

# Resource Materials

## The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire March 25, 1911

Designed and Compiled by  
United Federation of Teachers • UFT Teacher Center • Workers United  
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## The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire March 25, 1911

. . . On March 25, 1911, as workers were getting ready to leave for the day, a fire broke out in the Triangle Shirtwaist factory in New York's Greenwich Village. Within minutes it spread to consume the building's upper three stories. Firemen who arrived at the scene were unable to rescue those trapped inside; their ladders simply weren't tall enough. People on the street watched in horror as desperate workers jumped to their deaths. The final toll was 146 people—123 of them women. It was the worst workplace disaster in New York City history. . . .

In *Triangle: The Fire that Changed America* by David Von Drehle (2003, Grove/Atlantic).

## **Resource Materials**

### **The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire March 25, 1911**

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## Background Information on Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire

- The fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company in New York City claimed the lives of 146 young immigrant workers. This was one of the worst workplace disasters since the beginning of the **Industrial Revolution**.
- This incident has had great significance to this day because it highlights the inhumane working conditions that industrial workers can experience.
- Places of work that do not respect the rights of workers are called **sweatshops**.
- The Triangle Shirtwaist Company was in many ways a typical sweated factory in the heart of Manhattan, located at 23-29 Washington Place, at the northern corner of Washington Square East. Low wages, excessively long hours, and unsanitary and dangerous working conditions were the hallmarks of sweatshops.
- Even today, sweatshops have not disappeared in the United States. They attract workers in desperate need of employment and illegal immigrants, who may be anxious to avoid involvement with the government.
- Recent studies conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor found that 67 percent of Los Angeles garment factories and 63 percent of New York garment factories violate minimum wage and overtime laws. Ninety-eight percent of Los Angeles garment factories have workplace health and safety problems serious enough to lead to severe injuries or death.
- Workers organized **unions** to fight against sweatshop employers. Many of the garment workers before 1911 were unorganized, partly because they were young immigrant women who were new to the country. But many of the young workers were very brave, and wanted to fight against their poor working conditions.
- In 1909, an incident at the Triangle Factory sparked a spontaneous walkout of its 400 employees. The Women's Trade Union League, a progressive association of middle class women, helped the young women workers walk picket lines and stand up to police and management intimidation. At a historic meeting at Cooper Union, thousands of garment workers from all over New York City followed young **Clara Lemlich's** call for a general strike.
- On March 25, 1911, a fire broke out on the top floors of the Triangle Shirtwaist Company. Within minutes, the afternoon had erupted into madness, a terrifying moment in time. By the time the fire was over, 146 of the 500 employees had died.
- **Many of the Triangle factory workers were women, some as young as 15 years old.** They were mostly Italian and European Jewish immigrants who had come to the United States with their families to seek a better life. Instead, they faced lives of grinding poverty and horrifying work conditions.
- **The Triangle Fire** illustrated the need for frequent building inspections and adequate escape routes. Workers recounted their helpless efforts to open the ninth floor doors to the Washington Place stairs. They and many others afterwards believed they were deliberately locked—owners had frequently locked the exit doors in the past, claiming that workers stole materials.

- Firefighters could not reach above the sixth floor with their ladders, and the water from the hoses could not reach the top floors, either. Many workers jumped to their deaths.
- Unions, like the **International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU)**, organized rallies to protest the working conditions of New York City's poorest residents. This led to vast reforms in federal and state workplace laws to improve worker safety, and led to the appointment of **Frances Perkins** as Secretary of Labor under the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration. Perkins was the first woman to hold this position.

## Resources

\*A great website about the Triangle Factory fire for kids is [http://www.pbs.org/wnet/newyork/laic/episode4/topic5/e4\\_t5\\_s5-tt.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/newyork/laic/episode4/topic5/e4_t5_s5-tt.html)

\*Other websites to view are <http://laborarts.org/exhibits/union/triangle.cfm> and <http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire/>

\*For a virtual tour of the Lower Eastside Tenement Museum, visit [http://www.tenement.org/Virtual\\_Tour/index\\_virtual.html](http://www.tenement.org/Virtual_Tour/index_virtual.html) (or to schedule a class trip).

\*For songs, interviews with survivors, newspaper articles, a lecture by Frances Perkins, and letters, visit <http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire/texts/>

\*Books: Leon Stein, *The Triangle Fire*; Leon Stein, *Out of the Sweatshop*; David Von Drehle, *Triangle: The Fire That Changed America*.

\*Photographs: <http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire/photos/>

# The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire

## Elementary Grades Pilot Lesson

### Overview

This pilot lesson is designed for grades 4 and up. In this lesson about the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, students learn about the disaster, its background, and the affect of this disaster on history, and the history of the labor movement in particular. The lesson is designed in a Whole Group-Small Group-Whole Group model. A Background-Know/-Want-to-Know-Learned (BKWL) chart is used (see page 4). An Inquiry Chart (I-chart) is a possible option or can be used in a later lesson. (See resources at back of lesson). Before the lesson the teacher creates a wall-size version of the chart(s) to post for all students to see and work on.

**Note that there are three sample lessons with slightly different materials for each lesson and these can be interchanged if appropriate.**

<b>BKWL Chart</b>			
<b>Background</b> Our Prior Knowledge . . . [1. Whole group- before the "lesson" begins]	What we <b>Know</b> What we learned in the Mini-Lecture . . . [1. Whole group]	What we <b>Want to Know</b> Questions we have now are . . . [2. Small Groups]	What we <b>Learned</b> What we have learned from this whole lesson... [3. Whole group]

### Essential question

How can a disaster ultimately lead a society to change for the better?

### 1. WHOLE GROUP

**Connect** If appropriate paraphrase this quote for the class. "Great tragedies often reveal much about social conditions and the historical problems confronting people,"

(<http://www.historians.org/tl/LessonPlans/wi/Huehner/TriangleSWF.html>).

- **First** Students are given 5 minutes to think and "quick-write" about the following questions that are related to the quote, above: What do you think the author of this quote means by this statement? What examples of great tragedies in history have we studied that come to mind? Consider one example. What did the details of this tragedy reveal about life, especially living conditions, at that time?

- **Second** Pairs or triads of students share examples with each other.

- **Third** Volunteers are asked to share aloud some of their “quick-write” responses. [These responses are entered into the “B” of the BKWL chart].

**Teach** Mini-Lecture: March 25th, is the anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire—an early 20th century disaster that has shaped history ever since.

The teacher says: I am going to read you a short passage about the Triangle shirtwaist Factory fire. “This will help us to begin to gather information about the events that led up to the fire and where and when it happened. It will tell us something about what life and working condition were like in 1911. The factory, which still exists today, is now a part of New York University.”

The teacher reads the passage by Joy Hakim excerpted from *An Age of Extremes: 1880–1917*, which can be found at the back of the lesson and adds any explanations and definitions of vocabulary or terms appropriate for the class. The teacher may choose to reproduce the passage so that each student has a copy and can follow along.

**Whole-Group Activity** As students listen, they jot down what they hear about a) life and working conditions in New York City on March 25, 1911 and, b) what is the evidence that this passage offers.

Students then share out what they now know about life in New York City and the events that led to the Shirtwaist Factory fire. [The teacher records their responses in the “Know,” column of the BKWL chart].

The teacher gives a brief summary of the Triangle Shirt Waist Factory fire using the Semantic Map with the Who, What, When, Where, Why and How as the talking points. (See end of packet for Semantic Map.)

### **Questions We Now Have**

Students develop questions they have now about the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire and the teacher records these under the “W” of the BKWL chart or as questions on the I-Chart.

## **2. SMALL-GROUP ACTIVITY**

The class is organized into small groups and each group receives copies of a teacher-selected handout, a reading about the Triangle shirtwaist Factory fire.

Group Member Roles: include facilitator, recorder, reporter, and reader

### Group Tasks:

- Members use the questions on the BKWL chart or the on the I-Chart to drive the group’s inquiry concerning the Triangle Shirtwaist disaster.
- Members read the handouts provided, using the inquiry questions to focus their reading.

- After reading, groups discuss the information they have acquired on the disaster, recording any information that answers the questions on the class BKWL chart or the Inquiry chart (I-chart).

Teacher's Role: After clarifying the group task and facilitating the transition to small groups, the teacher circulates around the room to provide guidance and assess students' progress, facilitating if necessary.

### **3. WHOLE-GROUP ACTIVITY**

Groups take turns sharing their learning, using the BKWL chart or I-Chart as discussion points.

#### **SUMMARY**

Using the "L" column of the BKWL chart, students record their answers to the following question: What did you learn from the story of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire? The "L" column summarizes what the students have learned from the beginning of this lesson and can be included in the "Summary" section of the I-chart.

Questions for further consideration: Why, after all these years, do we continue to commemorate the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire? What is the relevance of this event for us today? What does the labor movement do today to protect workers?

#### **Mini-Summary**

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory disaster focused public attention on growing concerns about **sweatshops** and their exploitation of immigrant workers and other laborers. The Triangle Shirt Waist Factory fire ignited the cause of protecting laborers from unfair practices, giving rise to unions and labor laws that protect our most vulnerable citizens from exploitation. The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory disaster epitomizes what can happen when industry cares more about profits and money than the welfare of its workers.

#### **Next Steps**

Many other lessons can develop from this lesson, which can be taught and learned briefly in one introductory lesson and then serve as the basis of further study over a period of time. This lesson lends itself to an entire unit, perhaps within the context of social studies curriculum unit on industry and the emergence and rise of the labor movement in the 20th century. The questions that emerge from this lesson as recorded on the BKWL chart or the I-chart can serve both for planning and as initial questions of the next phase of study.



## Resource Material for the Elementary Grades Sample Lesson

### Telling the Story: A Short Read-Aloud Passage

Joy Hakim has written the following about the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire:

“Workers were sometimes locked inside the buildings where they worked because employers didn’t trust them. If the doors were open some might stop working to go outside and get fresh air. So the doors were locked the day in 1911 when the Triangle Shirtwaist Company caught fire. The women workers, who were sewing dresses, were trapped on a high floor. There was no way out. Some leapt out the window and fell to their death; some died in the flames: 146 young women perished on that day.”

—From: An Age of Extremes: 1880–1917. (2003, Oxford University Press). p. 101.

This book, An Age of Extremes: 1880–1917, is a good resource that describes the United States labor laws at the turn of the last century (the 1900’s) and highlights the life of Samuel Gompers, labor leader and organizer.

### Seeing the Story: Pictures

See the resource pages in this packet for a picture of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire. Additionally, pictures downloaded from the Internet or from books can also be used.

# The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire

## Middle School Pilot Lesson

### Overview

In this pilot lesson about the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, students learn about the disaster, its background, and the affect of this disaster on history, and the history of the labor movement in particular. The lesson is designed in a Whole Group-Small Group-Whole Group model. A Background-Know/-Want-to-Know-Learned (BKWL) chart is used (see page 4). An Inquiry Chart (I-chart) is optional. (See resources at back of lesson). Before the lesson the teacher creates a wall-size version of the chart(s) to post for all students to see/work on.

Note that there are three sample lessons with slightly different materials for each lesson and these can be interchanged if appropriate.

BKWL Chart			
<b>Background</b> Our Prior Knowledge . . . [1. Whole group-before the "lesson" begins]	What we <b>Know</b> What we learned in the Mini-Lecture . . . [1. Whole group]	What we <b>Want to Know</b> Questions we have now are . . . [2. Small Groups]	What we <b>Learned</b> What we have learned from this whole lesson... [3. Whole group]

### Essential question

How can a disaster lead a society to change for the better?

### 1. WHOLE GROUP

**Connect** "Great tragedies often reveal much about social conditions and the historical problems confronting people,"

(<http://www.historians.org/tl/LessonPlans/wi/Huehner/TriangleSWF.html>).

- **First** Students are given 5 minutes to think and "quick-write" about the following questions that are related to the quote, above: What do you think the author of this quote means by this statement? What examples of great tragedies in history have we studied that come to mind? Consider one example. What did the details of this tragedy reveal about life, especially living conditions, at that time?

- **Second** Pairs of students share examples with each other.

- **Third** Volunteers are asked to share aloud some of their "quick-write" responses. [These responses are entered into the "B" of the BKWL chart].

**Teach Mini-Lecture:** March 25th, is the anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire—an early 20th century disaster that has shaped history ever since.

The teacher says: “We are going to view a video documentary entitled \_\_\_\_\_. The video will help us to gather information about the events that led up to the fire and will take us through the factory, which still exists today and is now a part of New York University.

The video shows us photographs (primary documents) that depict the fire, the factory owners and some of the victims of the fire. The video also gives us an idea of what life was like for some workers in New York City in 1911 on the day the fire broke out.”

**Whole-Group Activity** as they view the first 5 minutes of the video [\_\_\_\_\_name video here], students are jotting down what they notice that they can tell from the video about a) life and working conditions in New York City on March 25, 1911 and, b) what is the evidence that the video offers.

Students then share out what they now know about life in New York City and the events that led to the Shirtwaist Factory fire. [The teacher records their responses in the “Know,” column of the BKWL chart].

The teacher gives a brief summary of the Triangle Shirt Waist Factory fire using the Semantic Map with the Who, What, When, Where, Why and How as the talking points. (See end of packet for Semantic Map.)

### **Questions We Now Have**

Students develop questions they have now about the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire and the teacher records these under the “W” of the BKWL chart or as questions on the I-Chart.

## **2. SMALL-GROUP ACTIVITY**

The class is organized into small groups and each group receives copies of a teacher-selected handout, a reading about the Triangle shirtwaist Factory fire.

Group Member Roles: include facilitator, recorder, reporter, and reader

### Group Tasks:

- Members use the questions on the BKWL chart or the on the I-Chart to drive the group’s inquiry concerning the Triangle Shirtwaist disaster.
- Members read the handouts provided, using the inquiry questions to focus their reading.
- After reading, groups discuss the information they have acquired on the disaster, recording any information that answers the questions on the class BKWL chart or the Inquiry chart (I-chart).

Teacher's Role: After clarifying the group task and facilitating the transition to small groups, the teacher circulates around the room to provide guidance and assess students' progress, facilitating if necessary.

### **3. WHOLE-GROUP ACTIVITY**

Groups take turns sharing their learning, using the BKWL chart or I-Chart as discussion points.

Time permitting, the class/group views the rest of the video, or may view it at another lesson time.

### **SUMMARY**

Using the "L" column of the BKWL chart, students record their answers to the following question: What did you learn from the story of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire? The "L" column summarizes what the students have learned from the beginning of this lesson and can be included in the Summary section of the I-chart.

Questions for further consideration: Why, after all these years, do we continue to commemorate the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire? What is the relevance of this event for us today? What does the labor movement do today to protect workers?

### **Mini-Summary**

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory disaster focused public attention on growing concerns about **sweatshops** and their exploitation of immigrant workers and other laborers. The Triangle Shirt Waist Factory fire ignited the cause of protecting laborers from unfair practices, giving rise to unions and labor laws that protect our most vulnerable citizens from exploitation. The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory disaster epitomizes what can happen when industry cares more about profits and money than the welfare of its workers.

### **Next Steps**

Many other lessons can develop from this lesson, which can be taught and learned briefly in one introductory lesson and then serve as the basis of further study over a period of time. This lesson lends itself to an entire unit, perhaps within the context of social studies curriculum unit on industry and the emergence and rise of the labor movement in the 20th century. The questions that emerge from this lesson as recorded on the I-chart can serve both for planning and as initial questions of the next phase of study.

# The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire

## High School Pilot Lesson

### Overview

In this lesson about the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, students learn about the disaster, its background, and the affect of this disaster on history, and the history of the labor movement in particular. This pilot lesson is designed in a Whole Group-Small Group-Whole Group model. Two tools—a Background/Know/ Want-to-Know/Learned chart (BKWL-chart, see page 5) and an Inquiry Chart (I-chart) are used. Before the lesson the teacher creates a wall-size version of each chart to post where all students can see them and work on them.

<b>BKWL Chart</b>			
<b>Background</b> Our Prior Knowledge . . . [1. Whole group-before the “lesson” begins.]	What we <b>Know</b> What we learned in the Mini-Lecture . . . [1. Whole Group]	What we <b>Want to Know</b> Questions we have now are . . . [2. Small Groups]	What we <b>Learned</b> What we have learned from this whole lesson... [3. Whole Group]

### Inquiry Chart

See last page of this lesson, page 6.

### Essential Question

How did the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire inspire society and labor leaders to reform workplace conditions and make them safer?

### 1. WHOLE GROUP

**Connect** “Great tragedies often reveal much about social conditions and the historical problems confronting people,”

(<http://www.historians.org/tl/LessonPlans/wi/Huehner/TriangleSWF.html>)

- **First** Students are given 5 minutes to “quick-write” about the following questions that are related to the quote, above: What do you think the author of this quote means by this statement? What examples of great tragedies in history have we studied that come to mind? Consider one example. What did the details of this tragedy reveal about life, specifically living conditions, at that time?

- **Second** Pairs of students share examples with each other.

- **Third** Volunteers are asked to share aloud some of their responses.

[These responses are entered into the “B” of the BKWL chart].

**Teach Mini-Lecture:** March 25th, is the anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire—an early 20th century disaster that has shaped history ever since.

The teacher says: “We are going to view a video documentary entitled \_\_\_\_\_. The video will help us to gather information about the events that led up to the fire and will take us through the factory, which still exists today and is now a part of New York University.

The video shows us photographs (primary documents) that depict the fire, the factory owners and some of the victims of the fire. The video also gives us an idea of what life was like for some workers in New York City in 1911 on the day the fire broke out.”

**Whole-Group Activity** As they view the first 5 minutes of the video [\_\_\_\_\_name video here], students are jotting down what they notice that they can tell from the video about a) life and working conditions in New York City on March 25, 1911 and, b) what is the evidence that the video offers.

Students then share out what they now know about life in New York City and the events that led to the Shirtwaist Factory fire. [The teacher records their responses in the “Know,” column of the BKWL chart].

The teacher gives a brief summary of the Triangle Shirt Waist Factory fire using the following Semantic Map (page 4) with the Who, What, When, Where, Why and How as the talking points.

### **Questions We Now Have**

Students develop questions they have now about the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire and the teacher records these on the I-Chart.

## **2. SMALL-GROUP ACTIVITY**

The class is organized into small groups and each group receives copies of a teacher-selected handout, a reading about the Triangle shirtwaist Factory fire. (Several options are included at the end of the lesson, in “Resources” or the teacher may have a preferred selection.)

Group Member Roles: include facilitator, recorder, reporter, and reader

Group Tasks:

- Members use the questions on the I-Chart to drive the group's inquiry concerning the Triangle Shirtwaist disaster.
- Members read the handouts provided, using the inquiry questions to focus their reading.

- After reading, groups discuss the information they have acquired on the disaster, recording any information that answers the questions on the class Inquiry chart (I-chart).

Teacher's Role: After clarifying the group task and facilitating the transition to small groups, the teacher circulates around the room to provide guidance and assess students' progress, facilitating if necessary.

### **3. WHOLE-GROUP ACTIVITY**

Groups take turns sharing their learning, using the I-Charts as discussion points.

The class/group views the rest of the video.

#### **SUMMARY**

Using the "L" column of the BKWL chart, students record their answers to the following question: What did you learn from the story of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire? The "L" column is used to summarize what students have learned from the beginning of this lesson.

Questions for further consideration: Why, after all these years, do we continue to commemorate the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire? What is the relevance of this event for us today? What does the labor movement do today to protect workers?

#### **Mini-Summary**

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory disaster focused public attention on growing concerns about **sweatshops** and their exploitation of immigrant workers and other laborers. The Triangle Shirt Waist Factory fire ignited the cause of protecting laborers from unfair practices, giving rise to unions and labor laws that protect our most vulnerable citizens from exploitation. The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory disaster epitomizes what can happen when industry cares more about profits and money than the welfare of its workers.

The teacher may wish to share some of the information from the "Background" sheets at the beginning of this packet, including the facts about today's sweatshops.

#### **Next Steps**

Many other lessons can develop from this lesson, which can be taught and learned briefly as one lesson and then serve as the basis of further study over a period of time. This lesson lends itself to an entire unit, perhaps within the context of social studies curriculum unit on industry and the emergence and rise of the labor movement in the 20th century. The questions that emerge from this lesson as recorded on the I-chart can serve both for planning and as initial questions of the next phase of study.

## Related Activities and Additional Resources



## BKWL Chart

<b>Background</b> Our Prior Knowledge . . . [1. Whole group]	What we <b>Know</b> What we learned in the Mini-Lecture . . . [1. Whole group]	What we <b>Want to Know</b> Questions we have now are . . . [2. Small Groups]	What we <b>Learned</b> What we have learned from this whole lesson... [3. Whole group]

**Inquiry Chart: The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire**

<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Question 1</b>	<b>Question 2</b>	<b>Question 3</b>	<b>Question 4</b>	<b>Other interesting/ Important Facts</b>	<b>New Questions</b>
<b>Source</b>						
<b>Source</b>						
<b>Source</b>						
<b>Summaries</b>						

**Adapted from: Buehl, D. (2001). Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning. (2nd edition). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.**



# FOR YOU FROM TEACHER CENTER

## INQUIRY CHART: A TOOL FOR INVESTIGATION

VIRGINIA DANZER, TOMMI ASTARITA, RONI MESSER

Use of an Inquiry Chart (I-Chart) for a topic investigation fosters skill in critical thinking and facilitates the organization of information for research and report writing. Appropriate for grades 3 and up, it can be used by a whole class, a small group, or an individual. (See the February issue of UFT Highlights page 1, for the story on I-Charts at P.S. 129M.) Knowledge of this strategy equips students to use the process effectively and independently to identify topics, gather resources, ask questions, conduct research and draw conclusions. Creating an I-Chart consists of three major stages: **Planning, Interacting, and Integrating/Evaluating** (Hoffman, 1992).

### PLANNING

In the planning stage the teacher selects a topic for whole class in-depth study, (after considering the curriculum, availability of information, and students' interests). A sample topic is Whales. The teacher reviews the content for the topic and creates 4-5 focus questions such as: What do whales look like? What are their habitats? Are they endangered? What do they eat? Are they dangerous to humans? Linking these questions to available resources is next. The teacher collects trade and textbooks, magazines, articles, encyclopedia entries, pictures, videos, cassettes and Web sites. (The teacher also considers potential trips and expert guest speakers).

The last step in the initial planning process is to construct the chart, (see illustration). It can be created on a large bulletin board, a blank wall or a blackboard covered with butcher paper. The title and the focus questions are entered on the

chart. To use with cooperative groups, the teacher assigns a color to each cooperative group. Each group uses pieces of "their" color paper to record their data. The chart is then completed (as the sheets are finished by students) by taping these (each color in its own row) under the title and focus questions.

### INTERACTING

In the interacting stage, students begin their investigation of the topic. Their prior knowledge is elicited when they answer the focus questions (either as a whole class or in small groups) using what they already know (or think they know) about the topic. Responses are recorded on the chart in the "What We Know" section, Row 2, columns 2-8. Even those responses that the teacher thinks may be inaccurate are included, since the groups will be coming back to review these. In the Interesting Facts column, students are asked to record any information not elicited by the questions, and any other questions that arise as the study progresses.

The students now read and research the topic using the previously gathered materials and any other resources contributed by the students. The research phase can be planned to span several days, or weeks. (If the class is working in small groups the teacher divides the resources equitably among the groups. Titles of books and other resources are included at the far left of the I-chart and the information gained from these is placed in the same row as the book title (see sample). If the groups are using colored paper to record their information, each row will be in the same color, thus identifying the book and the group that used the book as its resource.)

### INTEGRATING/EVALUATING

During the integrating and evaluating stage, the students formulate statements that synthesize the data found that match the focus questions, and the "Interesting Facts" column as well. Should conflicting information have been found, it should be noted and included in the summaries. The teacher guides the class in comparing their summaries with their initial responses (what we know), asking about new information that has been

found, and any misconceptions that have been cleared up. The "New Questions" column, also summarized by the class, is examined and may provide a focus for further investigations by the class, small groups, or individuals. The class or groups have now gathered questions, materials, data, and discussion points that can be applied in writing individual or group reports or research papers.

#### References

UFT Teacher Center. (2000, February). Inquiring Minds Chart at P.S. 129M. *Highlights* (2) 1. New York: UFT Teacher Center.  
Hoffman, J. (1992). Critical Reading/ Thinking Across The Curriculum: Using I-Charts to Support Learning. *Language Arts* (69) 121-127.

TOPIC: WHALES	What do whales look like?	What are their habitats?	Are whales an endangered species?	What do whales eat?	Are whales dangerous to humans?	Other Interesting Facts	New questions
What we know	Students' initial responses to the focus questions are placed in these rows.						
Publication data for each resource are detailed in a row in this column corresponding research data that answers the focus questions are entered in the rows to the right.							
Summary							

Note: This chart can be adapted to fit the size of the class, groups and particular needs of the class

# Inquiry Chart

Topic:	Q1:	Q2:	Q3:	Q4:	Other Interesting/ Important Facts	New Questions
What We Know: (Prior Knowledge)						
Source (Book)						
Source (Book/ Magazine)						
Source (Book/ Magazine/ Internet)						
Summaries (Hoffman 1992)						

adapted from Buehl, D. (2001). *Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning*. (2nd ed.) Newark, DE: International Reading Association.  
 UFT Teacher Center Activity Sheet for the "INTRERESTING REPORTS" in EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION section.

## SEMANTIC MAP: The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire

### WHO?

Factory Owners Max Blank and Isaac Harris

A Hero—Owner of the Adjacent Factory who Helped Workers Escape

Garment Worker

Tammany Hall

Families of the Garment Workers

Union Leaders

Other New Yorkers

### WHAT?

The fire at the Triangle Waist Factory killed 146 young immigrant workers. Owners Blank and Harris were blamed and put to trial for causing so many deaths.

### WHEN?

The fire broke out on March 25, 1911 at 4:45 p.m. just before closing time.

### WHERE?

The Triangle Shirtwaist Company was in Greenwich Village, New York City.

### WHY?

Although the fire was caused by a worker, owners of the factory ignored the physical conditions of the building which made escaping the fire extremely difficult.

### HOW?

A factory worker threw out a lit cigarette or match into a garbage pail filled with rags.

## RELATED ACTIVITIES

### 1. Conduct a Town Meeting

A Mock Town Meeting is called to decide whether families of the victims should be compensated for the loss of their loved ones in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire.

#### Preparation:

- A. The class prepares for the Town Meeting by dividing into teams representing the factions below:

GROUP	FACTIONS
I	Factory Owners Max Blanck and Isaac Harris
II	The Owner of the Adjacent Factory who Helped Workers Escape
III	Shirtwaist Factory Workers
IV	Tammany Hall
V	Families of the Garment Workers
VI	Union Leaders
VII.	Other New Yorkers
VIII.	Others

- B. Each team prepares a case from the perspective of their faction on the issue of whether or not the families of the victims should be compensated for the loss of their loved ones in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, using evidence from primary and secondary documents and accounts relating to the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire to defend their position. Providing a graphic organizer for teams to collect and organize their cases would help students to concretize their thoughts and prepare for the town meeting. (See 3, below)

#### The Town Meeting

At the Town Meeting, students role-play and present their cases. Another class may be invited to sit in on the town meeting and vote on the resolution based on how well the teams presented their cases.

Faction: \_\_\_\_\_ (Name)

Perspective on Compensation for Victims: \_\_\_ For, or \_\_\_ Against.

WHY?

Claim:

Evidence:

Further Explanation:

### 2. Create "Primary Documents"

Students create mock primary documents using information gleaned from accounts of the Shirt Waist fire, in preparation for the Regents exams. Students create their own Document-Based Questions for other students to respond to and practice their essay skills.

### **3. Write Compare and Contrast Essays**

Students compare and contrast the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory disaster with another historical disaster. Students evaluate which event was the most historically significant and explain why.

### **4. Write Editorials against Sweatshops of Today**

Students explore the issue of sweatshops today to write editorials advocating reform. The editorials may be edited for publication in the school newspaper or submitted to other news publications.

### **5. Invite Speakers to Class**

After conducting research on The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory and the fire, students invite speakers to address the topic: To what extent have conditions for factory workers improved in 100 years? Speakers may include officials from labor organizations to speak on this topic, as well as to address the struggles faced by unions to improve conditions for workers.

### **6. Write and Perform Readers' Theater**

Students collect primary and secondary documents from the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory time period. Students identify the most effective short passages, those which include facts, opinions, and representing a range of point-of-view on the disaster and its social implications. Students then practice reading aloud these selections. They may present their Reader's Theater performance for other classes to commemorate the day or to commemorate Women's History Month. An overhead projector or LCD player can be used simultaneously to display visual images/documents from the time period.

### **7. Create Displays**

Students can create a 3-part chart on working conditions in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory and other such factories, the columns titled "Then," "Now" (current working conditions in factories) and "Future" (Gains we have yet to make).

### **8. Write Essays for a Class Portfolio Based on a video**

A video available through the AFT, ([www.aft.org/international/child/video/html](http://www.aft.org/international/child/video/html)): *Futures: The Problem of Child Labor*, (2000). (See further information in Resources).

Individual students or groups can write on such topics as: "What if I could not go to school because I had to work..."

### **9. Trips**

Classes can plan trips in conjunction with their lessons/units to historic sites of the time, including the site of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire.

### **10. Create a Diorama-Bulletin Board Display**

Using materials that they have created (written or drawn or both) or excerpted from the Internet searches that they have conducted, students can create a diorama or bulletin board display that tells the story of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire.

### **Online Resources**

For songs, interviews with survivors, newspaper articles, a lecture by Frances Perkins, and letters, visit: <http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire/>  
<http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire/victimsWitnesses/unidentifiedVictims.html>  
<http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire/supplemental/tipsForStudents.html>  
<http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire/primary/photosIllustrations/index.html>

American Historical Association's web module:

<http://www.historians.org/tl/lessonplans/wi/huehner/TriangleSWF.html>