elite. Willoughby's keen eye for detail makes him aware of important discussions that others might miss.

Genevieve Laurent French fashion designer with European business connections and knowledge of social dynamics. She's well-connected among elite passengers and observant of status indicators aboard the ship. Laurent's position bridges different nationalities in the first-class social sphere.

Isa Maade Young companion to a wealthy older businessman with access to first-class information. Her charming personality helps in social situations and she's observant of dynamics among wealthy passengers. Maade navigates complex relationships between personal interests and her companion's status.

Yatsu Marajiglesh Renowned food connoisseur testing the ship's gourmet meals with relationships among both passengers and kitchen crew. He has access to food preparation areas and influence over kitchen staff. Marajiglesh serves as a connection between service workers and wealthy passengers through his culinary expertise.

Lawrence Beesley Science teacher with interest in ship mechanics and an analytical mind capable of assessing situations logically. He has access to second-class libraries and information resources about the ship. Beesley's educational background gives him a respected voice in technical discussions.

Eva Hart Seven-year-old traveling with parents to start a new life in Canada. Her father is a builder with practical knowledge of construction and family concerns. The Hart family represents hopeful emigrants seeking opportunity in America through the Titanic's promise of safe passage.

Joseph Philippe Lemercier Laroche Haitian engineer with technical skills and railroad experience, one of few passengers of African descent. He's multilingual with connections to French and Haitian communities aboard. Laroche faces racial discrimination while traveling with his family, prioritizing their safety above all.

Miriam Holloway Widowed schoolteacher with educational background and independent thinking who is traveling to visit her sister. She's knowledgeable about literature and current events affecting the voyage. Holloway represents educated women traveling independently in an era of changing gender roles.

Hassan Al-Fayed Egyptian merchant with international business connections and knowledge of trade routes. He's multilingual with the ability to communicate across cultural barriers aboard the ship. Al-Fayed balances traditional values with interest in Western practices during his business journey.

Odysseus Paggard Comic book enthusiast with creative problem-solving skills and artistic abilities. He's traveling with art supplies that could prove useful for communication during emergencies. Paggard's unconventional thinking offers fresh perspectives on the ship's challenges and social dynamics.

Daniel Buckley Irish emigrant with resourcefulness and quick thinking who is determined to reach America. He's familiar with tight quarters and challenging conditions in steerage. Buckley

has built community among other Irish passengers and demonstrates creative problem-solving in difficult situations.

Luca Moretti Italian musician traveling with minimal possessions and his violin to seek fame in America. He entertains third-class passengers and builds morale through music. Moretti connects with immigrant communities in steerage and represents artistic contributions despite limited resources.

Patrick "Paddy" O'Sullivan Irish boxer with physical strength and an imposing presence among third-class passengers. He's a known storyteller with potential for leadership in steerage. O'Sullivan has a quick temper but protective instincts toward vulnerable passengers during challenging situations.

Rotito Albeletti Italian immigrant working as kitchen assistant with access to food supplies and preparation areas. He's fleeing personal troubles while utilizing his cooking skills aboard ship. Albeletti connects steerage passengers with kitchen information and understands food resources available.

Shoya Wendapash Survival expert from recent expedition research and advocate for class equality aboard ship. She has strong public speaking abilities and can organize group action among third-class passengers. Wendapash's survival knowledge and leadership qualities make her valuable during emergencies.

Deets Gallgar Elderly passenger with life experience and wisdom, traveling with medical assistance. He provides historical perspective and calm advice during the voyage's challenges. Gallgar represents vulnerable elderly passengers who depend on care while contributing valuable practical knowledge.

Arish Pathuriway Indian passenger traveling to meet his girlfriend with limited English skills but rich cultural background. He carries sweets and cultural items that connect him to his homeland. Pathuriway represents non-European immigrants facing communication challenges and cultural adjustments aboard ship.