Using Texts to Teach Grammar

Yayu Cai

Xiamen University Tan Kah Kee College, Zhangzhou, Fujian, 363105, China

yayu_cai@163.com

Abstract: Learning English grammar has always been a difficult point for Chinese students. In this paper, the texts in daily life are used as the carrier, and two pieces of news and a song lyrics are selected to teach intermediate learners in China to better understand imperative mood and third conditional. Through the study of these three texts, students can get a better grasp of these two grammar points. Detailed teaching steps are presented in this paper.

1. Introduction

I choose learners aged 17 to 18 leveled intermediate as my target students. Both the teaching and learning take place in an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom in China. I have chosen three authentic texts for learners. Text 1 (see appendix 1) is Tropical banana sundae. It is from *The Sydney Morning Herald*, page 11, published on Tuesday of February 21st, 2012. Text 2 (see appendix 2) is The Beatles' famous song *Hey Jude* written by Paul McCartney. Text 3 (see appendix 4) is Titanic sinking to be re-lived a century on. It is from *The Daily Telegraph*, page 18, published on Saturday of April 7th, 2012. All of these three topics in the texts are interesting for learners. For text 1, learners would learn how to make a banana sundae, which seems to be a delicious snacks for them. Text 2 is the lyrics of *Hey Jude* which is well known and sung in learners' leisure time by a Singaporean singer Yanzi Sun. In terms of text 3, the year of the news is just the time for memorizing 100th anniversary of Titanic's sinking. Learners would be very interested in what would happen if Titanic had struck an iceberg in 2012 rather than 1912. Only the first paragraph of text 3 would be discussed in my classroom. Both in text 1 and text 2, the grammar feature I choose is imperative mood. In text 3, I would focus on third conditional.

2. Analysis

Painter (2001, p. 168) regards genre as "a culturally specific text-type which results from using spoken and/ or written language to (help) accomplish something". Paltridge (2006, p. 84) argues that genres are ways in which people "get things done" through their uses of spoken and written discourse. "The relationship between contexts and the texts they give rise to" is known as register (Painter, 2001, p. 173). Halliday (cited in Painter, 2001, p. 173) suggests that any context for language should be considered in terms of three aspects, known as "field, tenor and mode". Painter (2001, pp. 173-175) states that "field" can be viewed as "the cultural activity or subject matter" with which the writer/ speakers are concerned, "tenor" is a term for the social relationships between the participants, while "mode" refers to the medium and channel of communication, in particular concerning about the role

language is playing in the discourse. In terms of three metafunctional components of the language system, Halliday (cited in Painter, 2001, p. 177) says they are "ideational meaning, interpersonal meaning and textual meaning". Ideational meaning, as Halliday has called, relates to the linguistic expressions of things and events. Interpersonal meaning is about the speaker's standpoints to both the topic and the addressee. As for textual meaning, Halliday terms it as the way speakers make the text coherent. Painter (2001) argues that context and text influence each other. Field influences ideational meaning, tenor influences interpersonal meaning and mode influences textual meaning. As Marianne (1990) mentions, grammar and discourse (i.e., meanings and functions) should be integrated in language teaching, especially in EFL contexts. Teachers should move their grammar teaching focus from sentence to discourse (Hughes & McCarthy, 1998). The above factors will be discussed in the three texts below.

2.1 Text 1 Tropical banana sundae

Obviously, the genre of the text is recipe. The text type is procedure or instruction. Procedures are common factual texts which teach learners how to achieve a goal through a series of steps (Butt, et al., 2000). In this text, it is about the procedures to make a banana sundae. The writer is providing the information of making banana sundae to readers. Readers are not directly addressed at all. The relationship between the writer and readers is distant and non-hierarchic. The language in this text is written and monologic via printing. The schematic structure is introduction, materials needed and detailed procedures. In the part of detailed procedures, the writer further classifies the making into four steps, which are "to make the ice-cream, to make caramel, to make the toffee, and to serve" (see appendix 1).

Some typical linguistic choices that characterize a procedure are used in this text because of the genre of recipe. The use of imperative mood and present simple tense is throughout the whole text. The use of imperative mood is a typical linguistic choice in a procedure text (Painter, 2001). Another characteristic is the predominance of clauses with action verbs, such as peel, chop, pop, soften, heat, add, pour, fill, drizzle and serve. A further characteristic is the expressions of manner (e.g. to make the ice-cream, to make the toffee, and so the bananas poke over the top).

Declarative clauses are structured in this text to give information about the making, such as "sesame seed wafers are available from corner shops and supermarkets". As Droga (2003) says, the purpose of procedures is to teach somebody how to do something through a sequence of imperative clauses. In this text, imperative clauses with action verbs (as mentioned above) are used to get the making done directly by readers, which is also related to field and tenor. The writer use "celebration" and "great" to show the appreciation of banana sundae.

Core experiential meanings span the text in the following lexical families: sundae, banana, ice-cream, caramel, toffee, sesame seed wafers, and so on. The themes of four specific steps of making (see appendix 1) are four infinitive clauses. They are to make the ice-cream, to make caramel, to make the toffee, and to serve, respectively. Conjunctions are used to sequence procedures, such as and, until, then, when and so. Repetition of raw materials' names is used for emphasis, because the text is recipe. Through repetition, readers would be clear about how to make the sundae. As a written article, this recipe uses collocations to make the procedures more understandable, for example, cut it half lengthwise, set aside, fill with and beware of.

2.2 Text 2 Hey Jude

The genre of text 2 is song lyrics. It is written by Paul McCartney and sung by The Beatles. It is written for Julian Lennon during John Lennon and Cynthia Lennon's divorce instead of heroine. Cynthia Lennon is the former wife of musician John Lennon who is one of the founder members of

The Beatles, and the mother of Julian Lennon. The text is about Paul McCartney's comfort for John Lennon's son Julian as his parents were getting a divorce. Jude in the lyrics refers to Julian. The relationship between Julian and Paul McCartney is close but hierarchic because of their age. The schematic structure of the text is in accordance with the form of a song. They are verse, verse, chorus, instrumental, verse, chorus, instrumental, verse, and ending (see appendix 2).

As Parrott (2010) says, imperatives could be used to give advice. In this text, imperative mood in both positive and negative forms are used to express the writer's advices to Jude because of the field. Simple past, present perfect, and present simple are all used in the writing to depict the writer's comfort. Simple past and present perfect tense are used to explain that the divorce happened (e.g. you were made to and you have found her). Present simple which is the main tense in this text shows the writer's advice, telling Jude that it is time to let his feelings out and try to welcome Yoko (Julian's new mom).

Similar to text 1, imperative clauses with action verbs are also used in text 2 to express what the writer tells Jude to do, such as don't make, take, remember, don't carry, begin, and refrain. As Droga (2003) states, the relationships between participants can also be expressed as the ways of addressing the listener or reader, one way is through personal pronouns and the other way is through using names. In text 2, personal pronouns such as "you" and "her" (see appendix 2) help Paul McCartney to establish more personal relationships with Julian, so is the use of "Jude" to address Julian directly. The writer also uses a medium degree of modality (e.g. can, will, and be made to) in order to comfort Jude.

The phrase "Hey Jude" is a repeated topical theme throughout the text, while imperative clauses are rhymes. Reference chains are used to express the close relationship between the participants, such as "you" refers back to "Jude". Conjunction is used to express the comfort (the minute, then, so, and, and so on). A repetition of the phrase "Hey Jude" is related to the genre. Collocations (e.g. perform with and wait for), antonymy (bad and better) and meronymy (you, your heart and your skin) are used to make the comfort deeper.

2.3 Text 3 Titanic sinking to be re-lived a century on (first paragraph)

The genre of the chosen part (see appendix 4) is newspaper comment. It is an assumption about what would happen if the tragedy of Titanic had happened in 2012. It is a written article which offers readers space to think about the assumption. Readers are not directly addressed at all. The relationship between the writer and readers is distant and non-hierarchic. The schematic structure can be briefly seen as two parts, part one is the question, I call it assumption or problem, and part two is the answer, as the second part - solution.

This text is economical to present conditional sentences, as Thornbury (1999) says, the shorter the better. The modal verb "would" (see appendix 4) shows a medium degree of modality because the problem given rise to is an assumption. A comment adverbial "no doubt" is used to persuade readers to see things in the same way as the writer (Droga, 2003). In this text, the writer uses particular types of vocabularies to evaluate the phenomena of Titanic sinking and the assumption, as Droga (2003, p.64) calls, these particular types of vocabularies are "evaluative vocabulary or attitude". For example, in this text, "frantic" and "instantly" are used to judge the fear of passengers in Titanic, while "disaster" evaluates the whole sinking.

The theme of this excerpt is the assumption. Although it is a short excerpt, patterns of cohesion in this text make the assumption much sense. As Paltridge (2000, p. 131) says, the main patterns of cohesion include "reference", "substitution", "ellipsis", "conjunction", and "lexical cohesion" of which repetition, antonymy, hyponymy, meronymy, synonymy and collocation are the main kinds. In this text, "the Titanic" and "on board" apply ellipsis and meronymy to show the whole-part

relationship. "it" refers back to "disaster". "Disaster" is the synonym of "the Titanic had struck an iceberg".

3. Using texts in the classroom

3.1 Text 1 Tropical banana sundae

The purpose of text 1 is to focus on the linguistic features of recipe, with sub-focus on how to give detailed procedures of doing something. It would take two lessons (90 minutes) to teach this text by genre-based teaching approach.

Step 1

As Scrivener (2011) states, lexis could be pre-taught by using brainstorm words on a set topic. I would write down the following words on the blackboard, and explain that they are the key words in a recipe. Students are encouraged to imagine what the recipe is about in pairs.

banana	caramel	sugar
ice-cream	toffee	sundae

Step 2

Having elicited some of the students' predictions, I would tell students it is a recipe of banana sundae, present the handout of the recipe (see appendix 1) to the class, ask students to read the recipe quietly with a view to answering these questions: Does the writer like this banana sundae and how do you know? How many detailed steps are offered to make a banana sundae? The students check their answers in pairs before I check in open class. After checking, the students understand two interpersonal emotion words "celebration" and "great" in the recipe and master the schematic structure of the text.

Step 3

I then would ask students to read the recipe again, find out some conjunctive links and thinking about: Is there any subject in sentences? If yes, what are they? What kind of expressions does the writer use to separate each step? These could be summarized as:

Conjunctive links: e.g. and, then, until, so.

Sentences start with action verbs: peel, chop, heat, add, and so on.

Expressions of manner: e.g. to make the ice-cream, to make caramel.

Step 4

I would write down the following two sentences on the blackboard, and elicit the structure of imperative mood.

Peel six bananas.

Heat palm sugar.

When the subject of a clause is missed out, the clause is imperative (Parrott, 2010). Imperative mood is usually used for giving orders, making suggestions, giving advice and so on.

Step 5

Students would be made to find other examples of imperative mood in the text and underline them, then in pairs or small groups to identify the language features of the recipe. Again, these could be summarized as:

The use of conjunctive links: e.g. and, then.

The use of clause with action verbs: e.g. peel, chop, soften.

The use of expressions of manner: e.g. to make the toffee, to serve.

The use of imperative mood: e.g. arrange, add, pour.

Step 6

I would ask students if they ever cooked instant noodles for themselves. If yes, write down a recipe of instant noodles. If no, think about a kind of food you ever cooked for yourselves and write down

the procedures of how to cook it. When writing, focus on the procedures and the language features of a recipe.

Step 7

20 minutes later, students are asked to exchange their recipes with their neighbor and tell the whole class if they know how to cook the food in their neighbor's recipe after reading it.

3.2 Text 2 Hey Jude

The purpose of text 2 is to focus on listening and understanding the text, with sub-focus on how to give advice. It takes one lesson (45 minutes) to teach this text by text-based teaching approach. A gloss about the background information of the song and verbal explanation are used to deal with difficulty (see appendix 2).

Step 1

I would ask students if they have listened to the song *Hey Jude*, if yes, is there any volunteer who can sing a small section of the song for the whole class. If no, I would sing a small section to the class. Then I would ask students to discuss in pairs about who the singer is and who the lyricist is.

Step 2

I would tell students that I am going to play the song *Hey Jude*. As Gilmore (2007) argues, before shifting attention to language forms, students should be allowed to focus on meaning first. Before playing, I would make students to think about the questions: whom is this song written for? What is the song about? Is it about heroine?

Step 3

After playing the song, I would tell students the background information. Then I would present a handout in cloze (see appendix 3) with a gloss of background information of this song.

Step 4

Students would be asked to look through the handout, listen to the song again and fill in gaps. Through listening, students' attention to language may be drawn (Paltridge, 1994).

Step 5

After filling, I would ask students to think about the form of missing words in the handout, because a form-focus should be achieved in listening tasks (Thornbury, 1999). Moreover, I would remind students of the use of imperative mood. As Parrott (2010) says, imperative forms sometimes are used for giving orders, but more often are used to make suggestions, give advice or to invite.

Step 6

I would present a handout without missing words (see appendix 2) to students and ask them to read the gloss first and understand the meaning of the text. Then I would ask students to read through the whole text, acknowledge the structure of the song and find out some words which are related to the topic of this text – comfort (e.g. refrain, better, bad, shoulder, sad, perform).

Step 7

After understanding the text, I would ask students to discuss in small groups about how to comfort a friend in your same age and let one or two groups to express their opinions in open class.

3.3 Text 3 Titanic sinking to be re-lived a century on (first paragraph)

The purpose of text 3 is to focus on discussion, with sub-focus on third conditional. It takes one lesson (45 minutes) to teach this text through text-based teaching approach. The difficulty of this text is dealt with by shortening under which learners only need to focus on the first paragraph (see appendix 3).

Step 1

Some Titanic pictures would be presented to students via PowerPoint (see appendix 5). I ask

students to think about the following questions when looking: what is the name of the ship? What happened to the unsinkable ship? When did the tragedy happen?

Step 2

After having a general idea of Titanic, I would ask students to imagine what would have happened if the Titanic had struck an iceberg in 2012 rather than 1912 and discuss in pairs or small groups with the pattern "If the Titanic had struck an iceberg in 2012, … would have…".

Step 3

Having elicited some of the students' assumptions, I would remind students of the basic form and meaning of second conditional which have been learned last lesson. The basic form of second conditional is (Parrott, 2010):

Second conditional	If clause	Conditional clause
	If + past tense	would + bare infinitive

Then I would tell students that today's lesson is about third conditional of which the basic form is used when they are discussing the imagination in step 2.

Third conditional	If clause	Conditional clause
	If + past perfect	would + have + past participle

This conditional is used to speculate about past events, and about how things that happened or didn't happen might have affected other things (Parrott, 2010).

Step 4

I would tell students that sometimes we refer to "both the present and the past in conditional sentences, and we choose that tense of the main verb in each clause accordingly – one clause may be second conditional and the other may be third conditional" (Parrott, 2010, p.280). Then I would present students the handout of text 3 (see appendix 4), ask students to read the first paragraph quietly and line down verbs (e.g. had struck), interrogative (e.g. what if) and modal verbs (e.g. would) used in this paragraph.

Step 5

After checking the answers in open class, I would ask students to read the first paragraph again and identify what kind of conditional sentences are used in the if clause and the main clause. Then the structure of this paragraph would be summarized as follows:

If clause	Main clause
If the Titanic had struck an iceberg …	Frantic messages would no doubt be sent …
Third conditional	Second conditional

Step 6

Students would be asked to look at the following two texts (Parrott, 2010, p.284-285) on PowerPoint and identify what kind of conditional phrases are contained in each text.

(i) From a newspaper report of a demonstration:

'They stopped it turning into an all-out confrontation', another source said. 'Had it done so, we wouldn't have stood a chance.'

(ii) From a review of a TV play:

Were he living at this hour, Dennis Potter would certainly … have cautioned writer Richard Monks against directing his own work.

Step 7

Answers are given as follows (Parrott, 2010, p.287):

(i) "Had it done so, we wouldn't have stood a chance."

This is a third conditional sentence. Had + subject + past participle is used here to speculate about an unreal past – imaging that the demonstration had become an all-out confrontation.

(ii) "Were he living … , (he) would certainly … have cautioned …"

This is a mixed conditional. The first clause is second conditional, and the second is a main clause of third conditional. The first clause refers to the present, and the verb is continuous because the writer is concerned with the moment rather than any general truth. The use of were + subject makes the conditional more remote than if + subject. The second clause refers to the past – Potter isn't alive so he wasn't able to caution the writer.

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Appendix 1 Text 1 Tropical banana sundae
(from *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Tuesday, February 21, 2012).

Tropical banana sundae

A celebration of the great Australian banana, combining creamy banana ice-cream with split bananas, macadamia nut toffee, toasted coconut and palm-sugar caramel. Sesame seed wafers are available from corner shops and supermarkets.

8 bananas

100g palm sugar or soft brown sugar

40g butter

100ml cream

100g castor sugar

2 tbsp water

100g macadamia nuts

2 tbsp shredded coconut, toasted

4 sesame seed wafers

To make the ice-cream, peel six bananas, chop into quarters, pop in a sealed bag and freeze overnight. Soften for 20 minutes, then whiz in a food processor until thick and creamy. Refreeze in a plastic container for four hours or until needed. To make caramel, heat palm sugar, butter and cream, stirring. Simmer for three minutes, stirring constantly, then set aside to cool. To make the toffee, heat castor sugar and water in a pan, stirring until dissolved. Add macadamia nuts and allow to bubble and reduce, stirring constantly until you have a golden caramel – beware of burning. Pour onto a baking tray lined with baking paper and leave to set. When cool, chop roughly. To serve, peel two bananas, cut in half lengthwise and again crosswise. Arrange in four glasses so the bananas poke over the top. Fill each glass with scoops of banana ice-cream, drizzle with caramel sauce and top with macadamia toffee and toasted coconut. Add a jaunty sesame seed wafer and serve.
Serves 4

Appendix 2 Text 2 Hey Jude
(from http://www.elyrics.net/read/b/beatles-lyrics/hey-jude-lyrics.html).

Hey Jude

Hey Jude don't make it bad
Take a sad song and make it better
Remember to let her into your heart
Then you can start to make it better .... verse
Hey Jude don't be afraid
You were made to go out and get her
The minute you let her under your skin
Then you begin to make it better .... verse
And anytime you feel the pain hey Jude refrain
Don't carry the world upon your shoulders
For well you know that it's a fool who plays it cool
By making his world a little colder .... chorus
Na Na Na Na Na Na-Na-Na-Na-Na .... instrumental
Hey Jude don't let me down
You have found her now go and get her
Remember to let her into your heart
Then you can start to make it better .... verse
So let it out and let it in hey Jude begin
You're waiting for someone to perform with
And don't you know that it's just you hey Jude you'll do
The movement you need is on your shoulder .... chorus
Na Na Na Na Na Na-Na-Na-Na-Na .... instrumental
Hey Jude don't make it bad
Take a sad song and make it better
Remember to let her under your skin
Then you'll begin to make it
Better better better better better better YEAH .... verse
Na na na na-na-na-na na-na-na-na hey Jude
Na na na na-na-na-na na-na-na-na hey Jude
Na na na na-na-na-na na-na-na-na hey Jude
Na na na na-na-na-na na-na-na-na hey Jude .... ending

Gloss: Hey Jude is written by Paul McCartney and sung by The Beatles. It is written for Julian Lennon during John Lennon and Cynthia Lennon's divorce instead of heroine. Cynthia Lennon is the former wife of musician John Lennon who is one of the founder members of The Beatles, and mother of Julian Lennon. The text is about Paul McCartney's comfort for (advice to) John Lennon's son Julian as his parents were getting a divorce. Jude in the lyrics refers to Julian.

Appendix 3 Hey Jude for listening
(from http://www.elyrics.net/read/b/beatles-lyrics/hey-jude-lyrics.html).

Hey Jude

Hey Jude _____ it bad
_____ a sad song and _____ it better
_____ to let her into your heart
Then you can start to make it better
Hey Jude _____ afraid
You were made to go out and get her
The minute you let her under your skin
Then you begin to make it better
And anytime you feel the pain hey Jude _____
_____ the world upon your shoulders
For well you know that it's a fool who plays it cool
By making his world a little colder
Na Na Na Na Na Na-Na-Na-Na-Na
Hey Jude _____ me down
You have found her now go and get her
_____ to let her into your heart
Then you can start to make it better
So let it out and let it in hey Jude _____
You're waiting for someone to perform with
And don't you know that it's just you hey Jude you'll do
The movement you need is on your shoulder
Na Na Na Na Na Na-Na-Na-Na-Na
Hey Jude don't make it bad
Take a sad song and make it better
Remember to let her under your skin
Then you'll begin to make it
Better better better better better better YEAH
Na na na na-na-na-na na-na-na-na hey Jude
Na na na na-na-na-na na-na-na-na hey Jude
Na na na na-na-na-na na-na-na-na hey Jude
Na na na na-na-na-na na-na-na-na hey Jude

Gloss: Hey Jude is written by Paul McCartney and sung by The Beatles. It is written for Julian Lennon during John Lennon and Cynthia Lennon's divorce instead of heroine. Cynthia Lennon is the former wife of musician John Lennon who is one of the founder members of The Beatles, and mother of Julian Lennon. The text is about Paul McCartney's comfort for (advice to) John Lennon's son Julian as his parents were getting a divorce. Jude in the lyrics refers to Julian.

Appendix 4 Text 3 Titanic sinking to be re-lived a century on
(from *The Daily Telegraph*, Saturday, April 7, 2012).

Titanic sinking to be re-lived a century on
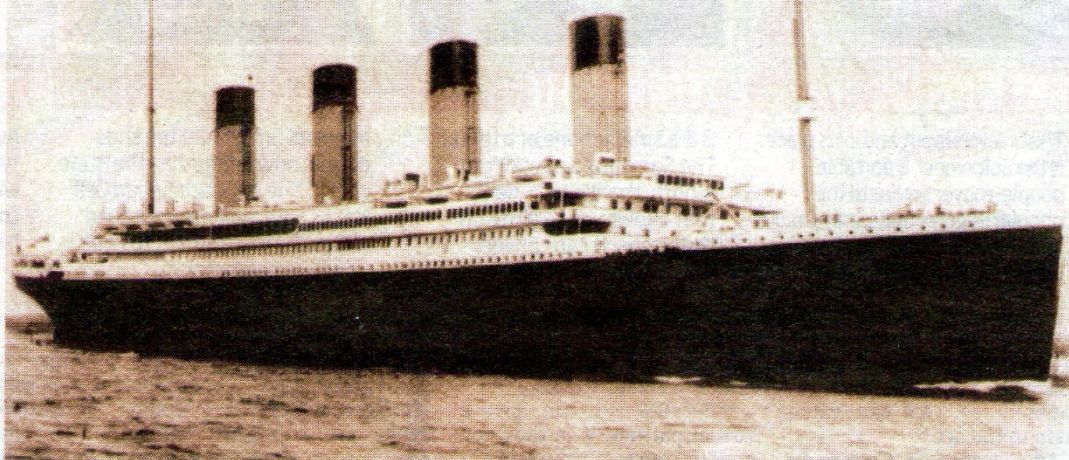
The 'unsinkable' Titanic hit an iceberg at 11.55pm local time in 1912 and sank with the loss of 1517 lives.

What if the *Titanic* had struck an iceberg in 2012 rather than 1912? With today's hi-tech portable devices, frantic messages would no doubt be sent instantly from people on board via wireless communication, letting the world know of the disaster as it unfolded.

But in fact that's not far from what actually happened 100 years ago next week.

Cutting-edge wireless technology on board the supposedly unsinkable ship meant short messages could be broadcast across the Atlantic in an instant, in much the same way as Twitter and mobile phone SMS are used today.

It is fitting then that those fateful messages sent before and after the *Titanic* hit an iceberg on April 15, 1912, will be broadcast once again, at precisely the same time 100 years later via Twitter.

> " CQD CQD SOS Titanic Position 41.44 N 50.24 W. Require immediate assistance. Come at once. We struck an iceberg. Sinking

The frantic calls of SOS (one of the first times the new distress code was used) will be tweeted from 12.55pm Sydney time next Saturday, using the #TitanicMMA hashtag.

The local start time equates to 11.55pm in the Newfoundland time zone, the ship's geographic location at the time of the sinking.

Eight iceberg warnings sent to the *Titanic's* wireless crew, which went largely ignored, will be tweeted prior to the start of the real-time account.

The broadcast will come from the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, in Nova Scotia, Canada, where many of the *Titanic's* floating wreckage ended up.

Elsewhere online to mark the 100th anniversary, genealogy site ancestry.com.au will provide free access to its *Titanic*-related archives. These archives include the official passenger list with each person's name, age and occupation.

Crew records uploaded to the site reveal the addresses, nationalities and positions held by staff on board, while death records and coronial inquest files provide an insight into the 1517 people who died that night.

Go to ancestry.com.au/titanic for more information.

Appendix 5 Pictures of Titanic
(From: https://www.google.com.au/search?tbm=isch&hl=en&source=hp&biw=1366&bih=649&q=t
itanic&gbv=2&oq=titanic&aq=f&aqi=g10&aql=&gs_l=img.3..0l10.5279.8909.0.10144.15.12.3.0.0
.0.274.1592.2-7.7.0...0.0.IDZx2Kcx9NY).