Test the Case

Evaluate a historical argument about workplace safety

9-10.RH.8 "Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid, and the evidence is relevant and sufficient."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the author's main claim, circle two details used as evidence, and place a question mark beside a claim the evidence may not fully support.

Who Checks the Exits?

1. In March 1911, a fire broke out at New York City's Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. One hundred forty-six workers died, many of them young immigrant women. Some exit doors were locked, and an outside fire escape collapsed. These failures turned a workplace fire into a mass tragedy. The Triangle disaster shows why state governments should require regular, independent factory safety inspections instead of relying on owners' promises. Inspections could identify locked exits and weak escape routes before a fire starts. A locked door is not merely a broken rule. In an emergency, it can cut off a worker's path out.

2. After the disaster, New York created the Factory Investigating Commission. Its investigators examined workplace hazards, and the state passed new safety laws. That response shows how a government can act when private safeguards fail. Yet passing a law and checking a building are different steps. A rule written on paper cannot open a door during a fire. Inspections must be frequent enough to catch changes, and inspectors must be able to demand repairs. Owners may object to the cost, but a visit from an inspector is less disruptive than a workplace where workers cannot escape.

3. Some factory owners might have improved their buildings without government pressure. Still, the locked doors and failed fire escape at Triangle show the danger of leaving safety decisions entirely to employers. Regular inspections would make every factory safe, because inspectors would catch each hazard before it harms anyone. They would make owners keep exits clear, maintain fire escapes, and fix problems before disaster strikes. New York's response after Triangle shows that officials recognized a need for stronger oversight. If inspections become routine, workers can enter a factory knowing that someone besides their employer has checked the way out.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What policy does the author argue for? Identify one detail about the Triangle fire that is relevant to that claim, and explain the connection.

2. The author points to New York's response after the fire. What does that response support, and what does it not prove about inspections?

3. Find the claim about what inspections would do for every factory. Is the author's reasoning sufficient to support that claim? Explain.

4. Does the passage provide enough evidence to support its response to owners' concerns about cost? Identify what evidence is missing.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A factory owner says, "The Triangle fire happened, so inspections cannot help." Write a four- or five-sentence reply that uses two facts from the passage, tests one inference in the owner's or author's argument, and names one type of evidence you would still need.

ANSWER KEY

Test the Case

HIGH SCHOOL · 9-10.RH.8

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the author's main claim, circle two details used as evidence, and place a question mark beside a claim the evidence may not fully support. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What policy does the author argue for? Identify one detail about the Triangle fire that is relevant to that claim, and explain the connection.	**The author argues for regular, independent factory safety inspections. The locked exit doors are relevant because an inspection could identify them before workers need to escape.**
2	The author points to New York's response after the fire. What does that response support, and what does it not prove about inspections?	**The commission and new laws show that the state acted on workplace hazards. They do not prove that regular inspections prevent deaths, since the passage gives no results from inspections.**
3	Find the claim about what inspections would do for every factory. Is the author's reasoning sufficient to support that claim? Explain.	**No. The passage identifies hazards an inspector might find, but it offers no evidence that inspectors would catch every hazard or make every factory safe.**
4	Does the passage provide enough evidence to support its response to owners' concerns about cost? Identify what evidence is missing.	**No. It asserts that an inspection is less disruptive than an unsafe workplace but gives no inspection costs or evidence comparing those costs with the effects of workplace hazards.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Triangle fire does not show that inspections are useless, because the passage does not say whether inspectors had checked that factory. Some exit doors were locked, and the fire escape collapsed, so checking escape routes before a fire seems relevant. New York later created a commission that studied workplace hazards. Still, the author's claim that inspections would make every factory safe goes beyond these facts. I would compare fire deaths in inspected and uninspected factories before deciding how effective inspections are.

Accept other passage-based details and reasonable limits on the evidence. For the open task, look for two accurate facts, a clearly tested inference, and a specific kind of additional evidence.