

Evidence Under Pressure

Analyze sources, claims, and viewpoints in a labor-history inquiry.

SS.6.W.1 "Utilize historical inquiry skills and analytical processes."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB As you read, underline each source and circle words that show a source's viewpoint or limit. Number the three pieces of evidence that a historian compares before making a conclusion.

Investigating the Lawrence Strike

- ① In 1912, thousands of textile workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts, went on strike after a state law shortened the workweek. Many workers found that their weekly pay had dropped. To investigate why the strike grew, a historian begins with questions: Who described the pay cut? What did different people want? The historian does not assume that one account tells the whole story. Instead, she looks for evidence created at the time and compares accounts from people with different roles.
- ② One piece of evidence is a letter written by a mill worker to a friend during the strike. The worker wrote that her family's food money was shrinking. This primary source gives a worker's firsthand view, but it cannot prove that every family had the same experience. A newspaper owned by a local business printed that the strike harmed the city. Its report may show what business leaders feared, yet ownership could shape which details the paper emphasized.
- ③ Another source is a Massachusetts state report published after investigators collected wage records. It lists lower weekly earnings for some mill jobs after the hours law began. The report supports the claim that pay cuts occurred, but a careful historian asks which jobs and workers were counted. After comparing sources, the historian can conclude that reduced pay helped cause the strike. She should also explain that workers' letters and business newspapers describe the event from different viewpoints.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Which question in paragraph 1 helps the historian investigate the pay cut?

2 What does the mill worker's letter suggest, and what can it not prove?

3 Why might the business-owned newspaper emphasize some details about the strike?

4 Which source supports the claim that pay cuts occurred, and what should a historian still ask about it?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write 3 or 4 sentences that plan a new investigation about the Lawrence strike. State one question not answered in the passage, name two different sources you would seek, and explain how comparing them could help you answer your question.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

As you read, underline each source and circle words that show a source's viewpoint or limit. Number the three pieces of evidence that a historian compares before making a conclusion. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which question in paragraph 1 helps the historian investigate the pay cut?	Who described the pay cut?
2	What does the mill worker's letter suggest, and what can it not prove?	It suggests that the worker's family had less money for food. It cannot prove that every family had the same experience.
3	Why might the business-owned newspaper emphasize some details about the strike?	Its ownership could shape the report. The newspaper may have emphasized details that reflected business leaders' fears or interests.
4	Which source supports the claim that pay cuts occurred, and what should a historian still ask about it?	The Massachusetts state report supports the claim. A historian should ask which jobs and workers were counted.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would ask whether the strike changed school attendance for children in Lawrence. I would look for school attendance records and letters written by workers' families. The records could show changes in attendance, while the letters could explain why children missed school. Comparing both sources could help me decide whether the strike affected attendance.

Accept any historically reasonable unanswered question, two distinct relevant sources, and an explanation of how comparison could strengthen or limit a conclusion. Students may name primary or secondary sources if their choices fit the question.