History for the Public

How format and evidence shape a historical account

SS24.HS.9a "Describe ways in which public historians present history to audiences."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three ways the historian presents the Triangle fire to an audience, one in each paragraph. Circle one source of historical evidence used in each way.

One Fire, Three Ways to Tell Its History

1. On March 25, 1911, a fire at New York City's Triangle Shirtwaist factory killed 146 workers. Many were young immigrant women who made clothing. A public historian planning a museum exhibit must decide what visitors will notice first and what they can examine closely. The exhibit might place a factory time card beside a short caption explaining a worker's shift. A larger label could connect the fire to demands for safer workplaces. Visitors can pause, compare an object with its explanation, and consider how one worker's routine relates to a larger event. The card supplies evidence, while the caption gives it context.

2. The same historian could make an audio tour for people walking through the neighborhood where the factory stood. At a stop near the former factory building, a narrator might read a short excerpt from a survivor's testimony, then explain where and when that testimony was recorded. Voices and street sounds can help listeners imagine the setting, but recorded sounds from today must not be passed off as sounds from 1911. The tour reaches people who might never enter a museum. It also unfolds in a set order, so the historian chooses what listeners hear before they reach the next stop.

3. An online collection could let people far from New York explore scanned newspaper reports, inspection records, and photographs from the period. Brief notes would identify each source and explain that early newspaper accounts sometimes gave conflicting details. Visitors could choose which records to open, rather than follow the fixed order of an audio tour. A search tool might help a student trace how different sources described the fire. Unlike an exhibit, the site can show many records without fitting them into a single room. Still, selecting and labeling those records shapes the story an audience encounters.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the museum exhibit use a time card and a caption to help visitors understand the fire?

2. How could the audio tour reach a different audience from the exhibit, and how would listeners encounter its account?

3. Why would the audio tour need to identify when its sounds and testimony were recorded?

4. How does the online collection give visitors a different way to explore evidence than the audio tour does?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a town is marking the opening of its first public library 100 years ago. In 4 to 5 sentences, propose one way a public historian could present this history to a specific audience, name two kinds of sources to seek, explain how the audience would encounter them, and identify one point the historian should verify or label clearly.

ANSWER KEY

History for the Public

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.HS.9a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three ways the historian presents the Triangle fire to an audience, one in each paragraph. Circle one source of historical evidence used in each way. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the museum exhibit use a time card and a caption to help visitors understand the fire?	**The time card provides evidence of a worker's routine, while the caption explains its context. Visitors can pause and connect that routine to the larger event.**
2	How could the audio tour reach a different audience from the exhibit, and how would listeners encounter its account?	**It reaches people walking through the neighborhood who might not enter a museum. They hear the account in a set order at stops along the route.**
3	Why would the audio tour need to identify when its sounds and testimony were recorded?	**Identifying the testimony helps listeners understand its source. Identifying present-day sounds keeps listeners from mistaking them for recordings from 1911.**
4	How does the online collection give visitors a different way to explore evidence than the audio tour does?	**Online visitors can choose and search records in their own order. Audio tour listeners hear what the historian selected in a set order.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would create an audio tour for middle school students outside the town's former library building. I would seek a dated newspaper report about the opening and an early borrowing ledger. A narrator would quote the report and describe what the ledger records about library use. Students could listen at the site and connect those sources to the place. Before calling it the opening site, I would verify that the building housed the first library.

For the marking job, accept museum exhibit, audio tour, and online collection, with an evidence source from each paragraph. For Your Turn, accept other feasible formats and sources if the response explains the audience's experience and identifies a detail to verify or label.