Who Shaped Reform?

Build a historical claim from sources that can support it.

USH.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 safety reform, circle the names of sources, and number one limit of the evidence. These marks will help you build a claim the sources can support.

Investigating the Triangle Fire's Aftermath

1. On March 25, 1911, a fire swept through the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in New York City. The factory occupied the upper floors of the Asch Building, and 146 workers died. Many were young immigrant women. The disaster brought dangerous working conditions into public view, but it did not begin the struggle for safer factories. Garment workers had already organized strikes over pay and conditions. A researcher might ask which voices shaped the response to the fire: workers, state investigators, or newspaper editors. That question is narrower than asking whether the fire mattered at all, and it calls for evidence from more than one kind of source.

2. Cornell University's Kheel Center preserves photographs, interviews, and other records about the fire and the garment industry. A worker's account in an archive can reveal what someone experienced, but one person's memory cannot describe every factory. Reports of New York's Factory Investigating Commission offer a different view. Created after the fire, the commission examined working conditions and urged safety changes. Its reports can show what investigators identified as problems, yet a recommendation does not prove that every workplace became safer. Check who created each record, when it was created, and whether it addresses the question before treating it as evidence.

3. New York passed new workplace safety laws in the years after the fire. Legislative records can establish when a law passed and what it required, while inspection records would be needed to study how officials enforced it. Newspapers can show which arguments reached readers, but an editorial's call for reform is an opinion, not proof that reform occurred. If you investigate why a particular change happened, compare records produced by people with different roles. A defensible thesis should make a focused, debatable claim and name evidence that could support it. It should also leave room for an earlier strike or another cause to complicate the story.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Write a narrow, debatable claim about the connection between the fire and New York's later safety laws. Use a fact from before the fire to keep your claim from crediting the fire alone.

2. A classmate claims, "The commission's recommendations made every factory safe." Revise the claim so the commission's reports could support it.

3. To investigate whether a new safety law was enforced, which two types of records mentioned in the passage would you compare? Explain what each could establish.

4. A researcher claims that newspaper editors shaped New York's safety laws. How could an editorial and a legislative record help test that claim, and what would they still not prove?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

For your own inquiry, decide whether workers or state investigators should be central to a history of the push for safer factories. Write four sentences with a debatable claim, evidence you would seek in two relevant source types named in the passage, and one limit of that evidence.

ANSWER KEY

Who Shaped Reform?

HIGH SCHOOL · USH.P.4.2.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two facts that could support a claim about safety reform, circle the names of sources, and number one limit of the evidence. These marks will help you build a claim the sources can support. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Write a narrow, debatable claim about the connection between the fire and New York's later safety laws. Use a fact from before the fire to keep your claim from crediting the fire alone.	**The fire likely helped bring about safety laws, but workers' earlier strikes show that demands for change did not begin with the disaster.**
2	A classmate claims, "The commission's recommendations made every factory safe." Revise the claim so the commission's reports could support it.	**The commission helped shape the response to unsafe conditions by identifying problems and urging changes. Its reports do not establish that every factory became safe.**
3	To investigate whether a new safety law was enforced, which two types of records mentioned in the passage would you compare? Explain what each could establish.	**Compare legislative records, which show what the law required, with inspection records, which could show how officials enforced it.**
4	A researcher claims that newspaper editors shaped New York's safety laws. How could an editorial and a legislative record help test that claim, and what would they still not prove?	**An editorial could show what reform an editor urged, and a legislative record could show whether a later law required that change. Together, they would not prove the editor caused lawmakers to act.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Workers should be central to this history because garment workers organized strikes before the Triangle fire. Worker accounts and garment-industry records at Cornell's Kheel Center could help test what conditions and changes workers described. Factory Investigating Commission reports could show how officials later described safety problems. These sources alone cannot prove which group had the greatest influence on the laws.

Accept other focused, debatable claims when students connect them to relevant sources and do not treat a recommendation or an editorial as proof of a result. For Part 3, students may center either workers or investigators.