

Session 3

We have already heard the story of Eva Hart, a child travelling on Titanic with her family. In this session, we'll look at two more stories from survivors of the disaster: Karen Abelseh and Gus Cohen. You'll read a letter, listen to a dramatic story of escape, do some pronunciation practice, and take a quiz.

Activity 2

Gus Cohen's escape

Listening exercise

There are many stories from survivors of the Titanic disaster but Gurshon 'Gus' Cohen's letter is one of the most dramatic. Listen to his story and think about how it differs from Karen and Eva's accounts. It's fast and might be difficult to understand, but don't worry: you can use the transcript to help.



Show transcript

Think about how this sentence sounded in the recording (listen to the beginning to hear it again if you like):

I **was making** a lark of it and people **were singing**.

In spoken English, we usually use the weak forms of was /wəz/ and were /wə/ when forming past continuous positive sentences and questions. Try saying the sentence with the weak forms.

The /ə/ sound that you find in these weak forms is very important in English. You can find out more about it and hear some examples in our [pronunciation tips video](#).

Notice that we often don't say the full 'ing' sound at the end of **verb-ing**. That means when Gus speaks, we hear 'I was making...' like this:

I was makin' /ə wəz meɪkən/

It can be difficult to hear all the words when someone is speaking naturally! But don't worry - you can get used to it by doing activities like the next one!

To do

Listen to Gus's story again and choose the correct words to fill each gap. Listen carefully for those weak forms and **verb-ing** sounds!

Download

[Click here](#) to download this recording (2.7MB).

Next

Wow! We have heard three different stories of survival, escape and bravery. If you'd like to hear more stories from survivors of the Titanic, BBC Radio Ulster has produced a whole series you can hear called [Titanic Letters](#).

Next, you will take a quick quiz to see what you remember about the accounts you have read and heard in this session.