Names That Remain

How the Triangle fire is remembered today

SS24.HS.1 "Describe how a selected historical subject is currently remembered or regarded, explaining how historical memory contributes to current thinking about the event..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways people remember the fire today, circle two historical details that shape that memory, and number two places where the text connects memory to how people think about work now.

Remembering the Triangle Fire

1. On March 25, 1911, a fire swept through the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in New York City. The factory occupied the upper floors of a building, and 146 workers died. Many were young immigrant women. Some exit doors were locked, and a fire escape collapsed. Today the building still stands. A permanent memorial, unveiled in 2023, wraps part of its exterior with a steel ribbon bearing victims' names. A passerby can encounter those names while walking to work or school. This public display presents the dead as individuals, not just a number in a textbook.

2. Each March, people gather near the former factory to read the victims' names aloud. Labor groups and descendants of workers have helped keep this annual remembrance alive. Speakers often connect the fire to workplace safety rules and workers' power to organize. That connection did not appear from nowhere: garment workers had already protested dangerous conditions before 1911, and public outrage after the fire increased pressure for reform in New York. Remembering the tragedy through the work of organizers can make today's safety rules seem like hard-won protections, rather than automatic features of a job.

3. Historical memory also depends on whose experiences are included. Accounts that emphasize factory owners' decisions draw attention to responsibility for unsafe conditions. Accounts that include earlier labor protests show that workers demanded change before the disaster, not only after it. Because many victims were immigrant women, descendants and labor groups have pushed to keep their names and voices in public discussion. These choices shape present-day debates: people may ask who is responsible for safety when a workplace relies on low-paid workers. No single memorial or lesson can include every perspective.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the permanent memorial's design affect the way passersby may regard the people who died?

2. How can the annual name reading influence the way people think about workplace safety rules today?

3. Why does including garment workers' protests before 1911 change the story people tell about safety reforms?

4. How might a story centered on factory owners' decisions raise a different present-day question from one centered on workers' protests?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 65 to 85 word script for a new community radio spot about the Triangle fire. Include one accurate historical detail, show how you would represent the people affected, and connect that choice to a question about workplace safety today.

ANSWER KEY

Names That Remain

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.HS.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways people remember the fire today, circle two historical details that shape that memory, and number two places where the text connects memory to how people think about work now. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the permanent memorial's design affect the way passersby may regard the people who died?	**Its ribbon displays victims' names where passersby can see them, encouraging people to regard the victims as individuals rather than a single death toll.**
2	How can the annual name reading influence the way people think about workplace safety rules today?	**The reading links remembrance of the victims to organizing and reform, helping people see safety rules as protections won through effort.**
3	Why does including garment workers' protests before 1911 change the story people tell about safety reforms?	**It shows that workers demanded safer conditions before the fire, so reforms were shaped by their efforts as well as by public outrage afterward.**
4	How might a story centered on factory owners' decisions raise a different present-day question from one centered on workers' protests?	**A story about owners may raise questions about employers' responsibility for safety. A story about protests may raise questions about workers' power to demand safer conditions.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Imagine a worker arriving for her shift, expecting an ordinary day. In 1911, 146 workers died in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in New York City. Many were young immigrant women. Think of each worker as a person with a life beyond the factory, not just part of a total. When you hear about danger at a workplace today, ask whether workers can report it safely and whether anyone listens.

Accept other supported explanations that connect a present-day representation to its effect on public thinking. For the radio spot, check that the historical detail is accurate and that the script makes its proposed representation and present-day connection clear.