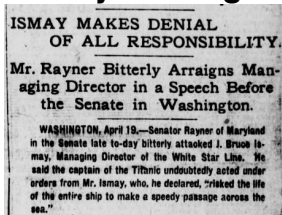


## Teaching with Primary Sources Assessment

**Grade Level:** High School (9-10)

**Standard(s) or Objectives:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.5 Analyze in detail how an author's ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.

### Library of Congress or Morris Special Collections Resources:



*The Evening World*, Friday April 19, 1912

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030193/1912-04-19/ed-1/seq-1/>

### Topic Background:

In the wee hours of the morning on April 15, 1912, the RMS Titanic – the largest passenger steamship in the world at the time – sank into the depths of the Atlantic Ocean after hitting an iceberg only a few hours earlier. More than 1,500 people died.

Excerpt from: <https://blogs.loc.gov/loc/2012/04/an-unsinkable-legacy-remembering-the-titanic/>

J Bruce Ismay, managing director of the White Star Line, left the Titanic in one of the last lifeboats to be launched, a decision that was to haunt him for the rest of his life.... his actions were widely criticized in the American press. He never overcame the shame of jumping into a lifeboat and retired from the White Star Line in 1913, a broken man.

Excerpt from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-17614345>

### Source(s) Used:

The source used for this assessment includes excerpts from the special evening edition of *The World* on Friday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1912. The featured article reports on the inquiry of the United States Senate into the Titanic disaster, particularly the questioning of J. Bruce Ismay, the managing director of the White Star Line, who was suspected of pressuring the Captain to make a speed record for the Titanic's maiden voyage, and who entered a lifeboat while there were still women and children aboard.

### Answer Key:

Question 1 – D

Question 2 – A

## Ismay Makes Denial of All Responsibility

...J. Bruce Ismay, managing director of the White Star Line, made many denials on the witness stand of any responsibility for the wreck.

...Mr. Ismay declared he did not get into a lifeboat until he saw that there were no women about him. He denied he had issued any order on the voyage to Capt. Smith. He said the Titanic was not being rushed at full speed when she crashed into the iceberg that sent her 2,000 fathoms to the bottom of the North Atlantic. She was not making her full revolutions and there was no great need to hurry. He did admit that she had made twenty-one knots an hour during the trip.

Mr. Ismay told the Senators how he had aided others into getting into the boats. He did not know that some of the boats were poorly manned; that the women in them had to row about the ocean for more than six hours. He had given no orders in the confusion that followed the collision and he declared he was a passenger only because he wanted to see how the new boat worked.

Altogether Mr. Ismay did not seem to think it strange that he was one of the survivors of the great disaster. He was cool and complacent before the committee and he began by saying that his company wished the fullest inquiry. He assured the committee he remained on the ship more than an hour after the collision, and almost until she sank.

### Questions:

1. The article states:

“Ismay, managing director of the White Star Line, made many denials on the witness stand...He denied he had issued any order...to Capt. Smith. He said the Titanic was not being rushed...He did admit that she had made twenty-one knots an hour...He did not know that some of the boats were poorly manned; that the women in them had to row about the ocean for more than six hours. He had given no orders in the confusion that followed the collision...”

What do these extracts reveal about the agenda of the article? (CCSS. RI.9-10.5)

- a. The article was written to clear Mr. Ismay of public suspicion.
- b. The article was written to emphasize that Mr. Ismay was not in charge of the Titanic.
- c. The article was written to show how lucky Mr. Ismay was to survive the disaster.
- d. The article was written to throw doubt on Mr. Ismay's public story.

2. According to the article, Mr. Ismay “did not know some of the [life] boats were poorly manned.” Which statement from the article best challenges his assertion? (CCSS. RI.9-10.8)

- a. Mr. Ismay told the Senators how he had aided others into getting into the boats.
- b. ...he did not get into a lifeboat until he saw that there were no women about him.
- c. He had given no orders in the confusion that followed the collision...
- d. ...he remained on the ship more than an hour after the collision, and almost until she sank.