# Claims Under Investigation

Build a research claim from sources that can support it.

**E.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 details that could support a claim about the Triangle fire, circle the name of each source you would use, and number the sources in the order you would examine them. Use your marks to plan a claim you could investigate.

### Investigating the Triangle Fire

1. On March 25, 1911, a fire swept through the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in New York City. The factory occupied the top floors of a building near Washington Square. The fire killed 146 workers, many of them young immigrant women. A National Park Service account describes obstacles to escape: a fire escape collapsed, and some exit doors were locked. These details suggest several possible research questions, not just one. Was the building's design the central danger? Did workplace rules make escape harder? A researcher must choose a question and develop a claim that the available evidence can actually support.

2. Different sources help with different parts of that investigation. The Kheel Center at Cornell University preserves newspaper reports and eyewitness accounts of the fire. An eyewitness account can show what someone saw or heard, but a witness may not know what happened on another floor. In response to the fire, New York's Factory Investigating Commission examined factory conditions and proposed changes to safety rules. Its official reports are useful for studying what investigators found and recommended, but a recommendation alone does not prove that conditions improved. The National Park Service account, written much later, brings together established facts about the disaster.

3. A strong thesis makes a focused argument, rather than repeating that the fire was tragic. It names a connection the sources can test and avoids claiming more than they show. For example, an archive's record of a new public well could establish when it opened, while a health department's test results could address whether its water was safe. Neither source alone proves that everyone used the well. Apply the same care to the factory evidence: separate what witnesses experienced, what investigators recommended, and what later histories report. If a source cannot answer your question, narrow the claim or find better evidence.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Write a focused claim about escape during the fire. Support it with two details from the National Park Service account described in the passage.

2. What claim about the fire and later safety proposals could you investigate using both the National Park Service account and the Factory Investigating Commission's reports? Explain what each source contributes.

3. If your claim concerns what one person experienced during the fire, which source would you start with? Explain one limit you would place on your claim.

4. A researcher claims that young immigrant women faced a higher risk of death than other workers in the fire. Why can't the passage establish that comparison, and what data would help test it?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a new research question about how the Triangle fire was recorded or remembered. In 3 to 4 sentences, state your question and an original thesis, then explain how two named sources from the passage could help you test it and identify one limit of your evidence.

**ANSWER KEY**

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## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that could support a claim about the Triangle fire, circle the name of each source you would use, and number the sources in the order you would examine them. Use your marks to plan a claim you could investigate. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Write a focused claim about escape during the fire. Support it with two details from the National Park Service account described in the passage. | **Several obstacles made escape dangerous at the Triangle factory: a fire escape collapsed, and some exit doors were locked.** |
| 2 | What claim about the fire and later safety proposals could you investigate using both the National Park Service account and the Factory Investigating Commission's reports? Explain what each source contributes. | **The fire's escape hazards may have influenced later safety proposals. The Park Service account identifies escape obstacles, while the commission's reports show what changes investigators proposed.** |
| 3 | If your claim concerns what one person experienced during the fire, which source would you start with? Explain one limit you would place on your claim. | **Start with an eyewitness account preserved by the Kheel Center. Do not claim that one witness knew what happened throughout the factory.** |
| 4 | A researcher claims that young immigrant women faced a higher risk of death than other workers in the fire. Why can't the passage establish that comparison, and what data would help test it? | **The passage says many victims were young immigrant women but gives no death rates by group. The researcher would need the number of workers and deaths in each group.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

How did reports of the Triangle fire change over time? Contemporary and later accounts of the disaster emphasize different details. Cornell's Kheel Center preserves newspapers published near the event, and the National Park Service provides a later historical account, so comparing these sources could test my thesis. I would need to read both accounts before identifying the details each one emphasizes.

Accept other focused, testable claims when students connect them to relevant sources and stay within what those sources can establish. For Part 3, the thesis need not be proven yet, but the proposed sources must be capable of testing it.