

Teacher Guide

Grades 3–4

# White Star: A Dog on the *Titanic*

Marty Crisp

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# WHITE STAR: A DOG ON THE *TITANIC*

by  
Marty Crisp

## Teacher Guide

Written by  
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### Note

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## Skills and Strategies

### Vocabulary

Context clues, definitions,  
synonyms, word maps,  
dictionary skills

### Comprehension

Predicting, identifying attributes,  
true/false, drawing conclusions,  
making inferences, supporting  
opinions

### Critical Thinking

Brainstorming, researching,  
evaluating, compare/contrast,  
forming opinions, analysis,  
cause/effect

### Literary Elements

Description, characterization,  
genre, foreshadowing, dialogue,  
point of view

### Writing

Letter, advertisement, report

### Listening/Speaking

Discussion, oral presentation,  
interview

### Across the Curriculum

Math—problem solving;  
Social Studies—Constitution,  
ships and sailors, maps;  
Science—icebergs, dog breeds;  
Art—illustration, poster, cover  
design

## “Not Without My Dog”—The Outcry and the Silence

On the ship’s deck, Sam realizes that something serious is happening. When Mr. Daniel and Mr. Ismay try to put Sam into a lifeboat, he fights them off. Sam hurries to the kennel to rescue Star. As Sam holds Star’s leash, the dog dives into the crowd and then jumps over the edge of the boat, taking Sam with him. Star and Sam swim to a lifeboat where they are taken aboard. Everyone aboard Lifeboat Number 4 watches helplessly as the *Titanic* sinks.

### Vocabulary

delay  
 conversation  
 emergency  
 suggestion  
 glimpsed  
 abandoned  
 expressions  
 sheepish  
 frantic  
 suddenly  
 threatening  
 visible  
 frantic  
 confided

### Discussion Questions

- How do the crew members and passengers react after the *Titanic* hits an iceberg? (The officers and passengers do not seem worried. Some passengers are irritated by the delay, and some are amused by the “accident on the high seas” [p. 53]. None of the people on board seem to think the ship is sinking.)
- Why does Sam refuse to get into a lifeboat? Why does Bucky refuse? (Sam doesn’t want to be treated like a child and will not leave Star. Bucky is 14 years old and does not want to be treated like a child. He wants to stay with his father and the other men.)
- Why does the smoking in the first-class lobby signal to Sam that something must be very wrong? (Normally, Finn is not allowed to smoke in plain sight on the ship, and he is never allowed in the first-class lobby. If these rules are being disregarded, Sam knows it’s because there are more serious matters at hand.)
- Mr. Daniel says, “This ship has a swimming bath, a gymnasium, and even a square court for those of us who like a little exercise to go with our caviar and champagne....But not enough lifeboats.” What is Mr. Daniel’s overall opinion of the ship? (Mr. Daniel believes that too much was spent on luxury and not enough on safety.)
- Does Sam rescue Star or does Star rescue Sam? Provide examples from the novel to support your opinion. (Answers will vary. Suggestion—Sam rescues Star from the kennel, where the dog is locked in a cage. He also rescues Star from certain death when he refuses to get into the lifeboat without him. After that, Star rescues Sam from the ship by jumping overboard and helping Sam swim to a lifeboat.)
- Describe Sam’s hypothermic condition right before and after he is pulled into the lifeboat. (When Sam first emerges from the water, his head throbs and he feels sleepy. As he is swimming, his head “seemed to be full of cotton” [p. 72]. He cannot feel his feet. He is almost delirious, thinking he has bumped against an angel or a big fish. He becomes more aware of the cold when he is in the lifeboat.)
- How is Star injured? What does this remind you of that was mentioned earlier in the novel? (Star’s tail becomes bent after it is caught in the lifeboat’s oarlock. Star’s tail is bent the same way Rusty’s tail was bent.)
- Prediction:** For how long will the survivors have to be rescued?

### Supplementary Activities

- Character Survival Record: Continue recording information on your Character Survival Record. Include the names of characters that you know have survived the sinking (such as Madeleine Astor and Quartermaster Perkins).

- Math: There were 2,228 people (passengers and crew) aboard the *Titanic*. If each wooden lifeboat was able to carry 65 people, how many lifeboats were needed? Fourteen wooden lifeboats were launched that night, but only 705 people were rescued. How many people could have fit onto the lifeboats? What happened? Find examples from the novel to support your reasoning. Then do some research to determine if your conclusions are correct.
- Art: Using a medium of your choice (paint, pencil, collage, ink, etc.), create an illustration of one of the following: (a) Mr. Daniel holding Pye as he stands in the kennel, (b) Lady Cabot calling desperately to Sam from a lifeboat, or (c) the passengers aboard Lifeboat Number 4 after the sinking.

### The Longest Night—Surviving

Lifeboat Number 4 takes on more survivors after finding an overturned boat. All of the survivors are rescued by the *Carpathia*, another ship. Sam realizes that Bucky and many others that he knew were not rescued. Sam finds a sad Mr. Daniel aboard the *Carpathia*—without Pye. Sam helps a newspaper reporter collect stories from survivors. Sam and the other survivors feel guilty just for being alive when so many died.

#### Vocabulary

occasionally  
rousing  
insistent  
horizontal  
clumsy  
applauded  
exhausted  
vacantly  
preferred  
shrill  
glistening  
interviews  
shuddered

#### Discussion Questions

- What does Sam hear on the lifeboat that makes him think of Bucky? (They are singing “Tara-ra-rah, oh, le-ay”—a song that Bucky sang frequently.)
- How does Sam feel when he remembers him of the night his father died? What does Sam most likely connect this feeling with? (He feels cold and the cold reminds him of the snowy March night that his father died. Answers will vary but Sam most likely connects “feeling cold” with death.)
- What is a collapsible? Why did this collapsible work? Describe how the men balance on the overturned collapsible. (A collapsible is a lifeboat with wooden bottom and canvas sides that pop into place and lock. The sides of this boat did not pop into place and it is upside-down in the water. To balance on the overturned boat, two rows of men lay lined up, leaning one way and then the other. “Shifts” to keep the collapsible from turning. An officer stands in front of the lines, blowing a whistle to signal the “shifts.”)
- What message is the author trying to send when she writes, “... everything would never be ‘as right’ again” (p. 89)? (The author is trying to convey that everything has changed, and the lives of those who have survived will never be the same again.)
- Who is Carlos Hurd? How does he help Sam? (Carlos Hurd is a newspaper reporter who is traveling on the *Carpathia*. He gives Sam some clothes and lets Sam help him collect stories from the survivors. The activity helps occupy Sam’s mind and he is helpful.)

## I Predict...

**Directions:** Spend a few minutes looking at the cover of the novel and flipping through its pages. What can you predict about the characters, the setting, and the problem in the novel? Write your predictions in the spaces below.

The Characters	The Setting	The Problem

From the information you gathered above, do you think you will enjoy reading this novel? Circle your response on the scale below.

0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

I will not like this book.

I will really like this book.

Explain your prediction on the lines below.

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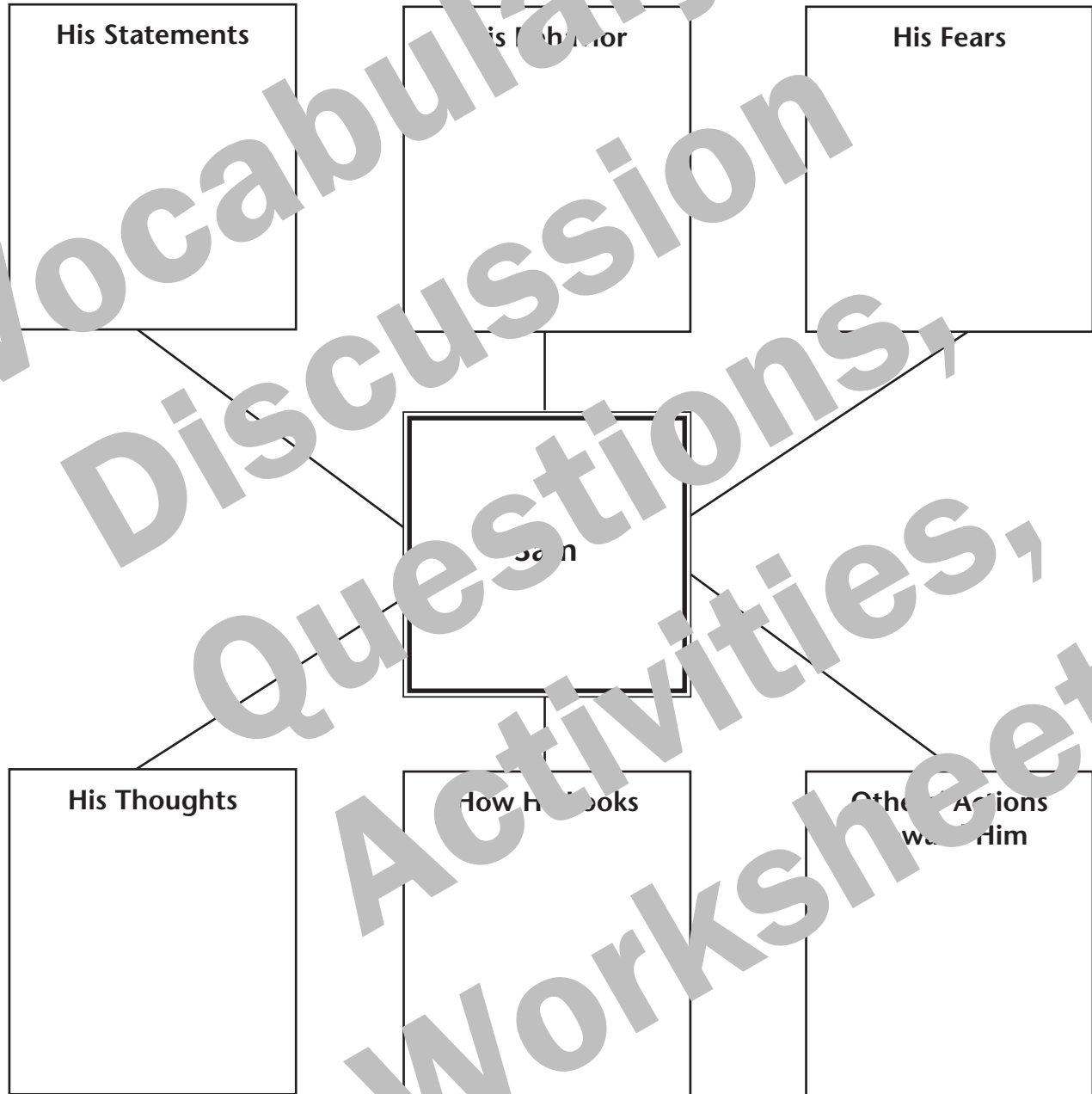
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## Character Web

**Directions:** Complete the chart below for Sam. Cite evidence from the story as you fill in information.





## Character Attribute Chart

**Directions:** Choose five characters from the book. List their names in the left-hand boxes. Fill in the other boxes with requested information.

Character	One-word Description	Appearance	Importance to the Story	Do you know anyone like this?