Two Views of Tragedy

Use evidence to connect questions and interpretations of a historical event.

8.P.1.2.B "Answer supporting questions related to social studies content knowledge and make connections to different interpretations."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the two supporting questions in the passage, then circle details that help answer them. Write 1 beside details that support the organizer's view and 2 beside details that support the fire official's view. A detail may get both numbers.

Questions After the Triangle Fire

1. On March 25, 1911, a fire broke out at the Triangle Shirtwaist factory in New York City. Workers made blouses on the upper floors of a ten-story building. The fire spread quickly through cloth and paper. Some workers escaped down stairs, but one stairway was blocked by flames, and a door on another route was locked. The outside fire escape collapsed under the weight of people trying to flee. Firefighters' ladders could not reach the highest floors. The fire killed 146 workers, many of them young immigrant women.

2. After the fire, people agreed that the deaths were a disaster, but they asked different supporting questions about its causes. A garment workers' organizer might ask, "Could workers leave quickly when danger struck?" The locked door and crowded escape routes would support the organizer's view that workers needed a stronger voice in workplace safety. Organizers had already called for better conditions before the fire. From this perspective, the fire showed why employers should not control safety rules without workers being heard. It was not simply an accident that no one could prevent.

3. A city fire official might ask a different question: "What features of the building made escape so hard?" The collapsed fire escape, flames in a stairway, and ladders that fell short would support a focus on safer building design and better fire protection. This view does not erase the organizer's concern about the locked door. Instead, it looks at another part of the same event. After public anger over the fire, New York passed new workplace safety laws and expanded factory inspections. Both interpretations point toward change, but they stress different kinds of action.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What supporting question does the workers' organizer ask? Use one detail from the fire to explain why that question matters.

2. What supporting question does the fire official ask? Give two details that help answer it.

3. How might the organizer and the fire official use the collapsed fire escape to support different interpretations?

4. Both interpretations call for change. How does each person's supporting question point toward a different kind of action?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a short recommendation to a 1911 safety committee: Which should it tackle first, exit access or building fire protection? Use two details from the passage, then explain how the workers' organizer and the fire official might each respond to your choice.

ANSWER KEY

Two Views of Tragedy

GRADE 8 · 8.P.1.2.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the two supporting questions in the passage, then circle details that help answer them. Write 1 beside details that support the organizer's view and 2 beside details that support the fire official's view. A detail may get both numbers. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What supporting question does the workers' organizer ask? Use one detail from the fire to explain why that question matters.	**The organizer asks whether workers could leave quickly. The locked door mattered because it kept workers from using an escape route.**
2	What supporting question does the fire official ask? Give two details that help answer it.	**The official asks which building features made escape hard. The fire escape collapsed, and flames blocked a stairway.**
3	How might the organizer and the fire official use the collapsed fire escape to support different interpretations?	**The organizer could point to workers' limited escape options and need for a voice in safety. The official could point to the need for a safer fire escape.**
4	Both interpretations call for change. How does each person's supporting question point toward a different kind of action?	**The organizer's question points toward giving workers a stronger voice in safety rules. The official's question points toward safer building design and fire protection.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The committee should tackle exit access first. A door on an escape route was locked, and flames blocked a stairway, leaving workers with fewer ways out. The workers' organizer would support this choice because workers needed safe routes they could use in an emergency. The fire official might agree that exits matter but argue that the collapsed fire escape also shows a need for better building design. The committee should inspect fire escapes next.

Accept other passage details when students explain how those details answer a supporting question. For Your Turn, either priority is valid if the recommendation uses two accurate details and connects both interpretations to the choice.