Evidence Into Action

Shape a historical claim for a specific audience.

OKH.P.4.2.C "Construct presentations or products for a designated audience, using research and reasoning to enhance understanding of a topic or issue."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the club's claim about reform, circle two named research sources, and number two choices that help incoming students understand the evidence.

Making a Fire's History Matter

1. A ninth-grade history club plans a three-minute presentation for incoming students about the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in New York City. The club's central question is, "How can a disaster change safety rules?" Instead of starting with a list of laws, the speakers begin with a clear scene: garment workers on the upper floors of a building as fire spreads. On March 25, 1911, the fire killed 146 people. The U.S. Department of Labor reports that number. Naming the source matters because a shocking figure without a source can sound like a dramatic guess.

2. Next, the club uses evidence that explains why the death toll was so high. Cornell University's Kheel Center preserves witness accounts and other records of the fire. Those records describe barriers to escape, including a locked door and a fire escape that collapsed. The speakers choose these details instead of gruesome descriptions because their audience needs to understand safety problems, not just feel alarm. They propose a simple handout with two headings, "What blocked escape?" and "What might have helped?" Under each heading, students would sort brief evidence from the records before hearing the club's conclusion.

3. Finally, the speakers connect the fire to public action. New York's Factory Investigating Commission examined working conditions after the fire, and the state passed workplace safety laws in the following years. The club says the disaster helped focus public attention on reform, not that one fire alone created every new law. This distinction keeps the claim honest: investigations, organizing, and lawmakers also shaped the response. For incoming students, the presentation ends with a question they can use in other cases: "When people demand a safer rule, what evidence should decision-makers examine first?" The question turns a history lesson into a way to weigh future claims.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why does the club name the U.S. Department of Labor when giving the death toll? How does that choice help incoming students?

2. Which two barriers would you put under “What blocked escape?” Why are they more useful to this presentation than gruesome details?

3. How does the handout's two-heading design help incoming students follow the club's reasoning?

4. Why does the club say the fire helped focus attention on reform instead of claiming it alone produced every new law?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75- to 100-word opening script for a presentation to a city youth council considering a student-made exhibit on workplace safety history. Recommend what the exhibit should teach, use two historical facts from the passage to explain your recommendation, and ask the council one question.

ANSWER KEY

Evidence Into Action

HIGH SCHOOL · OKH.P.4.2.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the club's claim about reform, circle two named research sources, and number two choices that help incoming students understand the evidence. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why does the club name the U.S. Department of Labor when giving the death toll? How does that choice help incoming students?	**Naming the source shows that the figure of 146 deaths is researched evidence rather than a dramatic guess.**
2	Which two barriers would you put under "What blocked escape?" Why are they more useful to this presentation than gruesome details?	**A locked door and a collapsed fire escape. They help students identify safety problems that could inform rules, rather than only making students feel alarm.**
3	How does the handout's two-heading design help incoming students follow the club's reasoning?	**It asks students to sort evidence about barriers and possible ways to help before they hear the club's conclusion.**
4	Why does the club say the fire helped focus attention on reform instead of claiming it alone produced every new law?	**That narrower claim accounts for the roles of investigations, organizing, and lawmakers in shaping the response.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Council members, I recommend a student-made exhibit on how evidence can lead to safer workplaces. In the 1911 Triangle fire, 146 people died, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. Records at Cornell University's Kheel Center describe a locked door and a collapsed fire escape. These facts show why an exhibit should pair the human cost with specific barriers to escape, rather than rely on shock alone. Could the youth council support an exhibit station where visitors compare those barriers with possible safety rules? That activity would make the history useful without pretending one disaster caused every reform.

Accept different numbered audience choices if students can explain how each helps incoming students understand the evidence. For the script, check the word count, two accurate facts, a reasoned recommendation, and a question addressed to the council.