

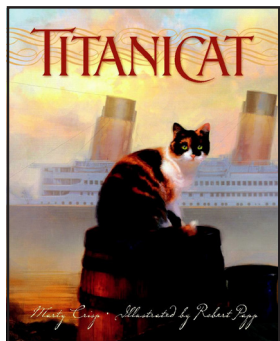


CRUCHLEY'S COLLECTION

Diana Cruchley is an award-winning educator and author, who has taught at elementary and secondary levels. Her workshops are practical, include detailed handouts, and are always enthusiastically received.

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TITANICAT



Jim is a cabin boy on the Titanic assigned to watch over a cat and her kittens. He sees the cat taking her kittens off the ship before it sails. As the "All ashore" is called there is one last kitten, so Jim takes it off and misses the ship. Based on a true story.

Marty Crisp, Scholastic, ©2008,
ISBN 978-0-545-2880-2

PERSONAL WRITING

A springboard from a picture book to personal writing should provide at least three topics if possible. Here are some ideas:

1. A time you were in an accident of some kind.
2. Suspicions you know about and those you believe and don't believe.
3. A story of bad or good luck

SUPERSTITIONS

Our cabin boy is saved from the Titanic because of the superstition that a cat leaving a ship is a sign of disaster. Show students the pictures on the attached page and have them describe what the luck is that the image is conveying (good or bad).

WEBSITES GALORE

There are so many websites devoted to the Titanic that I am not listing them here, except to say that the Discovery Channel has a *Take a Virtual Dive to the Titanic*.

CAT BREEDS

The ship's cat is a tortoiseshell cat. This might be a good time to introduce students to the names and vocabulary of cat breeds, some of which are:

- Ragdoll
- Maine or coon cat
- Bengal
- Siamese
- Manx
- Persian
- Abyssinian
- Angora
- Russian blue

RAPID RESEARCH - SHIPPING DISASTERS

This might be a good time for a student Rapid Research assignment on world disasters at sea - useful is a research skill, a writing skill, oral language, and general knowledge (which in the end enriches vocabulary). Many examples are provided in the page with the picture book, *The Discovery of Longitude*.

Students are given 20 minutes, in pairs, to find 20 facts(10 each) about the disaster. They submit their findings as a series of sentences in list form. Then they make a 2-minute oral presentation - 1 minute each - of their findings for the rest of the class. It is also possible to create a more elaborate result involving students writing a mock newspaper story including all of their facts and illustrating it with a "photo" or two taken from the internet. These would be mounted to create a terrific class display.

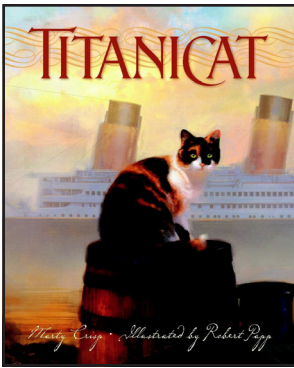
THE TITANIC - DICAPRIO AND WINSLET

This image has nothing to do with the book, but is fun because it is a parody, with cats, of the famous scene from *The Titanic* movie. (I guess you could explain what a parody is.)



SONGS

Again, for enrichment, there are two songs associated with the book. Jim sings, "Oh Danny Boy" as he works. The song, "Nearer My God to Thee" was allegedly played by the band as the ship went down. Both of these songs would be available with lyrics on line so that students could even sing along.



TITANICAT, CONT.

BASED ON A TRUE STORY

There has been a whole collection of picture books recently that are based on small events in history (and sometimes larger ones) that people have forgotten. The ones shown below are those for which I have done teaching ideas.

GOOD AND BAD LUCK FOR THE SHIP

Mariners had a very risky life and often had detailed superstitions such as that it was unlucky to have a woman aboard. The superstition involving the killing of an albatross bringing a curse on *The Ancient Mariner* in the poem by Samuel Taylor Coleridge is another. Cat superstitions include:

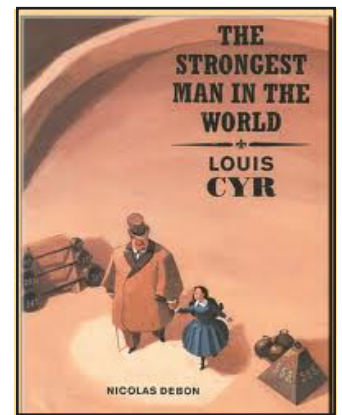
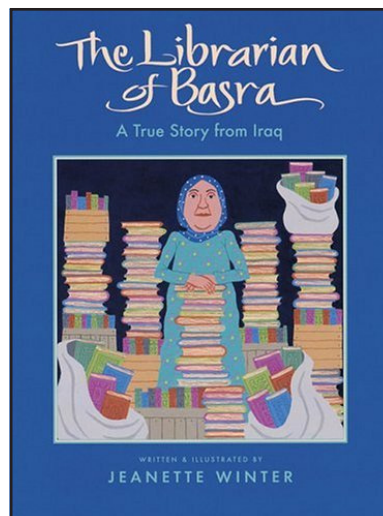
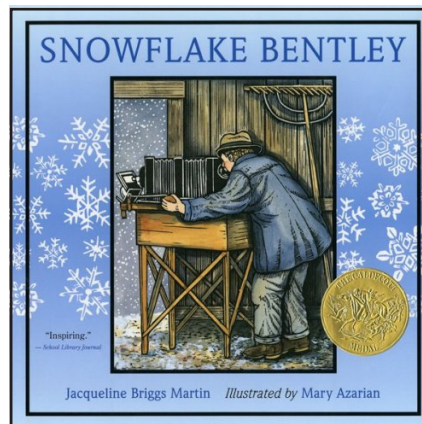
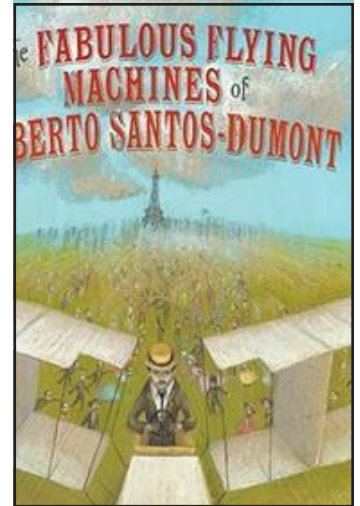
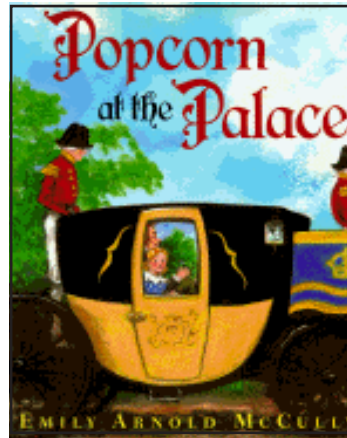
- a cat on board is good luck.
- if a cat leaves the ship, it is bad luck.
- cats have 9 lives.
- if a cat is mewing, you will have a difficult crossing.

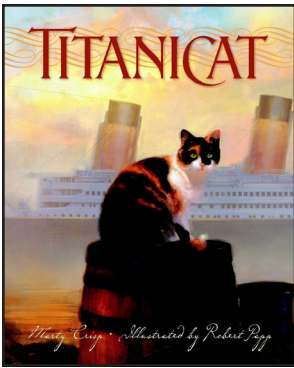
A writing idea might be to start the images for superstitions included on the attached page. Brainstorm the list with students. Then ask them "bring them to life" in a story of continuous disasters for the hero.

THE TITANIC AND I

In the Titanic exhibit an activity for students was to pack an imaginary suitcase. In this case students could have a list such as that below. They then find images of period clothing, and include their own clothing from today, to create a chart.

Pack a Suitcase		
1912	Me	On the Titanic (1912)
Shoes		
Jewellery		
Hair Style		
Song		
Hat		
Food		





THE VOCABULARY OF CAT BREEDS

TITANICAT, CONT.

A Tortoise Shell Cat - like the one in the book - is not a breed of cat, but rather a colour of cat. There are a lot more breeds than this short list. Look for their distinguishing characteristics. A Persian cat is incredibly fluffy and has a pushed in grumpy looking face. A Siamese can be told by dark face, feet, and tail. A Maine Coon is as big as a collie, and has a racoon-like tail. The Bengal looks like a miniature leopard. A Rag Doll is fluffy, large, and will hang in your arms like a rag doll. A Russian Blue has a very plush coat like a quality stuffed toy. A Turkish Angora is usually white, has long silky fur and is not the source of Angora sweaters. The Abyssinian looks like a statue from Ancient Egypt. A Manx has no tail, etc.



Siamese



Rag Doll



Russian Blue



Abyssinian



Manx



Bengal



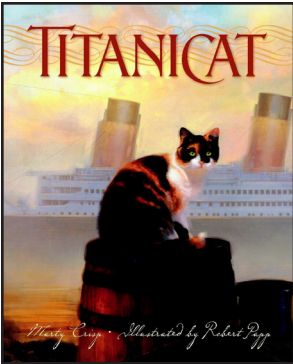
Persian



Maine Coon



Angora



SUPERSTITIONS

TITANICAT, CONT.

