Evidence After the Fire

Build a historical claim from sources and reasoning

6-9.WH.6.4 "Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the passage's main claim, then circle one detail from each named source that supports it and label the details NPS or Kheel.

Why Was the Triangle Fire So Deadly?

1 On March 25, 1911, a fire swept through the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in New York City. The factory occupied the eighth, ninth, and tenth floors of a building. According to the National Park Service, 146 workers died. That number matters, but it does not explain why so many people could not escape. A stronger historical claim is that dangerous working conditions made the fire far deadlier. To test that claim, we need evidence about the exits and the rescue effort, not just a count of the dead.

2 The Cornell University Kheel Center preserves accounts from people connected to the fire. In these accounts, survivors described finding a locked exit door on the ninth floor. Their reports are evidence about what escape was like inside the factory, although a witness could not see every floor at once. The National Park Service also reports that firefighters' ladders could reach only the sixth floor. Since the factory was on floors eight through ten, the ladders could not reach workers at its windows. Together, these details support the claim about dangerous conditions.

3 A source's job helps us judge what it can show. The Kheel Center at Cornell University holds historical records, so its survivor accounts let us study what people said they experienced. The National Park Service, a federal agency, brings together research about the fire. Neither source proves that every exit was locked or that ladders alone caused the deaths. After the fire, New York created a Factory Investigating Commission and passed new safety laws. The response shows that officials recognized a need to reduce risks in workplaces.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What claim does the passage make about why the fire was so deadly, and why is the death toll alone not enough to prove it?

2. How does the ladder height support the claim about dangerous conditions? Use floor numbers in your reasoning.

3. Why are the survivor accounts useful evidence, and what can they not show?

4. How does New York's action after the fire support a claim that factory safety was a public concern?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence argument claiming that New York needed changes to factory safety after the Triangle fire. Use one detail from the Kheel Center accounts and one from the National Park Service, explain how they support your claim, and state one limit on what the evidence proves.

ANSWER KEY

Evidence After the Fire

GRADES 6-9 · 6-9.WH.6.4

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the passage's main claim, then circle one detail from each named source that supports it and label the details NPS or Kheel. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What claim does the passage make about why the fire was so deadly, and why is the death toll alone not enough to prove it?	**Dangerous working conditions made the fire deadlier. The death toll shows how many people died, but not what kept them from escaping.**
2	How does the ladder height support the claim about dangerous conditions? Use floor numbers in your reasoning.	**The ladders reached only the sixth floor, while the factory occupied floors eight through ten. Firefighters could not reach workers at the factory's windows with those ladders.**
3	Why are the survivor accounts useful evidence, and what can they not show?	**The accounts describe a locked ninth-floor exit from survivors' experience. They cannot show what happened at every exit or on every floor.**
4	How does New York's action after the fire support a claim that factory safety was a public concern?	**New York created a Factory Investigating Commission and passed safety laws, showing that officials treated workplace risks as a problem requiring public action.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

New York needed stronger factory safety rules after the Triangle fire. Survivor accounts preserved by Cornell's Kheel Center describe a locked ninth-floor exit, which suggests that an escape route failed workers. The National Park Service reports that firefighters' ladders reached only the sixth floor while the factory occupied floors eight through ten, showing that outside rescue could not reach its windows. These details support safer exits and rescue planning, but they do not prove that every factory had the same dangers.

Accept claims that connect specific, accurately attributed evidence to a need for safety changes. The stated limit should avoid treating evidence from this fire as proof about every exit or every factory.