

Ships of all sizes get wrecked for many different reasons. Shipwrecks can show us how people lived in the past. They also help us study ways to protect sea animals and coral reefs.

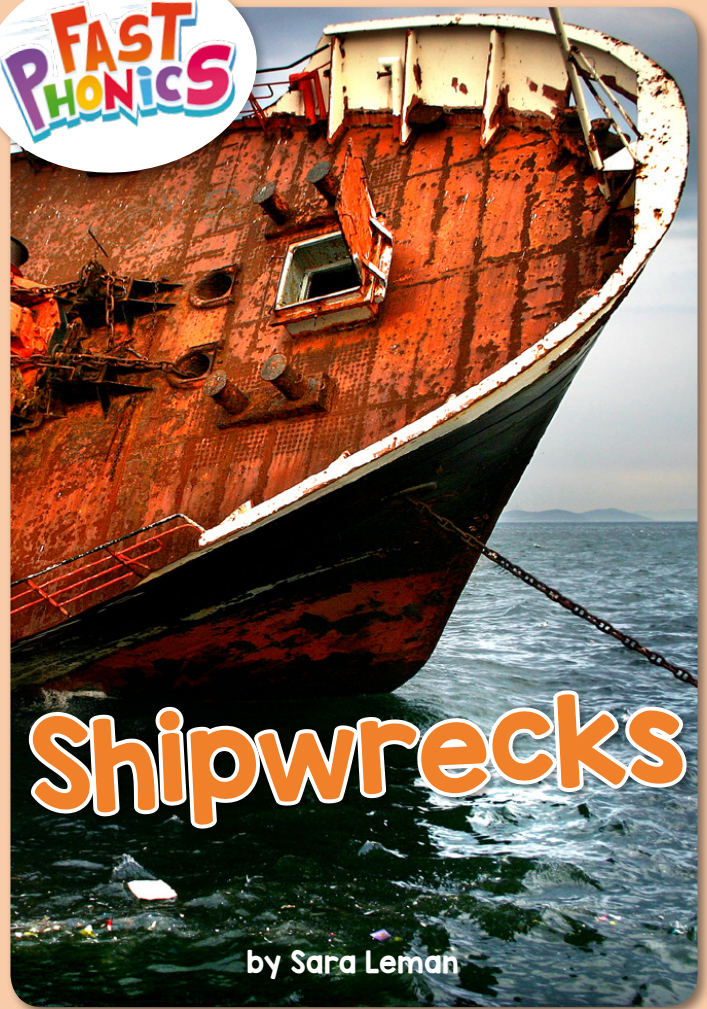


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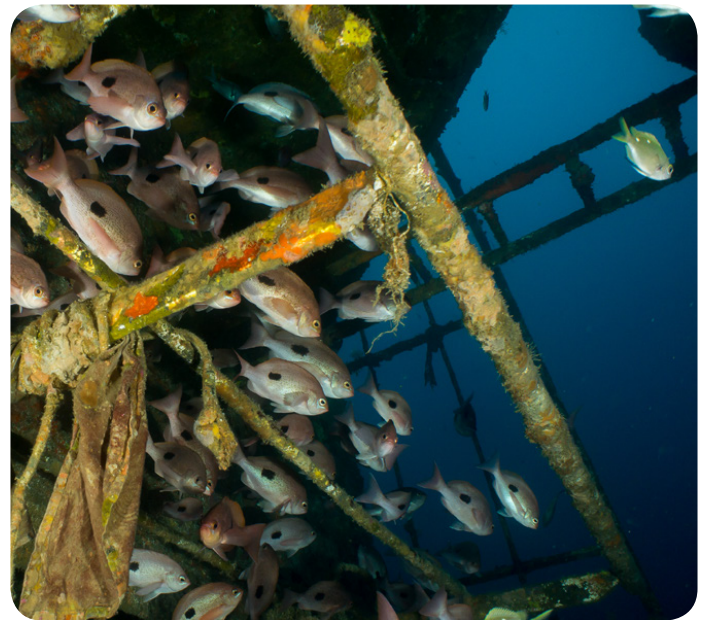
Shipwrecks

by Sara Leman

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Many people are interested in wreck sites and artifacts. Divers spend a long time underwater studying them. They have masks, tanks, and an array of gadgets to keep them safe.



MV Rena was firmly lodged on the reef for weeks. Bad weather and high seas broke the ship in half. Part of the ship sank. Over time, the wreck became home to shoals of fish. Divers now visit what is left of the *Rena*.

Shipwrecks

Phase	Word count	Lexile
5	476	650L

Book focus

Set 20

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Ships also get wrecked in wars. Missiles, mines, bombs, and fire destroy ships. The remains often sink to the bottom of the sea. They stay there for years until they rust or rot away.

Focus Questions

What is a shipwreck?

How do shipwrecks occur?

Why are shipwrecks important?

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The remains of the *Titanic* still lie at the bottom of the sea. Over the years, several things have been found in the wreckage. These include a pocket watch, a satchel, boots, hair combs, and knives. Lots of these artifacts are on public display.



Ships of all sizes get wrecked for many different reasons. However, shipwrecks play an important role. They show us how people lived in the past. They also help us study ways to protect sea animals and our coral reefs.

Do you know if there is a shipwreck near you?

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Have you ever seen the remains of an old ship? Sometimes they can be stranded on a beach. Sometimes they sink to the bottom of the sea. These remains are known as shipwrecks.

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One of the most well-known shipwrecks is *RMS Titanic*. In 1912, the huge ship crashed into an iceberg. The ice made a big hole in the ship's hull and water flooded in. The *Titanic* split in half and sank in less than three hours.

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There are lots of wrecked ships in the South Pacific. It is known as a 'metal graveyard.' The wrecks are rich in history with many artifacts still in place.

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Ships can get wrecked because the crew makes a mistake. In 2011, the crew of *MV Rena* did not watch where they were going. They sailed off track and went the wrong way. As a result, the ship ran aground on a reef in New Zealand. Shipping containers broke free from the deck and oil washed up on the shore.

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Wreck sites are habitats for sea animals and plants. Divers are attracted to these sites. They can swim up close to the fish. They can see the stunning coral that grows on the remains of shipwrecks.

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Some ships are wrecked on purpose to attract divers. This is known as 'scuttling.' The cargo ship *Boga* was sunk in 2012. Today, divers can still see relics from the *Boga*, such as the wheel.

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Severe weather causes problems for ships. High winds and huge waves make ships pitch and roll. Very strong gusts of wind can tip ships over. Ships sink if water crashes into their sides or floods into open hatches.

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