

Testimony Under Pressure

Trace how a primary-source speech turns grief into an argument.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.5 "Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read the primary-source excerpt. Mark a sentence whose position matters and draw arrows showing how later paragraphs build on earlier ones. Use the original paragraph labels P1-P6; P2 is omitted.

Rose Schneiderman: We Have Found You Wanting (excerpt)

P1

I would be a traitor to these poor burned bodies if I came here to talk good fellowship. We have tried you good people of the public and we have found you wanting.

[P2 omitted] P3

This is not the first time girls have been burned alive in the city. Every week I must learn of the untimely death of one of my sister workers. Every year thousands of us are maimed. The life of men and women is so cheap and property is so sacred. There are so many of us for one job it matters little if 146 of us are burned to death.

P4

We have tried you citizens; we are trying you now, and you have a couple of dollars for the sorrowing mothers, brothers and sisters by way of a charity gift. But every time the workers come out in the only way they know to protest against conditions which are unbearable the strong hand of the law is allowed to press down heavily upon us.

P5

Public officials have only words of warning to us--warning that we must be intensely peaceable, and they have the workhouse just back of all their warnings. The strong hand of the law beats us back, when we rise, into the conditions that make life unbearable.

P6

I can't talk fellowship to you who are gathered here. Too much blood has been spilled. I know from my experience it is up to the working people to save themselves. The only way they can save themselves is by a strong working-class movement.

Editorial context and source

Schneiderman delivered this speech at a memorial meeting at the Metropolitan Opera House on April 2, 1911, after the Triangle factory fire. First published in *The Survey*, April 8, 1911. This excerpt preserves the wording and order of five paragraphs from Cornell's transcript; paragraph labels are editorial. "Found you wanting" means judged you inadequate; a workhouse was a place of confinement with compulsory labor.

Source: Cornell University, Kheel Center, The Triangle Factory Fire, "We Have Found You Wanting." trianglefire.ilr.cornell.edu/primary/testimonials/ootss_RoseSchneiderman.html

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How does the second sentence of P1 shape the function of the details in P3?

2 In P4, explain the structural work done by the sentence beginning "But every time". How does P5 develop it?

- 3** Why is P6 more than a repetition of P1? Explain how its final two sentences change the speech's direction.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a structural analysis of this excerpt, not a summary of the fire. Distinguish a key sentence, its paragraph and a larger portion of the speech. Cite short quotations with paragraph labels. You are analyzing the supplied excerpt; do not invent a function for omitted P2.

1. Map the larger portions

Describe the relationship among P1/P3, P4/P5 and P6. Identify the central claim or purpose that their arrangement develops. Note where one paragraph performs more than one function.

2. Explain the architecture

Write about 150-200 words. Analyze how at least two key sentences work within their paragraphs and how those paragraphs connect across the larger portions. Test your reading by explaining what would change if the final two sentences of P6 appeared before P4.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Read the primary-source excerpt. Mark a sentence whose position matters and draw arrows showing how later paragraphs build on earlier ones. Use the original paragraph labels P1-P6; P2 is omitted. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the second sentence of P1 shape the function of the details in P3?	The judgment that the public has failed establishes an accusation. The recurring injuries and contrast between lives and property in P3 then supply reasons for that judgment, rather than serving only as a memorial description.
2	In P4, explain the structural work done by the sentence beginning "But every time". How does P5 develop it?	The sentence pivots from charitable gifts to suppression of workers' protest. P5 extends the accusation with official warnings and punishment, making the law a repeated obstacle rather than a remedy.
3	Why is P6 more than a repetition of P1? Explain how its final two sentences change the speech's direction.	Both reject fellowship, but P6 converts that rejection into a proposed agent and method of change: working people saving themselves through a strong working-class movement. The intervening criticism prepares that turn.

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Illustrative structural map

P1/P3 establish the accusation and its grounds; P4/P5 contrast public charity with repression; P6 returns to fellowship and proposes collective self-rescue.

Illustrative analysis

Schneiderman arranges this excerpt to make collective action follow from the failure of public sympathy. In P1, "we have found you wanting" turns the memorial address into an accusation. P3 supports that judgment by moving from repeated injury to the contrast between cheap lives and sacred property. The comparison makes the deaths part of a social pattern, rather than an isolated tragedy.

The sentence beginning "But every time" in P4 shifts from charitable gifts to the suppression of workers' protests. It limits the apparent generosity of the preceding sentence. P5 extends that contrast: warnings and the workhouse show how official power returns workers to the conditions they resist. Together, these paragraphs explain why sympathy does not provide a solution.

P6 repeats the refusal of fellowship but adds a direction for action. Its final two sentences name working people as the agents of their own rescue and a working-class movement as the means. Placing those sentences before P4 would announce the remedy before developing the contrast between charity and coercion. Their closing position makes the proposed movement answer the failures the preceding portions have established.

TEACHER ASSESSMENT NOTES

Accept defensible alternative accounts supported by exact wording and placement. Evaluate relationships among sentence, paragraph, larger portion and whole excerpt, not labels alone. A sentence may accuse, contrast and prepare a transition simultaneously. The claims about casualties and treatment of workers are Schneiderman's historical assertions, not new classroom statistics. Keep her wording distinct from editorial context. No outside reading is required.