

Ocean Travel

For centuries, people traveled to America by ship. Christopher Columbus took a little over a month to sail to North America in 1492. Storms made the crossing more difficult for the Pilgrims in 1620; it took two months for their ship, the *Mayflower*, to reach America. With the invention of the steam engine, ship travel became easier, and by the 1840s, steamships **routinely** crossed the ocean in less than two weeks.

In the following **decades**, shipbuilders made larger, faster, and more comfortable passenger ships called ocean liners. A company named White Star Line decided to build the most **luxurious** ocean liner ever. The ship would be almost 900 feet long and carry more than 2,200 people. It would also be the safest, with an unsinkable double-hull design. This magnificent ship would be called the *Titanic*.

On April 10, 1912, the *Titanic* began its maiden voyage. Four days later, the ship hit an iceberg in the North Atlantic, and within three hours, the ship had disappeared beneath the icy waves. Only 705 of the 2,227 people on board survived.

The sinking of the *Titanic* was a **catastrophe**, but ships were still the only way to cross the ocean. Then, in the 1930s, the first passenger planes began flying over the Atlantic. Airplanes were much faster than ships. As air travel became less expensive, fewer people traveled by ship. Ship companies came up with an idea to keep their **industry** alive: turn ships into resorts. Instead of traveling just to reach a **destination**, people would have fun on the ship! The idea was a success. Today, cruise ships visit many interesting ports, but people often stay on board when the ship docks. With all the swimming pools, theaters, restaurants, rock-climbing walls, zip lines, and ice-skating rinks, why would anyone want to leave?



Modern cruise ships can carry more than 6,000 passengers.

MONDAY

Use the words from the passage to fill in the blanks.

catastrophe **decades** **destination** **industry** **luxurious** **routinely**

1. Ten-year periods of time are called _____.
2. The place that someone is traveling to is his _____.
3. Something that is very comfortable and expensive is said to be _____.
4. Another word for a terrible disaster is _____.
5. Something done _____ happens in a normal, regular way.
6. The cruise ship _____ tries to make ocean travel fun and safe.

TUESDAY

What information did you learn from the picture and caption?

WEDNESDAY

Choose the correct answer.

1. What was the author's purpose in writing this passage?

<input type="radio"/> (A) to inform people about ocean travel	<input type="radio"/> (C) to sell tickets for ocean cruises
<input type="radio"/> (B) to persuade people to travel on airplanes	<input type="radio"/> (D) to warn people of the dangers of ships

2. What is the structure of this nonfiction article?

<input type="radio"/> (A) compare/contrast	<input type="radio"/> (C) cause/effect
<input type="radio"/> (B) chronological (order of events)	<input type="radio"/> (D) problem/solution

3. Steamships crossed the Atlantic in less than _____.

<input type="radio"/> (A) one week	<input type="radio"/> (C) one day
<input type="radio"/> (B) two weeks	<input type="radio"/> (D) two days

THURSDAY

Put the events in order. Write 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 next to each one.

- _____ The *Mayflower* sailed to America.
- _____ The *Titanic* set sail on its first voyage.
- _____ Modern cruise ships were designed to be like resorts.
- _____ Columbus sailed to North America.
- _____ The first passenger planes began flying over the Atlantic.

FRIDAY

Would you like to take a trip on a modern cruise ship? Why or why not?
