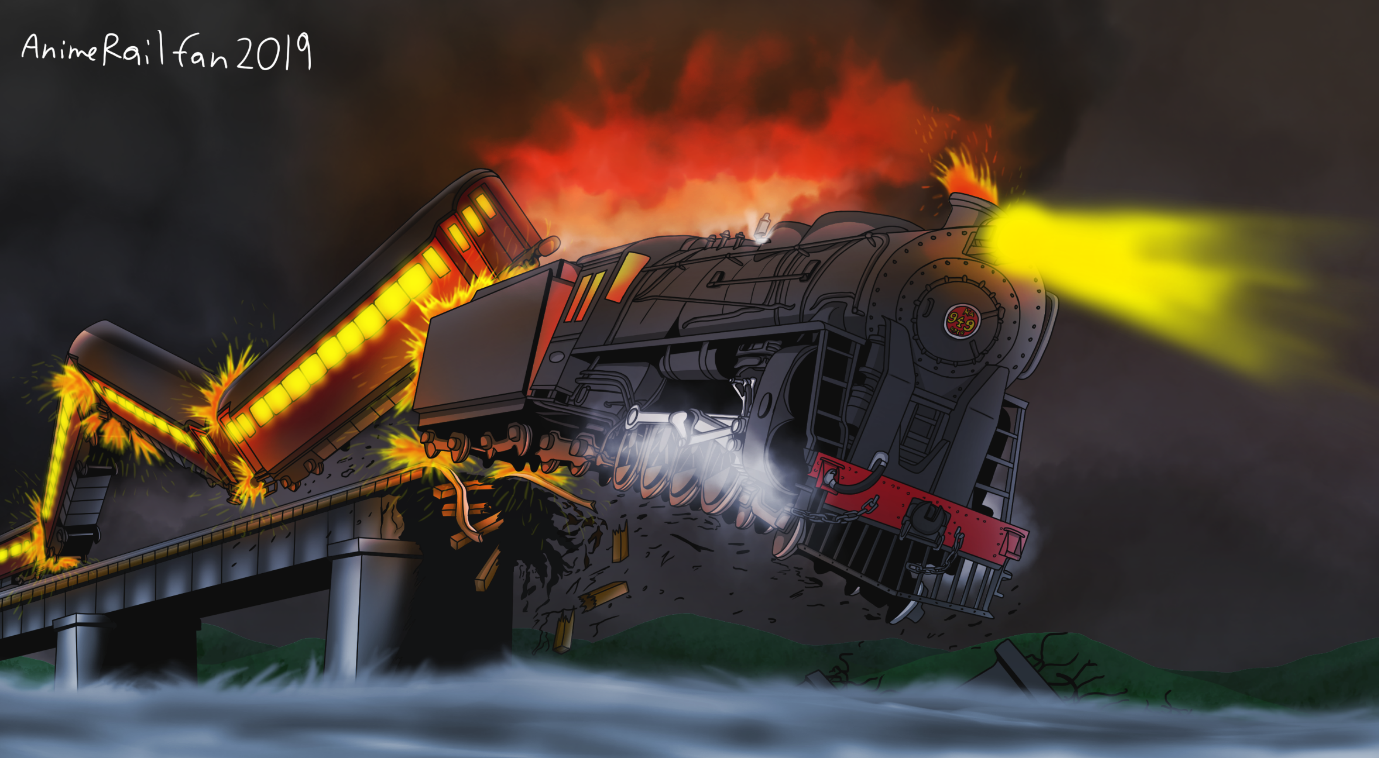
**Mr Bartholomew**

**Global Studies Year 8**

**Survival**

**Week 2 Lesson 1**

# The Tangiwai Rail Disaster of 1953



**Success Criteria:**  Students will become familiar the Tangiwai Rail disaster and be about to recount what led to the event and how it could have been prevented.

**Task 1:** In your Red Books write today’s date and ‘Week 2 Lesson 1 – The Tangiwai Rail Disaster.

**Brief Discussion:** What do students know about this event?

# Task 2: Watch the video clip: ‘The Tangiwai Train Disaster 66 Years Later’ at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJssGS9I4MM> (12:48 sec.)

# This gives an excellent overview of the event which is recreated with good actors.

1. How many passengers & crew were on the train? (1:50 sec. mark)

2. When Cyril Ellis sees the bridge is out – how does he try to stop the train?

3. Why didn’t the train stop for Ellis?

4. How many people died in the crash?

5. What is a lahar? (8:00 sec.)

6. What action did the government take after the accident to prevent a similar event from happening? (9:00 sec.)

7. A similar event happened in 2007 at the same spot! What was the result? Did any trains crash? Why or why not? (10:00 sec.)

**Task 3:**  Read the article below, ‘Death at Tangiwai: A Class Affair.’ Before you do, look up the following definitions:

1. First class travel.

2. Second class travel.

3. Carnage.

4. Derailment.

## **Task 4:**

## Read the article below and answer the following question in your Red Books: ‘Why did so many wealthier people survive the disaster, and so many poorer passengers die?’

## **Death at Tangiwai: A Class Affair**

Almost everyone killed at Tangiwai was travelling in a second-class carriage – 148 out of 151. Traditionally located at the front of the train, these were more affected by the noise, smoke, coal dust and fumes of the locomotive, something those in first class paid to avoid. In a head-on collision or derailment, second-class passengers were at greater risk of death or injury. At Tangiwai, just 28 of the more than 170 second-class passengers survived. Only one first-class passenger was lost, along with the driver and fireman. Most of the passengers in the final three (first-class) carriages, which remained on the track, initially did not even know what had happened to their train.

The Tangiwai disaster was especially tragic for the Nicholls family from Palmerston North and the Benton family from Marton, which each lost five members, and the Fitzgerald family from Lower Hutt, which lost four. Amidst the death and carnage, though, there were some good-luck stories.

Seventeen-year-old Barbara Mahy and her younger brother John had first-class tickets but could only find seats in a second-class carriage. After leaving Waiōuru the guard moved them to the last first-class carriage, at the rear of the train. Almost all the occupants of their original carriage were killed. Christine Cole Catley and her three small children were booked to travel second-class that evening but due to a change of plans travelled a day earlier. For the rest of her life she wondered about ‘the people who considered themselves lucky’ to get those tickets at the last moment.

The Tangiwai tragedy killed more people than the combined total of all the other rail accidents in New Zealand history (the next-worst accidents, at [Hyde in 1943](https://nzhistory.govt.nz/node/2874) and [Ōngarue in 1923](https://nzhistory.govt.nz/node/2903), claimed 21 and 17 lives respectively). It is worth noting, too, that in 1953 road accidents in New Zealand claimed 279 lives.

**Task 5: Go to: How did sand help to save the lives of many passengers on the train? The answer can be found on this page:** [**https://tangiwai1953.weebly.com/causes-and-consequences.html**](https://tangiwai1953.weebly.com/causes-and-consequences.html)

**Write the question and answer into your Red Books.**

**Week 2 Lesson 2:**

**The Orpheus Shipwreck of 1863**



# Read the following article:

# The Orpheus Shipwreck

At approximately 1:30pm, on 7 February, 1863, the *HMS Orpheus* was only miles from her destination port of Auckland when it struck a sandbar at Manukau Heads. As the waves got heavier, the ship started breaking up. 189 people died, making this New Zealand’s worst maritime disaster.

## **What happened?**

On 7 February, 1863, the *HMS Orpheus* was getting near to her destination port of Auckland. On board were 259 men, many of them British soldiers heading for the Waikato Land Wars.

The harbour bar at the head of the Manukau Harbour was a sandbank built up by the movement of the waves. Crossing it had to be done at the right time, when the tide was high enough and the water over the bar deep enough for ships to pass safely.

The signalman at the signal station on Paratutai Island signalled the *Orpheus* to “take the bar” (across the harbour mouth) at about 11am when the tide was right. Weather conditions were fine and sunny.

The signalman watched the *Orpheus* take a course too far to the south of the bar to cross it safely and tried to signal the ship to keep northward, but it did not change course. On board the ship, a seaman with experience of the harbour realised the ship was taking the wrong course. Alarmed, he went to the master of the ship and pointed out the correct course on the chart.

Before the turn could be made, the *Orpheus* struck the sandbar, burying the nose of the ship. The engines seized and gradually the *Orpheus* slipped further over on to her side. A south-westerly wind had sprung up and the waves were growing stronger.

A steamer had just been piloted out of the harbour when the skipper saw the *Orpheus* out by the bar. At first he did not realise that it was in difficulties, until he met two smaller boats from the *Orpheus*. Another boat from the *Orpheus* had been lost when it was lowered over the side. Most of the 40 men on board were drowned or crushed in the wreck.

Meanwhile the men remaining on the *Orpheus* had climbed the rigging in an attempt to stay clear of the waves which were breaking over the ship halfway up the mast. Some tried to climb forward to the bowsprit and jump into the water there, but many fell to the deck making the attempt.

Smaller boats from the steamer moved in around the *Orpheus* to rescue survivors from the sea. Between 8 and 8:30pm the masts fell into the sea, taking with them over 100 men who had climbed the rigging. Further attempts to save the drowning men were made at night by the light of the moon, but by dawn only the stumps of the masts and pieces of the deck remained visible. There were only 70 survivors.

### **How many died?**

189 people died.

### Other events and outcomes

Three major enquiries were held into the wreck of the *Orpheus*. There were differences between the powers of the New Zealand authorities and those of the Royal Navy, who refused to let any of its officers be blamed.

However, the navigation charts carried on the *Orpheus* were out of date. The sandbar had grown by some 800 metres and extended well out into the old channel and none of the officers on the *Orpheus* had had experience on the Manukau Harbour. They were sailing according to the directions on the out-of-date charts.

The *Orpheus* shipwreck is still New Zealand’s worst shipwreck, in which the greatest number of people died.

**Assignment:**

# Disasters are often not an ‘act of god’ but human creations. That was true on the wreck of the *Orpheus*. Based on the reading above – Imagine you are a newspaper reporter who has been asked to write a feature story remembering this famous event in New Zealand history. Your article will contain two paragraphs:

# Paragraph #1:

# Write a big picture summary of the event in your own words – include who, what, where, when, and why

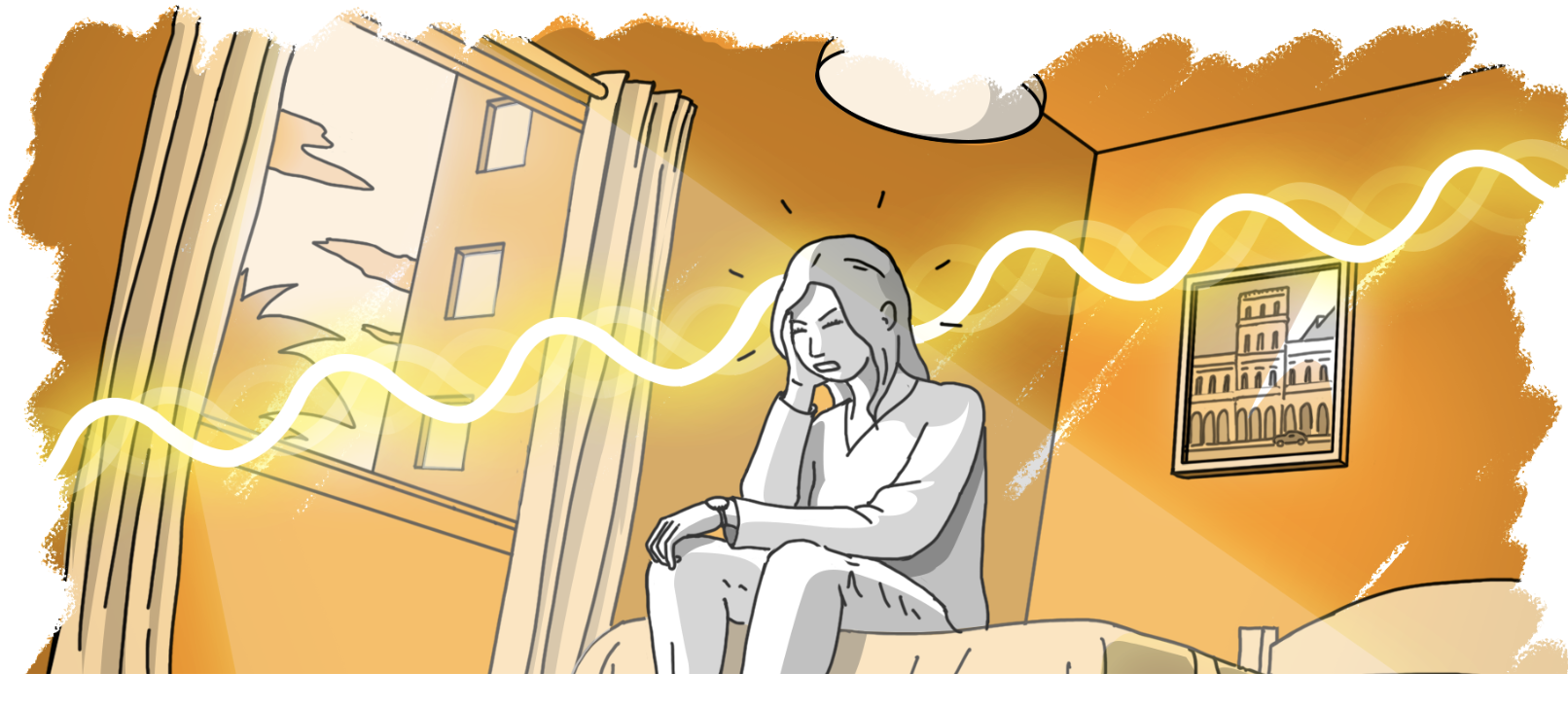
# Paragraph #2:

# Based on information contained in the article above, what lessons can be learned from this tragedy? What lessons can be learned from this event so it doesn’t happen again?

# Week 2 Lesson 3

**Current Event Analysis # 1**

**The Havana Syndrome Mystery Solved**



In late 2016 several American and Canadian Embassy staff reported feeling unwell after hearing mysterious sounds while they were stationed in Havana, Cuba. Some people have suggested that they were targeted with a Russian secret weapon. While we explored this Current Event last year – new information has since come to light.

**Task 1:**  Watch the new 60 Minutes report on Havana Syndrome. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYDDxfpV-WE

Write a half-page summary of the position held by the skeptical scientist from the University of Auckland. Why is he reluctant to believe in Havana Syndrome?

**Task 2:** Read the article ‘Havana Syndrome: The Story that Refuses to Die’ at: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/nz/blog/its-catching/202404/havana-syndrome-a-story-that-refuses-to-die>

Answer the following questions:

1. What has the United States intelligence community (the CIA & FBI) concluded about Havana Syndrome?

2. List the 5 different reasons why the author of the article believes is keeping the Havana Syndrome myth alive. Write a summary of each reason in at least 3 sentences – and in your own words – DO NOT COPY word for word from the article.

**1. Current Fears & the Power of Moral Panics**

**2. Ego**

**3. The Prevalence of AHIs**

**4. Excitement**

**5. The Search for Confirmation**

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