

Titanic Poetry “Incident at Sea, 1912”

The Teaching Sequence for Writing

English KS2 Year 6



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English

Key Stage 2 Year 6

Learning Aims

- The Teaching Sequence for Writing is still the recommended approach to the teaching of reading and writing.
- The activities in this unit of work support different approaches to poetry but teachers will identify further opportunities to meet the needs of the children in their classes.
- It is not intended to be a prescriptive unit of work where all activities are worked through slavishly, but rather as a repository of possible teaching opportunities. Teachers should select from, and adapt, the range of suggested activities to meet the needs of the children they teach.
- The opportunity to teach the reading, performance, enjoyment of, and writing poetry focuses on the theme of the Titanic.
- The poems selected are suggestions only. Teachers may choose to use the recommended approaches with poems of their own choice.
- The poem, “*Incident at Sea, 1912*” is included at the end of this PDF.
- Some slides contain additional teacher guidance in the ‘Notes’ area which will not be visible to the children. These are listed throughout the PowerPoint index on the following pages.

Curriculum Objective

- Non-statutory guidance states:
 - As vocabulary increases, teachers should show pupils how to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and **how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language**. Identification of, and opportunity to use, simile and metaphor where appropriate is included in this unit.
 - Teachers should select the most appropriate focuses for the children they teach. Further objectives will be met incidentally as the unit progresses.



PowerPoint Presentation

The accompanying PowerPoint presentation has 59 slides.

As mentioned above, the content within this PowerPoint is not intended to be a prescriptive unit of work where all activities are worked through slavishly, but rather as a repository of possible teaching opportunities. Teachers should select from, and adapt, the range of suggested activities to meet the needs of the children they teach.

The slides are indexed below:

- Slide 1: Title slide

Slides 2 to 8 are aimed at the teacher, as outlined below:

- Slide 2: Introduces the Teaching Sequence for Writing.
 - Phase 1a Reading with a reader's eye:
 - Phase 1b Reading with a writer's eye
 - Phase 2 Capturing ideas, learning the skills, practising, planning, having a go.
 - Phase 3 Teacher modelling.
- Slide 3: Explains Phase 1a and Phase 1b, and that poetry reading will focus on reading aloud, performance and enjoyment. Do not underestimate the investment made at the reading phase which will pay dividends in the writing phase.
- Slide 4: Teacher modelling of comprehending text.
Phase 1a: Reading with a reader's eye:
Do I like it? How does it affect me?
- Slide 5: Teacher modelling of analysing text:
Phase 1b: Reading with a writer's eye:
How has the writer done it? What techniques can I learn and apply?
- Slide 6: Phase 2: Capturing ideas, learning the skills, practising, planning, having a go. During this phase, provide plenty of opportunities for children to learn and practise the skills you wish to see in the writing, focusing on the needs of the children in your class. With poetry, the separate phases are less distinct and there may be a crossover of skills in Phase 1b and Phase 2, and teachers should adapt the resources according to the needs of the children. Allow children to work in pairs or small groups to discuss and rehearse elements of writing. Make use of a working wall or writing journal to record examples of good practice.



- Slide 7: Phase 3: Planning, drafting, editing, writing. Explaining how to use the poems as inspiration rather than prescriptive models.
- Slide 8: Explains that the activities in this unit of work support different approaches to poetry. The selected poems are suggestions only. Teachers may choose to use the recommended approaches with poems of their own choice. Some of the slides contain additional guidance in the Notes area which will not be visible to the children.

Slides 9 to 59 are aimed at the classroom, as outlined below:

- Slide 9: Title slide
- Slide 10: Sets out the children's reading objectives and writing objectives.

Guidance from the Notes section:

These are suggested objectives from the National Curriculum for Year 5/6. Teachers should select the most appropriate focuses for the children they teach. Further objectives will be met incidentally as the unit progresses. *Non-statutory guidance states: As vocabulary increases, teachers should show pupils how to understand the relationships between words, how to understand nuances in meaning, and how to develop their understanding of, and ability to use, figurative language. Identification of, and opportunity to use, simile and metaphor where appropriate is included in this unit.

- Slide 11: Introduces the children to the opportunities of listening to, reading, enjoying and writing poetry.
- Slide 12: Introduces the unit's poem, 'Incident at sea, 1912' by Peter Thomas.
- Slide 13: Phase 1a: Create opportunities to:
 - Predict.
 - Question and discuss.
 - Clarify. Summarise.
 - Think aloud.
 - Note the structure.
 - Make connections.
 - Visualise.



- Slide 14: Elements of poetry. Explains that poems come in different forms with different structures, and introduces poetry conventions:
 - Mood.
 - Theme.
 - Rhythm.
 - Rhyme.
 - Line.
 - Stanza.
 - Metre.
 - Language effects.

Guidance from the Notes section:

Not every element is covered in this unit but teachers may select whichever focuses they wish.

- Slide 15: 'Get ready for reading a poem – can you see ...'. Displays an image of the Titanic and asks the children how they would feel if they were in the picture.

Guidance from the 'Notes' section: priming pupils for reading:

Use a visual image to focus attention on key ideas, to engage their imaginations, to provide hooks for thinking. An opportunity to explore associations with known events in history. How might these connect with the picture?

These video clips available on YouTube give an excellent overview of the departure:

[Titanic departure \(real video from 1912\)](#)

[Titanic 'leaving port' clip](#)

- Slide 16: Offers background information on the Titanic passenger list and the class system.
- Slide 17: 'Get ready for reading a poem – freeze frame 'I was there''. Put the children in groups of three or four and ask them to create a still image of the departure scene.

Guidance from the Notes section:

Freeze frame and thought tracking are drama strategies which enable children to verbally express their understanding of characters and situations. The teacher should prompt the thoughts with questions to elicit thoughts and feelings from the children in character.



- Slide 18: 'Get ready for reading a poem – Opportunities'. Sets out a selection of suggestions that setting out on the Titanic may have offered different people back then.

Guidance from the Notes section:

This is similar to a hotseating activity but instead of questioners, the children in the class are 'opportunities' which might present themselves to the characters on board the Titanic, whether they are passengers, crew, servants, etc. Children may work in pairs or individually to construct an opportunity that they will present to the character in the 'hotseat' who may be the teacher in role.

- Slide 19: Get ready for reading a poem – vocabulary. Ship of Dreams. Tells the children that they are going to read a poem about the Titanic's first class passengers, and asks them to look at the images and vocabulary on the following slides.
- Slide 20: Offers a selection of words to help children describe the Titanic's first class passengers and lifestyle.
- Slide 21: Offers a selection of words to help children describe the lower class passengers.
- Slide 22: 'A word about prosody', reading aloud with **intonation**, taking account of where to vary **pitch, stress, volume** and **timing**.
- Slide 23: Phase 1a, reading as a reader. 'A word about prosody', explaining **stress**.
- Slide 24: Before you introduce the children to the poem, ask them to discuss these words and phrases with their partner:
 - Quayside.
 - Caviar.
 - Refugees.
 - Steerage.
 - Judder.
 - Frenzy.
 - Enterprise.

Guidance from the Notes:

Direct the teaching of vocabulary in advance. Explain key information for pupils to look out for. A visual focus is very useful, as it aids comprehension while listening to/reading the story. Opportunity for examples of scaffolding for mixed ability whole-class reading – rather than differentiation by task/resource.



- Slide 25: Phase 1a: Reading with a reader's eye. Do I like it? How does it affect me?

Guidance from the Notes:

Reading aloud with prosody is central to a poetry unit and needs to be modelled by the teacher.

Children's comments can lead to the discussion picking up different interpretations.

Structure the questioning to build in challenge and support.

Children learn from each other by listening to classmates justify and elaborate.

Supporting comments used with kind permission of <https://jamesdurran.blog/>

- Slide 26: Phase 1a: Reading with a reader's eye: Do I like it? How does it affect me? Sets the children up for reading the first stanza of the poem.

Guidance from the Notes:

Teachers should model the reading of this poem with prosody, encouraging the children to join in and mimic the way it is read.

The importance of talk and analysis being rooted in personal response.

Give individuals or pairs their own copy of the text.

A 'Tell-me grid' recommended by [Aidan Chambers](#) (supplied on the last page of this PDF) is one mechanism for structuring thinking.

Blend pair, small group and whole-class talk.

Train pupils over time to talk in small groups; strategies for structuring talk (turn-taking in a given order, asking each other questions, etc).

Make sure you spend time joining tables; over a series of lessons, can interact with and assess individuals as you might in small group reading sessions.

- Slide 27: Follows this up with a grid for discussion: 'What I like'. 'What I didn't like'. 'I want to know'. 'It reminded me of ...'

Guidance from the Notes, as for previous slide 26.

- Slide 28: The first stanza of the poem. Read and then re-read the stanza, both aloud and silently.
- Slide 29: Illustration of the Titanic leaving. Sets up the emotion of 'I was there'.



- Slide 30: Respond as a reader to the first stanza – ‘I was there’.

Guidance from the Notes:

Through listening to, and reading, poetry, and allowing images, sounds, smells and emotions to take shape and develop and in their heads, children are exposed to varied language. By paying close attention to the language used, they can enjoy the sound of words spoken aloud, supporting their understanding of how language works.

- Slide 31: Learn the first stanza – Poetry by Heart.

Guidance from the Notes:

‘Placing listening at the centre of learning so that everyone in the classroom experiences different readings or class performances of a poem is a highly effective way of reinforcing the existence and importance of contrasting interpretations.’ Julie Blake, Poetry by Heart

- Slide 32: Read the second stanza.
- Slide 33: Respond as reader to the second stanza – Close reading.

Guidance from the Notes:

Elicit from the children that, although the Titanic was advertised as a luxury cruise for the wealthy, many passengers were travelling in search of a better life, or to escape famine or poverty. For the majority of third class passengers, this was their once in a lifetime chance to improve their lot in life.

- Slide 34: Respond as a reader to the second stanza – Compare and contrast.
- Slide 35: Read the third stanza.
- Slide 36: Re-read the third stanza – Dictogloss.

Guidance from the Notes:

The ‘Dictogloss’ technique is a classroom activity where children are required to reconstruct a short text by listening and noting down key words, which are then used as a base for reconstruction. Dictogloss is often regarded as a multiple skills activity. Children practise listening closely, collaborating and using vocabulary, grammar and discourse systems in order to complete the task. Support with visuals may be displayed while the text is read aloud.

- Slide 37: Read the fourth stanza.
- Slide 38: Respond as a reader to the fourth stanza – Timeline. With the children, co-construct a timeline that will clarify the narrative of the poem.
- Slide 39: Respond as a reader to the fourth stanza – The Iceberg’s Story.

Guidance from the Notes:

Children need to explore the possibilities of writing from the point of view of an inanimate object, the iceberg. This could be done as a drama activity. It is important that children try to see the iceberg as having human characteristics in order to write from the viewpoint of an inanimate object. Questions are suggestions. Teachers should encourage children to invent their own.

- Slide 40: Provides a Zone of Relevance Diagram.

Guidance from the Notes:

This is an activity specifically designed to develop and extend vocabulary within the context of the poem. Children should discuss the words with a partner then sort them onto the diagram. If a word is irrelevant, it is placed outside the circle. If it is relevant, children need to decide how relevant - the more relevant it is the closer it must be to the centre.

- Slide 41: What if ... the iceberg could give its own account of what happened?

Guidance from the Notes:

What kind of iceberg will they create? One full of remorse and slinking away in shame, or an aggressive iceberg that doesn’t care? Allow plenty of oral opportunities to explore the feelings of the iceberg in the aftermath of the disaster.

- Slide 42: Example of an iceberg article.

Guidance from the Notes:

The example article may be used as a model write or just as an example of what could be written. Lexile rating 1000L. Here is more information on the [Lexile framework for reading](#).



- Slide 43: The whole poem.
Guidance from the Notes:
Teachers should ensure that children have plenty of opportunities to read, perform and hear the poem. This can be done chorally, individually, in smaller groups, or however the teacher prefers, but the focus on oracy is the key.
- Slide 44: Phase 1b: Reading with a writer's eye: How has the writer done it? What techniques can I learn and apply?
Guidance from the Notes:
Choose one or two objectives to be the main focus of studying the text with a poet's eye. Use the word 'poet' when speaking to the children. They need to see themselves as poets. The wording of these response prompts is slightly different when reading as a poet.
- Slide 45: Reading as a writer – poetic devices.
Guidance from the Notes:
Rhyme appearing within the lines is known as internal rhyme.
- Slide 46: Reading as a writer – explore the structure. Focussing on End-stopped and Enjambment.
Guidance from the Notes:
Although the structures should be included, teachers need to decide whether to use these more advanced terms or not. Children's interest in words can often be underestimated, as can their ability to grasp and use new language. Consider the two-year-old who can name all those dinosaur names!
- Slide 47: Reading as a writer – explore the structure. Showing examples of end-stopped lines and enjambed lines.
Guidance from the Notes:
Read and re-read, aloud and silently.
- Slide 48: Reading as a writer – poetic devices. Alliteration.
- Slide 49: Reading as a writer – explore the poem.
Guidance from the Notes:
Encourage children to put forward their own ideas, which may be different from the ideas of others and different from the teacher's ideas, but valid nevertheless. Annotations may be displayed or not, depending on how much support the teacher feels the children need.



- Slide 50: Reading as a writer – explore the poem.

Guidance from the Notes:

Encourage children to put forward their own ideas, which may be different from the ideas of others and different from the teacher's ideas, but valid nevertheless. Annotations may be displayed or not, depending on how much support the teacher feels the children need.

- Slide 51: Reading as a writer – explore the poem.

Guidance from the Notes:

Encourage children to put forward their own ideas, which may be different from the ideas of others and different from the teacher's ideas, but valid nevertheless. Annotations may be displayed or not, depending on how much support the teacher feels the children need. Lines 4-6 especially need their own focus as these exemplify a 'show not tell' approach. Nowhere does it explicitly tell the reader the ship hit the iceberg. Rather, the reference to warnings, keeping a watchful check for icebergs, then words to describe a collision, all reveal these unfolding events.

- Slide 52: Reading as a writer – explore the poem.

Guidance from the Notes:

This final verse opens up plenty of opportunities for children to explore how the poet has deliberately chosen words, phrases and comparisons to convey the panic and despair of the passengers and how the contrast with the confidence in the ship and the iceberg (drifted on, indifferent) sharpens the hopelessness of the situation.

- Slide 53: Reading as a writer – close reading. Ask the children to discuss the meaning of the three lines:

Titanic rose up, lights aglow, and then the wonder-ship

Slipped beneath the waves, and with it hopes and dreams:

Industry and enterprise were no defence it seems.

Guidance from the Notes:

Close reading involves the reader thinking about both what is being said in the poem and how it is being said, leading to possibilities for observation and insight. This activity may be more suitable for readers who are currently demonstrating greater competence.



Activity

- Slides 54 and 55: Place the children in pairs and ask them to plan their own lines based on *Incident at Sea, 1912*.

Guidance from the Notes:

This success criteria is made up of suggested elements which may be included. Teachers should co-construct this with the children and be flexible in their approach. Children often find writing poems challenging so teachers may wish to amend or remove some elements, e.g. rhyme.

- Slide 56: Phase 3: Teacher modelling - Poetry: Planning, drafting, writing, editing.

Guidance from the Notes:

Co-construct the success criteria with the children and agree what the writing COULD include. This is modelled here but can be introduced at any point in the sequence.

Any vocabulary recorded for potential use should only be capitalised where a capital letter is needed, e.g. the start of sentences, proper nouns. Otherwise, stick to lower case so when children use the words, they won't capitalise them in the middle of a sentence.

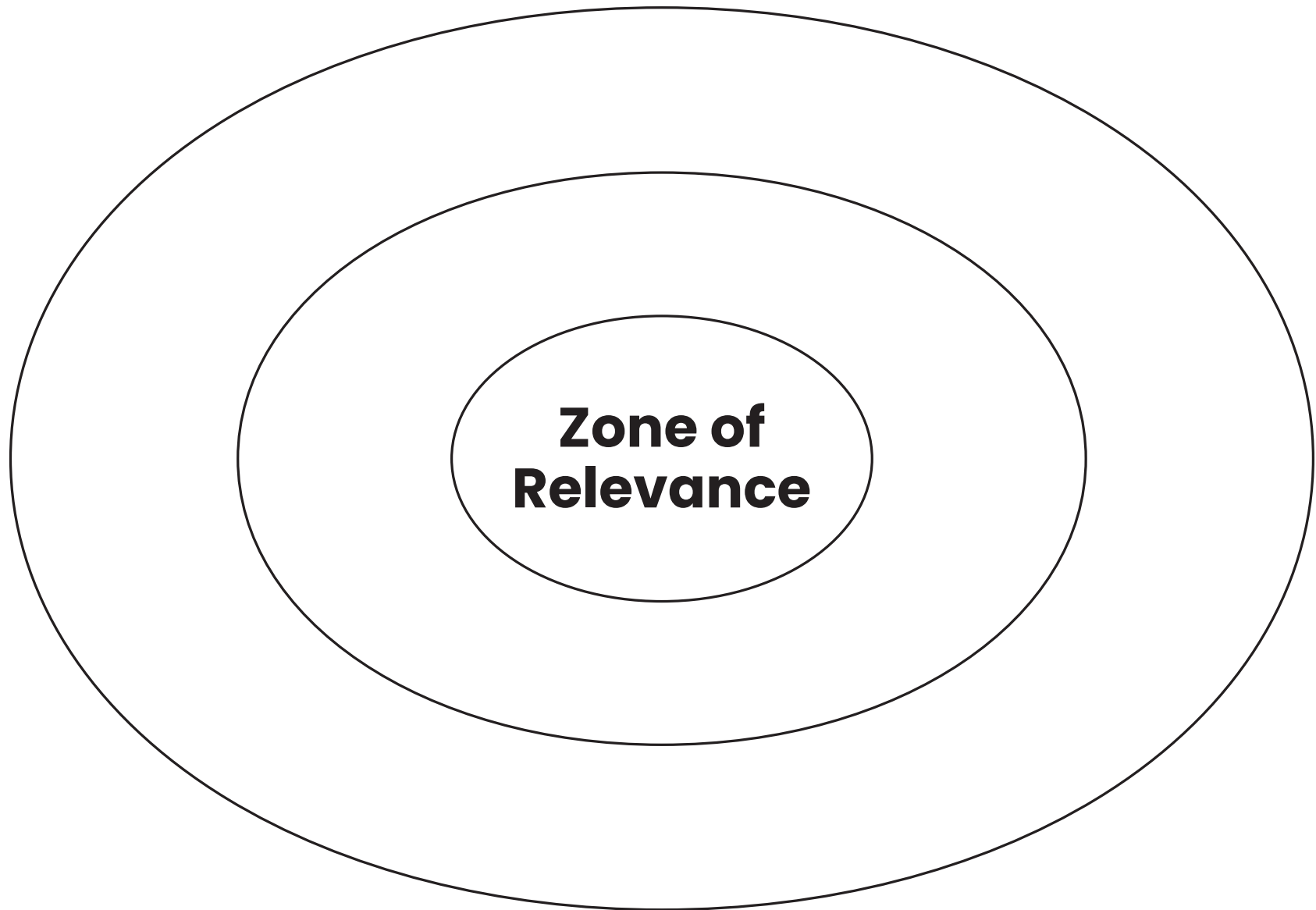
The agreed success criteria is a repository to select from, not a hard and fast 'tick every item'.

- Slide 57: A suggested last paragraph. But the teacher should attempt and model your own version if you can.
- Slides 58 and 59: Closing slides. All websites referred to were functional at the time of publication. Teachers should check that these are still operational before including them in the lesson.

Original illustrations by [Stella Perrett, Radical Cartoons](#)



Zone of Relevance



Zone of Relevance



humble

sad

brutal

spiteful

subdued

sorrowful

unsympathetic

insensitive

sorry

ashamed

aloof

malicious

contrite

guilt-ridden

indifferent

aggravated

regretful

apologetic

irritated

uncaring

rueful

embarrassed

hostile

remorseful

vindictive

cruel



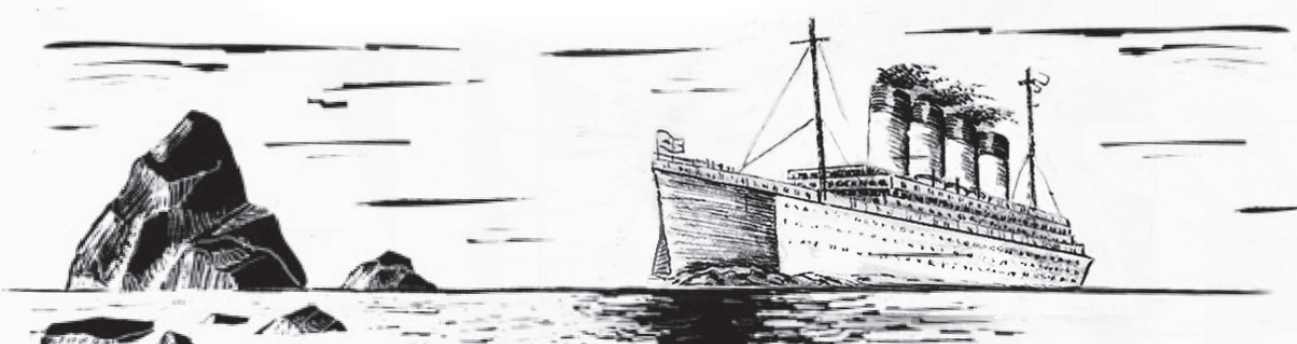
Incident at Sea, 1912

From the quayside nudging, arms and flags all waving,
Mighty engines throbbing, the great ship's US-bound.
For comfort engineering, for safety and for saving
Atlantic crossing time, it leaves ashore, the sound
Of dockside farewells: friends and viewers left behind.
An ocean-going palace, Unsinkable and grand,
First-class cabins, restaurants for the wealthiest kind -
Champagne, caviar, service, a suited ballroom band.

Exclusive cruise escape for those with wealth and leisure,
For others, steerage cabins, in the cramping dark below:
Refugees from famine, poverty, the voyage not for pleasure,
But seeking opportunity, in hope that dreams could grow.
This brave new century, the twentieth, only twelve years old,
This Empire's hub, the home of science and invention,
With Progress its ambition, and with efforts brave and bold,
Makes Titanic! - a nation's pride, a bold world-best intention.

North Atlantic night... bright stars reflect in waves below,
Dark water, deadly cold, and silver moonlight on the deck;
Simple Irish songs below; above, a dance-band and a show.
The radio crackles warnings: advice to keep a watchful check
For icebergs - then a thump and shock and shake and judder.
Movement ceases, no response from wheel or rudder.
Doubt and disbelief, then panic as Titanic starts to roll:
Too few lifeboats, too much pushing test the crew's control

Some in frenzy fought their way to safety; but for most
The floating wreckage served till cold unfixed their grip.
As captain and musicians chose to stay calm at their post,
Titanic rose up, lights aglow, and then the wonder-ship
Slipped beneath the waves, and with it hopes and dreams:
Industry and enterprise were no defence it seems.
The iceberg drifted on, indifferent to the human plight:
Science, Empire, Wealth no match for neutral Nature's Might.



Tell Me Grid

What I like

What I didn't like

I want to know...

It reminded me of...

