

# Should Artifacts Be Taken From the Titanic?

Or should we leave the ill-fated ship alone?

## About the Story

Lexile® Measure 960L

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

**Learning Objective:** to analyze the arguments in two essays and decide which argument is the strongest

**Featured Skill:** analyzing arguments

### Standards:

The article and its suite of support materials support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.4, R.6, R.8, W.1, SL.1, SL.3

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



## Your Teaching Package

Find your full suite of support materials at [scope.scholastic.com](https://scope.scholastic.com).

### Audio:

- Article read-aloud
- Text-to-speech
- Vocabulary

### Slideshow:

- Vocabulary

### Connected readings

#### from the Scope Archives:

- "Searching for the Titanic"
- "Do Mummies Belong in Museums?"

### Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Vocabulary: Definitions
- Argument Terms Glossary
- Featured Skill Activity: Scavenger Hunt\*
- Persuasive Appeals: Ethos, Pathos, Logos
- Essay Kit
- Anchor Chart: Debate Essay Kit Transitions
- Anchor Chart: Argument Essay Checklist
- Lesson Plan Slide Deck

\*Available on two levels

# Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

## 1. Prepare to Read (15 minutes)

### Preview Vocabulary (10 minutes)

- Project the **Vocabulary Slideshow** on your whiteboard. Review the definitions and complete the activity as a class. The audio pronunciations of the words and a read-aloud of the definitions are embedded on the slides. Highlighted words: *controversy*, *corroding*, *crow's nest*, *reverence*, *salvaged*

## 2. Read and Discuss (45 minutes)

- For students' first read, have them follow along as they listen to the **audio read-aloud**, located in the Resources tab in Teacher View and at the top of the story page in Student View. Pause at the end of the introduction (before Mia's and Jayden's essays) to check for understanding. Have students turn and discuss with a partner: *What does author Mackenzie Carro mean when she says, "Retrieving these artifacts has not been without controversy, however"?*
  - Have students silently reread the article to themselves.
  - Poll the class: "No matter what you personally think about the issue of taking artifacts from the *Titanic*, who do you think makes the better argument: Mia or Jayden?" Take a poll and tally the results on the board.
  - Now trace and evaluate the arguments in each essay:
1. Read the directions in the Scavenger Hunt box on page 25 or at the bottom of the digital story page. If you need to review the bolded academic vocabulary in the box, here are definitions and examples:
    - **central claim:** the big idea that the author supports in their argument; their position, belief, or viewpoint  
*Example: School should start later.*
    - **reasons:** the grounds on which a central claim is based; the individual reasons that support or prove the central claim

*Example: Middle school-aged kids need more sleep.*

- **supporting evidence:** facts, statistics, and examples that show why a reason should be believed; evidence and reasons support and “hold up” a claim  
*Example: A study by the Sleep Institute found that 47 percent of kids aren’t getting enough sleep.*
- **counterclaim:** an acknowledgment of a concern or disagreement from those with opposing viewpoints  
*Example: Some may argue that starting school later won’t help kids get more sleep, that they’ll just go to bed later.*
- **rebuttal:** an author’s direct response to an opposing viewpoint or claim (the “comeback” to a counterclaim)  
*Example: Some may argue that starting school later won’t help kids get more sleep, that they’ll just go to bed later. ←[counterclaim] While that may be true in some cases, a 2018 study that looked at two schools in Seattle found that students’ sleep increased an average of 34 minutes each night after start times were moved nearly an hour later. ←[rebuttal]*

For more argument terms support, see our **Argument Terms Glossary**, found in the Resource Library at Scope Online.

2. **Project Mia’s essay and do a think-aloud that models each step in the Scavenger Hunt.** (Students can mark along in their magazines with you, or fill in the **Scavenger Hunt** graphic organizer found at Scope Online. This activity is offered on two levels—the lower-level version has students identify central claims and supporting evidence only.)

- Identify Mia’s **central claim**. (*What does Mia think?*)
  - First, ask students: “Based on her essay, how would Mia respond to the question in the headline on page 24: Should artifacts be taken from the *Titanic*?” (Mia would say, “Yes! Artifacts should be taken from the *Titanic*.”)
  - Think aloud: “I’m going to circle lines that express this big idea: ‘Yes. Artifacts help keep the memory of the *Titanic* alive’ and ‘we must be able to collect artifacts from the wreck.’”
- Underline Mia’s **reasons**. (*Why does she think that?*)
  - Think aloud: “I just circled Mia’s central claim—that is, what Mia thinks. Now I’m going to underline her reasons—or *why* she thinks what she thinks: ‘The *Titanic* is an iconic piece of history that has fascinated the public for more than 100 years. It only makes sense that we would try to learn as much as we can about it,’ and ‘The items retrieved so far have provided a treasure trove of information’ and ‘the wreck will not be here forever.’”

- Put check marks on two pieces of **supporting evidence**. (*How does she know?*)
    - Think aloud: “Can I find two pieces of evidence Mia provides to convince readers that retrieving artifacts from the *Titanic* is a good idea? I’m going to check ‘Recovered menus have revealed what passengers ate, playing cards have shown what they did for fun, and articles of clothing have told us what they wore’ and ‘Salt water and bacteria are corroding the ship. According to some estimates, the *Titanic* could completely disappear by 2050.’”
  - Star the **counterclaim**. (*What does the other side say?*)
    - Think aloud: “Where does Mia acknowledge a concern from the opposing viewpoint? I’m going to star ‘Some feel it is disrespectful to take things from the wreck, believing that as the final resting place of so many, it should be left undisturbed.’”
  - Put a double star next to her **rebuttal**. (*What is her response to the other side?*)
    - Think aloud: “Does Mia have a comeback for the viewpoint that taking things from the wreckage is disrespectful to the dead? Yes. She says, ‘But devoting the large amounts of time, effort, and money required to retrieve the artifacts is actually a way of honoring the ship’s crew and passengers. After items are removed, they are carefully preserved so that future generations can learn about what happened.’”
3. Have students complete the Scavenger Hunt for Jayden’s essay. They can work independently or in pairs, optionally using the Scavenger Hunt graphic organizer available at Scope Online. Then share out responses as a class. Sample responses:
- **Central claim:** “No. The *Titanic* is a gravesite that deserves to be left alone” or “It should not be torn apart and picked over.”
  - **Reasons:** “But we must remember that while the story of the *Titanic* may captivate us, it was a real tragedy that affected real people”; “Plus, expeditions to the wreck can damage it.”
  - **Supporting evidence:** “When the *Titanic* sank, more than 1,500 individuals lost their lives”; “The *Titanic*’s crow’s nest has vanished, for example. Some believe it was knocked loose by a submersible.”
  - **Counterclaim:** “Some argue that we must salvage items from the wreck so we can learn from them.”
  - **Rebuttal:** “But not all of the recovered items have been used for research or education. Some have been sold for profit. In 2017, a letter written by a passenger sold for \$153,000. Is this really the way to treat the belongings of those who died?”

- Discuss: Which evidence do you find most convincing in each essay? Least convincing? What do Mia and Jayden agree about? Are there any important reasons you think they left out of their arguments? *Answers will vary.*

### 3. Write About It: What Do You Think?

(45 minutes)

- Have students revisit the following questions in writing:

***Who makes the stronger argument? What do you think about whether artifacts should be taken from the Titanic?***

#### Connected readings from the Scope archives:

- Narrative Nonfiction: [“Searching for the Titanic”](#)
- Debate Essay Kit: [“Do Mummies Belong in Museums?”](#)