# Claims Under Investigation

Build a historical thesis from evidence you can check.

**AWH.P.4.2.A** "Develop self-generated theses or claims related to independent research and investigations using credible and relevant sources."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline two facts that could support a claim about factory safety after the fire, circle two types of sources, and number two limits on what the sources can prove.

### What Changed After the Fire?

1. Research begins with a question, not a conclusion borrowed from a website. Imagine investigating why a town replaced a wooden bridge. A dated council record could show a repair vote, while a local newspaper might reveal residents' complaints. Neither source alone proves what motivated every council member. A useful thesis would make a specific, arguable claim about the decision and name the evidence that could test it. Before trusting any source, check who created it, when it was created, and whether its purpose could shape what it leaves out. Then ask whether it actually addresses your question.

2. Now consider a different investigation: What changed factory safety in New York after the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire? On March 25, 1911, a fire swept through the Manhattan factory, killing 146 workers. Some exit doors were locked, and the fire escape collapsed. The New York State Legislature created the Factory Investigating Commission in 1911. Its published reports examined working conditions and recommended changes. Those reports are useful evidence of what investigators found and proposed, but they do not, by themselves, show how every factory responded. A claim about all factories would require more evidence.

3. Additional records could sharpen the investigation. New York State laws passed in the following years required stronger workplace protections, including fire safety measures. The legal text can establish what lawmakers required, but a law's passage does not prove that inspectors enforced it everywhere. Factory inspection records, if located and checked for dates and locations, could help test that separate question. A union newspaper from the period might show how workers described dangerous conditions, although its advocacy purpose could shape its emphasis. A present-day blog post with no author or citations would be harder to verify, even if its headline sounded convincing.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Write an arguable thesis about what helped change New York factory safety after the fire. Support it with two details from the passage, but do not claim that every factory complied.

2. A classmate claims, “New York's new laws made every factory safe immediately.” Revise the claim to fit the available evidence, and name evidence you would need to test the original claim.

3. You want to test whether safety rules were enforced at specific factories. Which source in the passage would you seek, and what would you check to see if it fits your investigation?

4. Why might you use the commission reports alongside a union newspaper to investigate safety concerns instead of relying on the unsigned, uncited blog post?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Using a social studies topic you have already researched, write a thesis you generated yourself. Name two credible, relevant sources from your research, explain how each supports or could challenge your thesis, and state one limit of your evidence.

ANSWER KEY

# Claims Under Investigation

HIGH SCHOOL · AWH.P.4.2.A

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two facts that could support a claim about factory safety after the fire, circle two types of sources, and number two limits on what the sources can prove. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Write an arguable thesis about what helped change New York factory safety after the fire. Support it with two details from the passage, but do not claim that every factory complied. | **The Triangle fire helped spur New York safety reforms: the legislature created an investigative commission in 1911, and the state passed stronger workplace laws in the following years.** |
| 2 | A classmate claims, "New York's new laws made every factory safe immediately." Revise the claim to fit the available evidence, and name evidence you would need to test the original claim. | **New York passed stronger safety laws after the fire, but the passage does not show that every factory became safe. Dated inspection records from factories across the state could help test compliance.** |
| 3 | You want to test whether safety rules were enforced at specific factories. Which source in the passage would you seek, and what would you check to see if it fits your investigation? | **Seek factory inspection records. Check their dates and factory locations to see whether they address the factories and period being investigated.** |
| 4 | Why might you use the commission reports alongside a union newspaper to investigate safety concerns instead of relying on the unsigned, uncited blog post? | **The reports document investigators' findings and proposals, while the union newspaper could provide workers' views, though its advocacy may shape its coverage. The blog post lacks an author and citations, making it harder to verify.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

My thesis is that the 1954 Brown ruling changed the law but did not immediately end resistance to school integration. The Supreme Court's opinion in Brown v. Board of Education establishes the legal ruling, while the National Park Service's history of the 1957 Little Rock Central High School crisis documents resistance afterward. These sources do not show how quickly every school district changed.

Accept different defensible theses grounded in the passage, provided they distinguish legal requirements from evidence of enforcement. For Part 3, look for a self-generated claim, two identifiable sources that fit it, and a specific evidence limit.