Unit 1/Week 3

Title: Finding the Titanic

Suggested Time: 5 days (45 minutes per day)

Common Core ELA Standards: RL.4.1, RL.4.2, RL.4.3, RL.4.4, RL.4.6; RF.4.4; W.4.2, W.4.4, W.4.9, W.4.10; SL.4.1, SL.4.2; L.4.1, L.4.2, L.4.6

Teacher Instructions

*Refer to the Introduction for further details.*

**Before Teaching**

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and the Synopsis. Please do **not** read this to the students. This is a description for teachers, about the big ideas and key understanding that students should take away **after** completing this task.

Big Ideas and Key Understandings

Author and Titanic discoverer Robert Ballard works diligently to preserve the Titanic as a monument to those who lost their lives in the famous shipwreck.

Synopsis

Robert Ballard describes how he and his team discovered the Titanic in 1985. Through a flashback to the story of 12-year old Ruth Becker in 1912, Ballard portrays one of the many stories that has driven his interest to preserve the Titanic on the ocean floor.

1. Read entire main selection text, keeping in mind the Big Ideas and Key Understandings.
2. Re-read the main selection text while noting the stopping points for the Text Dependent Questions and teaching Vocabulary.

**During Teaching**

1. Students read the entire main selection text independently.
2. Teacher reads the main selection text aloud with students following along.

(Depending on how complex the text is and the amount of support needed by students, the teacher may choose to reverse the order of steps 1 and 2.)

1. Students and teacher re-read the text while stopping to respond to and discuss the questions and returning to the text. A variety of methods can be used to structure the reading and discussion (i.e.: whole class discussion, think-pair-share, independent written response, group work, etc.)

Text Dependent Questions

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| **Text Dependent Questions** | **Answers** |
| Who is telling the story at this point? How do you know? | The author of the story, Robert Ballard, is using first person to describe how he and his team discovered the Titanic. |
| What are Robert Ballard and his team trying to do?  When is this happening? | They are trying to find the Titanic; the year is 1985. |
| How does the team use Argo? | Pulled along from above, Argo was a sled that took moving pictures right above the ocean floor. Ballard’s team was able to see these pictures from the ship’s video screen, as they looked for evidence of the Titanic. |
| Ballard thinks about the people who “survived the shipwreck.” What does this mean and why does he share this? | He is thinking of the stories of people who had survived the Titanic, or lived to tell about the experience. He cannot forget the stories that have been told, including that of Ruth Becker’s. He shares her story in memory of those who had lost their lives as well as the survivors. |
| Who is Ruth Becker? Who is telling the story in Chapters 2, 3 & 4? | Ruth Becker survived the Titanic when it sunk in 1912; she didn’t begin to tell her story until near the end of her life. A narrator tells the story in Chapters 2, 3 & 4. |
| The narrator uses 4 short sentences to describe the rooms of wealthy, or rich, first-class passengers. Combine those ideas into 1 or 2 complex sentences.  The narrator contrasts the rooms of the first-class passengers with the third-class passengers. Combine those sentences into 1 or 2 complex sentences. | One example could be: *Ruth peeked inside one of the rooms of a wealthy first-class passenger, finding it to be bigger and fancier than her whole cabin.*  One example could be: *The third-class passengers, speaking many different languages, crowded the lower decks of the Titanic with their large trunks and suitcases, as they hoped to make new lives for themselves in America.* |
| A palace is a large and fancy building or mansion. What words and phrases does Robert Ballard use to describe the Titanic as “the floating palace?” | With nine decks and as tall as an eleven-story building, the Titanic is the largest ship afloat. It was very ornate, with gold plated light fixtures, a grand staircase, an elevator, steam baths, and swimming pool. |
| How did Ruth end up on a lifeboat? | Ruth was separated from her mother and brother & sister as they were getting onto the lifeboats. Ruth’s mother screamed for her. Ruth walked to another boat and asked the officer if she could get in. He lifted her onto the packed boat, where she had to stand. |
| As they rowed towards the lights of what they hoped to be another boat, Ruth saw “distress signals” being sent up from the Titanic. Rereading the text, what are “distress signals?” | These were the rockets that the crew of the Titanic sent up into the sky, alerting other ships that they were in trouble and required help. |
| Summarize the key events of Chapter 3. | Ruth’s mother woke her up in the middle of the night when the ship had hit the iceberg. Women and children were evacuated off of the ship first. Ruth was separated from her family, but made it on to a lifeboat. As her lifeboat rowed towards the lights of what they hoped to be another ship, Ruth saw the hundreds of passengers still on the ship. Ruth watched the Titanic break in half and sink. |
| Why did Ruth’s eyes fill with tears of relief when she saw her mother, brother and sister on the rescue ship? | Ruth had been separated from her family and almost did not get on a lifeboat. She watched as the Titanic, still full of thousands of passengers, sunk. She couldn’t find her mother when she first got on the rescue ship. |
| When Ballard’s team found a bit of the Titanic with the Argo, why did they feel excited and sad? | They were excited to have finally found the ship; they were sad, as they thought of the stories of those who had died on the ship so long ago. |
| Compare the functions of Argo, Alvin and J.J, the tools the team uses while exploring the Titanic. | Argo was the sled that helped them identify the location of the Titanic. Alvin took the team down to the Titanic. JJ (Jason Junior) was the small robot that could go inside the ship to take pictures. |
| “We explored most of the great wreck over the next few days.” How is the word great used? How can a shipwreck be great? | In this context, ‘great’ refers to the size of the shipwreck—both in the passengers lost and in the size of the ship. Carrying over two thousand passengers, the Titanic was the largest ship to ever sail, and consequently the largest shipwreck when it hit the iceberg. |
| The team placed two plaques, or flat markers engraved with words, on the Titanic before they left. What did the plaques mean? | Ballard’s team left a plaque on the stern in the memory of all of the passengers who had lost their lives. They left a plaque on the bow asking anyone who visits the Titanic to leave it in peace. They did not want the Titanic to be disturbed. |

Vocabulary

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|  | **KEY WORDS ESSENTIAL TO UNDERSTANDING**  Words addressed with a question or task | **WORDS WORTH KNOWING**  General teaching suggestions are provided in the Introduction |
| **TEACHER PROVIDES DEFINITION**  not enough contextual clues provided in the text | stern  plaque | loomed  expedition  steward  fixtures |
| **STUDENTS FIGURE OUT THE MEANING**  sufficient context clues are provided in the text | bow  survived (survivor)  voyage  wreckage (wreck; shipwreck)  monument  floating palace  great  distress signal  wealthy  third class | grand  damage  drenched  submarine  hull  distance  drifted  bursts |

Culminating Task

* Re-Read, Think, Discuss, Write

*A monument is a structure in memory of people who have died. What evidence does the author use to show the Titanic should be left as a monument to those who died in the wreck?*

Answer: Ballard explains that the Titanic, the largest ship of its kind, carried over two thousand passengers, many of whom died when it hit the iceberg and sunk in 1912. By highlighting the human aspect of the Titanic through the story of Ruth Becker, Ballard wants to honor the memories of those who lost their lives. Ballard uses the Argo, Alvin & JJ, scientific equipment to help discover and take pictures of the Titanic, but that would not disrupt the ship.

Additional Tasks

* How do the illustrations help you understand the different settings?

Answer: The variety of black and white photographs, paintings and colored photos are used to compare the discovery of the Titanic in 1985 with original images of the ship in 1912.

Note to Teacher

* Do not read the “Background” selection prior to reading this selection. Use it later in the lesson if students need additional support in understanding the selection. See the introduction for a complete discussion of background knowledge and pre-reading.

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**“Finding the Titanic”**

1. Who is telling the story at this point? How do you know?
2. What are Robert Ballard and his team trying to do? When is this happening?
3. How does the team use Argo?
4. Ballard thinks about the people who “survived the shipwreck.” What does this mean and why does he share this?
5. Who is Ruth Becker? Who is telling the story in Chapters 2, 3 & 4?
6. The narrator uses 4 short sentences to describe the rooms of wealthy, or rich, first-class passengers. Combine those ideas into 1 or 2 complex sentences. The narrator contrasts the rooms of the first-class passengers with the third-class passengers. Combine those sentences into 1 or 2 complex sentences.
7. A palace is a large and fancy building or mansion. What words and phrases does Robert Ballard use to describe the Titanic as “the floating palace?”
8. How did Ruth end up on a lifeboat?
9. As they rowed towards the lights of what they hoped to be another boat, Ruth saw “distress signals” being sent up from the Titanic. Rereading the text, what are “distress signals?”
10. Summarize the key events of Chapter 3.
11. Why did Ruth’s eyes fill with tears of relief when she saw her mother, brother and sister on the rescue ship?
12. When Ballard’s team found a bit of the Titanic with the Argo, why did they feel excited and sad?
13. Compare the functions of Argo, Alvin and J.J, the tools the team uses while exploring the Titanic.
14. “We explored most of the great wreck over the next few days.” How is the word great used? How can a shipwreck be great?
15. The team placed two plaques, or flat markers engraved with words, on the Titanic before they left. What did the plaques mean?