



**ANALYZE VISUALS**  
 Identify which parts of the boat are dedicated to the first-, second-, and third-class passengers. What differences do you note?

Indeed, when Ruth Becker's mother had asked one of the second-class staff about the safety of the ship, she had been told that there was absolutely nothing to worry about. The ship had watertight compartments that would allow her to float **indefinitely**. There was much talk among the passengers about the *Titanic* being unsinkable.

100 In 1912, people were divided into social classes according to background, wealth, and education. Because of these class lines, the *Titanic* was rather like a big floating layer cake. The bottom layer consisted of the lowly manual workers sweating away in the heat and grime of the boiler rooms and engine rooms. The next layer was the third-class passengers, people of many nationalities hoping to make a new start in America. After that came the second class—teachers, merchants, and professionals of **moderate** means like Ruth's family. Then, finally, there was the icing on the cake in first class: the rich and the aristocratic. The differences between these groups were enormous. While the wealthy brought their maids and valets<sup>7</sup>

110 and mountains of luggage, most members of the crew earned such tiny salaries that it would have taken them years to save the money for a single first-class ticket. **E**

**indefinitely**  
 (ín-děf'ə-nīt-lē) *adv.*  
 for an unlimited length of time

**moderate** (mōd'ər-īt)  
*adj.* not excessive or extreme; average

**E NARRATIVE NONFICTION**  
 Why is it important to understand the way social class influenced the people on the ship?

7. **valets** (vā-lāz'): gentlemen's personal servants.