

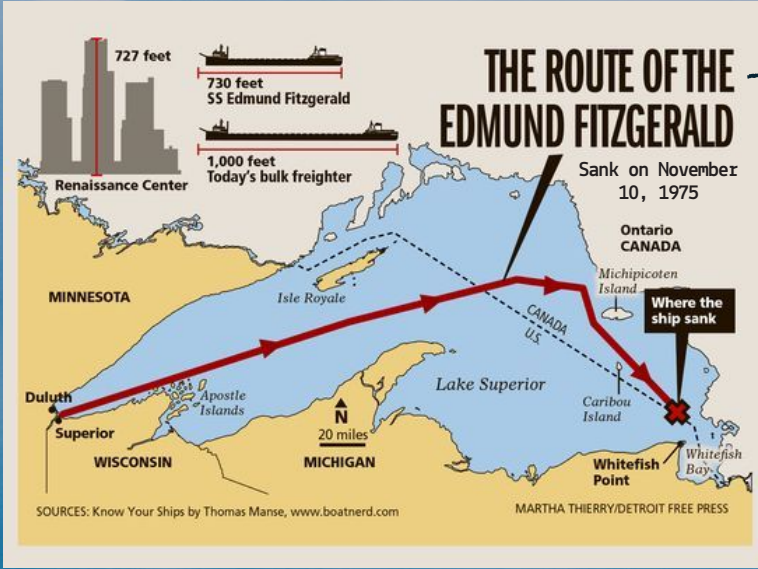
# THE WRECK OF THE EDMUND FITZGERALD

By Gordon Lightfoot

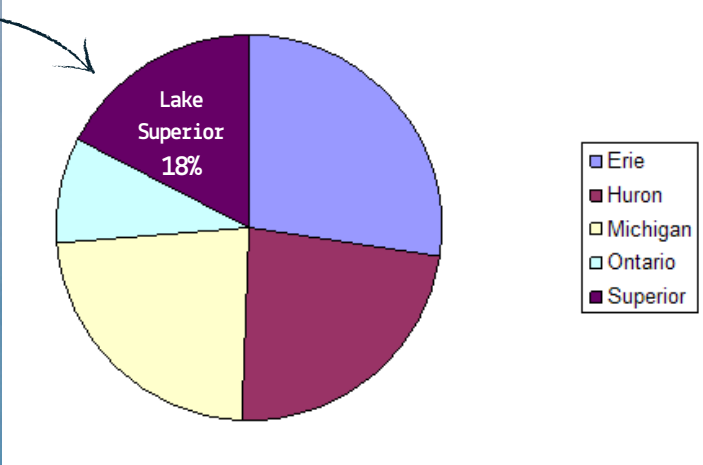
Shipwreck: the wreckage or destruction of a ship at sea by storm, sinking, or collision.



## INTRODUCTION & STATISTICS



PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL WRECKS BY LAKE (SINCE 1950)



## THE THEME OF LOSS

Loss is sometimes inevitable.

"Good ship and crew was a bone to be chewed  
When the gales of November came early"  
(Lightfoot 7, 8)

People are sometimes too willing to give up, which is a form of loss itself.

"At seven pm a main hatchway caved in, he said  
Fellas, it's been good t'know ya" (Lightfoot 27, 28)

Loss usually involves grieving, by the people that survive.

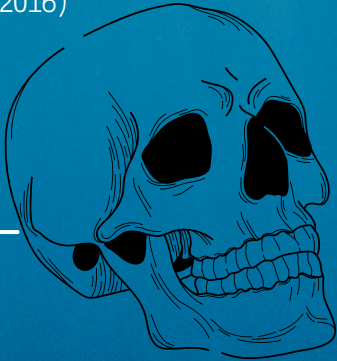
"all that remains is the faces and the names"  
(Lightfoot 39)

When the Edmund Fitzgerald and its crew was lost, the lake "gained" something.

"Superior, they said, never gives up her dead"  
(Lightfoot 55)

Emotional loss is devastating, but physical loss or the unknown can be just as difficult.

"'we haven't found any people alive or dead,'" (Detroit Free Press 2016)



## THE TITANIC

The theme of tragedy and loss is clear in both the actual event and film. This connects to the Edmund Fitzgerald shipwreck through mood and morals, exploring life, death, and sorrow. Though it sank in 1912, the film portrayed the loss felt in the shipwreck in a way that continues to be tragic and moving today.

"...the breadth of the film's success is better explained by the way it touches universal feelings." (Ebert, 1998)

"...the inexorable way the tragedy progresses, the film places us in a situation with fewer and fewer choices, until finally there is only one." (Ebert, 1998)

## CONCLUSION

Loss is a central theme in The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald, as the shipwreck took the lives of 29 people, as well as the ship. Though ships are safer today than in the past, lives are still lost due to shipwrecks, with loss being a major part of these events. Loss can be a metaphor to so many aspects of life, and used in literature to give depth, meaning or inspiration. One perspective could be that although sad, it is sometimes necessary. Without loss, nothing could be gained; without sorrow, there could never be happiness.

"The legend lives on..."  
(Lightfoot 53)

"Many artistic and literary figures not only could have encountered [shipwrecks] in newspaper accounts and other published shipwreck narratives but also could have been acquainted with them more intimately."  
(Landow 2015)

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