From Fire to Reform

Trace how people and events shaped a safety idea.

RI.7.3 "Analyze the interactions between individuals, events and ideas over the course of a text."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle key events, underline people's actions, and draw arrows connecting each action to an event or safety idea that shaped it.

The Fire That Changed Factory Safety

1 On March 25, 1911, a fire broke out at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in New York City. The factory occupied the upper floors of a building where workers sewed clothing. Flames spread quickly through scraps of fabric. Some workers found that a door was locked, while others could not escape by the crowded fire escape, which collapsed. Firefighters' ladders could not reach the highest floors. The fire killed 146 workers. For people watching from the street, the disaster raised a painful question: Who was responsible for making workplaces safe?

2 Frances Perkins, a social worker, witnessed the fire from a nearby street. She had already cared about working conditions, but seeing workers trapped pushed her to focus more urgently on fire safety. Perkins joined a citizens' group called the Committee on Safety, which pressed officials to act. Public anger also led New York lawmakers to create the Factory Investigating Commission. Its members inspected workplaces and heard testimony about hazards. The commission's findings gave reformers evidence they could use to argue that safety should be required by law, not left to each factory owner.

3 New York soon passed laws requiring stronger factory safety measures, including better fire exits and fire drills. These rules grew from more than one person's concern: workers described risks, investigators gathered evidence, and reformers such as Perkins pressed for change. Years later, Perkins became the U.S. secretary of labor, the first woman to serve in a presidential cabinet. She continued to support protections for workers. The fire did not create her belief in safer workplaces, but it changed how urgently she pursued that belief and helped turn public concern into action.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did witnessing the fire change Perkins's work, and what had she believed before it?

2. How did public anger after the fire help reformers make a case for safety laws?

3. How did workers and investigators contribute differently to the push for new laws?

4. At the start, workplace safety is raised as a question. How does that idea develop by the end of the passage?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are a New York lawmaker after the commission's investigation. In four or five sentences, explain how the fire, workers' testimony, and the commission's findings might shape your decision about a safety law. Include two accurate details from the passage.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle key events, underline people's actions, and draw arrows connecting each action to an event or safety idea that shaped it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did witnessing the fire change Perkins's work, and what had she believed before it?	**Perkins already cared about working conditions. Witnessing the fire made her pursue fire safety more urgently, and she joined the Committee on Safety.**
2	How did public anger after the fire help reformers make a case for safety laws?	**Public anger led lawmakers to create the Factory Investigating Commission. Its inspections and testimony gave reformers evidence to support required safety measures.**
3	How did workers and investigators contribute differently to the push for new laws?	**Workers described the risks they faced. Investigators gathered evidence about hazards through inspections and testimony.**
4	At the start, workplace safety is raised as a question. How does that idea develop by the end of the passage?	**The fire raised the question of who should keep workers safe. Reformers argued for legal requirements, New York passed safety laws, and Perkins continued to support worker protections.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At first, I might have thought each factory owner could decide how to prevent fires. After the Triangle fire killed 146 workers, I would listen closely when workers described risks to the Factory Investigating Commission. The commission's inspections and testimony would show me why safety cannot depend only on owners' choices. I would support a law requiring better fire exits and fire drills.

Accept supported explanations that connect people's actions to the fire, the investigation, or the idea of required safety measures. For Part 3, look for a lawmaker's decision explained through those interactions, not just a list of facts.