



Te Waka Wahine Court of Inquiry Programme - years 7-10

It is 1969. Last year on 10th April 1968 the passenger ship Wahine was wrecked at the entrance to Wellington Harbour. 51 people were killed. The government has set up a Court of Inquiry. You and your team members are part of the Court.

It is your job to find out as much as possible about the disaster so that New Zealand can begin to understand this terrible tragedy.

As part of a team, you need to work together to find the answers to the following questions. You should use the old newspapers and maps etc to help you with your answers.

Establishing the facts:

- 1 Where was the Wahine coming from and going to?

from:

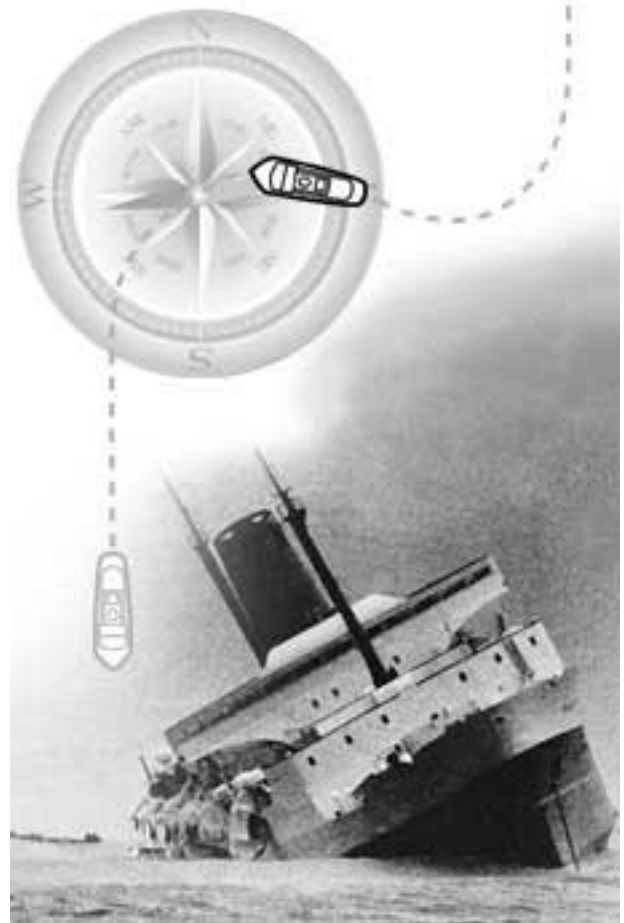
to:

- 2 How many people were on board?

- 3 Who was the captain of the ship?

- 4 51 people died on the day.
Where were most of the bodies found?

- 5 How and why did the bodies get there?





Investigating the causes:

- 6 As with most tragedies, there was more than just one reason for the disaster. Think about the different reasons why the ship ended up on the rocks and why so many people died.

Using the Areas of Expertise chart below, and the resources at the Museum, brainstorm some of the things that contributed to the disaster.

Areas of Expertise:

WEATHER (including forecasting)

HARBOUR (including tides)

EQUIPMENT (including ship)

DECISIONS and ACTIONS





Investigating the causes (continued):

- 7 Your team will be given one expert area from this chart to investigate further and present your findings to the court.

Choose one main problem in your given area. Consider all the factors that are involved with this and make some notes:

What happened?

Where did this occur?

Who was involved?

When did this happen – before what or after what?

Why do you think it happened?

- 8 Your team must now prepare a report to be given at the Court of Inquiry. Answer the questions below and use these as notes for your presentation.

Description: What happened?

Consequence: What was the result?

Problem: What was the cause?

Possible solution: How could this situation have been improved or been avoided?

To help you with your ideas, use the problem-solving grid on the next page.





Investigating the causes (continued):

The Wahine Disaster

PROBLEM:

Possible solutions	Possible consequences of solutions

Our choice is

Because

Class Challenge

- 9 Discuss and rate the problems presented to the Court of Inquiry, with 1 being the most significant problem and 5 being the least significant.

1

2

3

4

5

- 10 Given that you cannot change the weather or geography of a place, what is the one thing you could change to reduce such loss of life in a disaster such as the Wahine.

