Before or Because

Trace event chains and test claims about cause.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.3 "Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number the major events in the order they occurred. Underline words or phrases that show one event caused, contributed to, or merely came before another.

The Triangle Fire and Reform

1 On March 25, 1911, a fire began near closing time at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in New York City. Workers on the eighth, ninth, and tenth floors handled fabric scraps and used machines powered by belts. Smoke spread quickly through the upper floors. Many workers headed for stairways, but one exit door on the ninth floor was locked. A fire escape collapsed under the weight of people, and firefighters' ladders did not reach the highest floors. Within minutes, 146 people, mostly young immigrant women, had died.

2 News accounts printed victims' names and described the unsafe exits, bringing crowds to a public funeral procession. The disaster occurred after years in which reformers and some workers had criticized dangerous factory conditions. Those earlier complaints did not produce major statewide changes by themselves. After the fire, New York legislators created the Factory Investigating Commission, which inspected workplaces and held public hearings. Frances Perkins, who witnessed the aftermath, later became a prominent labor official. The commission's reports documented hazards such as blocked exits, poor sanitation, and weak fire protections. Its investigations gave lawmakers detailed evidence for proposed reforms.

3 Between 1911 and 1914, New York passed more than thirty laws addressing workplace safety. The new rules required measures including fire drills, unlocked exit doors during work, and improved fire escapes. The Triangle fire was not the only influence on these laws. The commission's inspections, testimony from workers and experts, and public pressure also shaped particular provisions. Still, the fire did more than come before the reforms in time. It prompted the commission's creation and intensified public attention, helping set the investigation and lawmaking process in motion. A careful account therefore connects several causes rather than claiming that one event alone produced every law.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Put these events in chronological order: the Factory Investigating Commission begins its work, reformers criticize factory conditions, New York passes workplace-safety laws, and the Triangle fire occurs.

2. Explain how two conditions during the fire contributed to the high number of deaths. Use details from the passage.

3. Did the earlier complaints about factory conditions cause the major statewide changes described in the passage? Explain the difference between occurring earlier and causing change.

4. Does the passage present the Triangle fire as the only cause of the later workplace-safety laws? Support your answer with the event chain in the text.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write exactly four sentences that trace the path from unsafe factory conditions to later laws. Identify one event that merely preceded the reforms and explain how at least two events contributed to causing them.

ANSWER KEY

Before or Because

HIGH SCHOOL · RH.9-10.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Number the major events in the order they occurred. Underline words or phrases that show one event caused, contributed to, or merely came before another. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Put these events in chronological order: the Factory Investigating Commission begins its work, reformers criticize factory conditions, New York passes workplace-safety laws, and the Triangle fire occurs.	**Reformers criticize factory conditions, the Triangle fire occurs, the Factory Investigating Commission begins its work, New York passes workplace-safety laws.**
2	Explain how two conditions during the fire contributed to the high number of deaths. Use details from the passage.	**The locked ninth-floor exit blocked an escape route, and the fire escape collapsed under people's weight. Firefighters' ladders also could not reach the highest floors.**
3	Did the earlier complaints about factory conditions cause the major statewide changes described in the passage? Explain the difference between occurring earlier and causing change.	**No. The complaints came before the fire and reforms, but the passage states that they did not produce major statewide changes by themselves.**
4	Does the passage present the Triangle fire as the only cause of the later workplace-safety laws? Support your answer with the event chain in the text.	**No. The fire prompted the commission's creation and increased public attention, but the commission's inspections, worker and expert testimony, and public pressure also shaped the laws.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Years of complaints about factory dangers preceded the Triangle fire, but the passage says those complaints alone did not bring major statewide change. The fire exposed the consequences of unsafe exits and drew public attention. It prompted lawmakers to create the Factory Investigating Commission, whose inspections and hearings supplied evidence. The later laws resulted from this chain plus worker and expert testimony and public pressure, so the fire was an important cause, not the only cause.

Accept answers that distinguish sequence from causation and support claims with accurate passage details. For Part 3, students should identify earlier complaints as preceding events and explain the fire, commission, evidence, and public pressure as connected causes.