From Smog to Change

Trace how an author develops a public crisis into an investigation and response.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.3 "Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the main focus of each paragraph. In the margin, number 1, 2, and 3 beside details that show how the author moves from the event, to evidence, to actions taken afterward.

London's Deadly Smog

(1) In December 1952, cold air settled over London and trapped smoke close to the streets. Homes, factories, and power stations burned large amounts of coal, sending soot and sulfur dioxide into the still air. For four days, a yellow-gray fog reduced visibility so sharply that buses stopped and people struggled to find familiar corners. Hospitals received many patients with breathing problems. Later estimates linked the episode to thousands of deaths, especially among older adults and people with lung disease. At first, many residents treated the fog as an unusually severe version of a common winter nuisance.

(2) Doctors and public health researchers began comparing death records from the foggy days with records from earlier winters. They found a sharp rise in deaths from respiratory and heart conditions. A 1954 government inquiry gathered testimony from scientists, fuel users, and local officials. Its report identified domestic coal fires as a major source of smoke, while also noting pollution from industry and power generation. The inquiry did not treat the fog as a single, isolated accident. It placed weather, fuel use, and health records in the same report, alongside charts showing the rise in deaths.

(3) Parliament passed the Clean Air Act in 1956. The law allowed local authorities to create smoke-control areas, where households had to use cleaner fuels or smokeless appliances. Government grants helped some residents replace old heating equipment. The act also required limits on smoke from industrial chimneys, though enforcement and the availability of cleaner fuel varied by place. London's air did not become clear overnight, and later laws strengthened pollution controls. Still, smoke measurements and public health records in the following decades documented major declines in the thick, coal-driven smogs that had once shut down city life.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does the author establish in paragraph 1 before presenting research and an inquiry in paragraph 2? Use two kinds of details from paragraph 1.

2. Trace the order of ideas in paragraph 2. What comes first, next, and last, and how does that order develop the paragraph's analysis?

3. Why does the author end paragraph 1 with residents' early view of the fog before beginning paragraph 2 with doctors' records?

4. How does paragraph 3 build on the sources of pollution identified in paragraph 2? Explain using one source from paragraph 2 and one action or result from paragraph 3.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write exactly 3 sentences that analyze the author's structure across all three paragraphs. Name the focus of each paragraph, then explain how one detail in the final paragraph grows out of an earlier detail.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the main focus of each paragraph. In the margin, number 1, 2, and 3 beside details that show how the author moves from the event, to evidence, to actions taken afterward. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does the author establish in paragraph 1 before presenting research and an inquiry in paragraph 2? Use two kinds of details from paragraph 1.	**The author first establishes the smog's immediate disruption and human cost, using details about stopped buses, poor visibility, hospital patients, and deaths. The paragraph also shows that many residents initially saw it as a familiar winter problem.**
2	Trace the order of ideas in paragraph 2. What comes first, next, and last, and how does that order develop the paragraph's analysis?	**The paragraph begins with doctors comparing death records, moves to the government inquiry and its testimony, and ends by bringing weather, fuel use, and health records together. The order moves from an observed health pattern to a broader examination of possible causes.**
3	Why does the author end paragraph 1 with residents' early view of the fog before beginning paragraph 2 with doctors' records?	**The placement contrasts residents' initial belief that the fog was an unusually bad nuisance with the later evidence that revealed a serious health crisis.**
4	How does paragraph 3 build on the sources of pollution identified in paragraph 2? Explain using one source from paragraph 2 and one action or result from paragraph 3.	**Paragraph 2 identifies domestic coal fires and industrial pollution as sources. Paragraph 3 describes smoke-control areas, cleaner household fuels, and limits on industrial chimney smoke, then notes later declines in coal-driven smogs.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The author opens with the smog's conditions, disruptions, and health costs, so the reader sees the event before considering explanations. Next, the inquiry moves from death records to testimony and a report about pollution sources. Finally, smoke-control areas and cleaner fuels address the coal smoke named earlier, while later health records show what changed.

Accept responses that accurately trace the progression from the smog event, to investigation and evidence, to pollution-control actions and later results. Students may use different relevant details, as long as they explain how the order connects the ideas.