

## Process Paper

Inspired by this year's theme, we wanted a topic that showed the two-way relationship between rights and responsibilities, where different sides have both responsibilities to uphold and rights they deserve. While searching, we found an interesting educational video on *YouTube* about the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire of 1911. We started researching and found it perfectly fit this year's theme. We found that most people were focusing on blaming the factory owners for their lack of responsibility. However, we felt that the government, the fire department, and workers also shared the responsibility for the tragedy. The goal of our project is to show that with rights come responsibilities.

Our research started by borrowing library books, searching for articles, and watching documentaries to get various perspectives on the story. We found several primary source books and were able to get quotes from them. We found plenty of newspaper articles published during the time of the fire. We were thrilled when we found the Factory Investigation Commission's (FIC) report and transcripts from the actual trial of the factory owners. They helped us get a full picture of the events. We also found interviews with survivors that gave us a better perspective of the incident. For modern perspectives, we conducted five interviews. We interviewed Fire Marshall Richard Shea, Factory Fire Safety Manager Brian Blanchette, restaurant owner Mohamed Agha, Human Resources Coordinator Rajae Al-Badr, and a former CVS pharmacist, Osama ElSherbini.

For our project, we decided to create a website that others could easily understand. We organized it into various sections: historical context, the story, impacts, and significance. We included subsections to avoid making any page too long for the reader. To make it appealing, we

incorporated images, videos, primary documents, and navigation buttons. The colors were fire-themed, and one of our members drew the background.

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire was a turning point that sparked public awareness of the inhumane working conditions of the 1900s. It led to better labor and workplace safety laws. It showed the need for a balance between rights and responsibilities in the workplace. While workers have the right to a safe working environment, they must adhere to the safety rules. Employers are responsible for providing a safe workplace, and have the right to enforce security measures and manage a business. The government must create laws for employers to follow. Finally, the fire department must implement and enforce laws to prevent such tragedies from recurring. This disaster pushed for better working conditions.

Although there were other workplace accidents in the early 1900s, this fire killed the greatest number of people. That huge number outraged the public, leading to the creation of the FIC, which produced a report with recommendations to prevent future fires. These recommendations, supported by unions fighting for workers' rights, turned into labor and workplace safety laws. The laws kept evolving, leading to better wages and safer conditions. These changes continue to protect workers today, making the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire a crucial factor in obtaining workers' rights.