

DIRECTIONS

- 1) **Connect:** Take a look at the clothing labels in the clothes you (and others) are wearing. Look at some of the clothes in your drawers and closet as well. Where was the clothing made?

What do you notice about where our clothing is made? Are you surprised? Why do you think so much of our clothing is made in other countries instead of in the United States?

- 2) **Read:** Independently, read "The Real Cost of Fashion", marking the text to note key ideas or questions.

- 3) **Respond to the Text:**

- Why do many retailers manufacture clothes in Bangladesh? Do Americans benefit from this? Explain your answer.

- Why are working conditions unlikely to improve dramatically in Bangladesh anytime soon?

- **What steps are many U.S. clothing companies taking to improve safety for workers in factories in poor countries? Which measure do you think has the best chance of making conditions safer for factory workers? Explain your reasoning.**

4) Gather Evidence: Will having higher U.S. clothing prices help or hurt developing nations? Gather pros and cons from the reading that address the question of whether or not retailers should raise prices. Then discuss your findings and opinions with classmates or others who have read the article.

SHOULD RETAILERS RAISE CLOTHING PRICES? WHY OR WHY NOT?	
PRO'S	CON'S

5) Read & Compare: Read the following page titled "Fire in New York." Answer the 5 questions at the bottom.

6) Write:

What responsibility do American companies have to ensure the health and safety of workers who manufacture the clothing they sell? Do we as consumers have any responsibility for the workers in other countries who make our clothing? If so, what should or can we do? Write a letter to your favorite clothing company in which you argue for the best course of action to improve worker safety and rights around the world. Cite evidence from one or both texts that you read to support your reasons.

Your letter must include:

- a salutation
- an introductory paragraph with some background information and a thesis statement
- at least one body paragraph guided by a topic sentence (idea) and backed by evidence (details from the articles) that support your ideas
- a closing

READING COMPREHENSION **RI.6.1****FIRE IN NEW YORK**

The building that collapsed in Bangladesh in April may seem a world away, but factories in the United States have had similarly dangerous conditions. In 1911, a fatal fire broke out at the Triangle Waist Company in New York City,

which made women's blouses. It helped draw attention to those dangers and inspired Americans to demand safer working conditions. Read about that fire below. Then answer the questions comparing it with the tragedy in Bangladesh.

March 25, 1911: The paychecks had been handed out, the workers were gathering their belongings, and the closing bell was just about to chime. Then suddenly—fire! Flames and suffocating smoke swept through the Triangle Waist Company, housed on the top three floors of a 10-story building in New York City. Panicked, the 500 workers inside struggled to escape. Many crammed into elevators. Some slid down elevator cables. Others raced down a back staircase before it caught fire. But 146 of the workers didn't make it out alive.

Most of the victims were poor female immigrants, and many were teens. The two youngest were only 14 years old.

Survivors recounted harrowing details: One of the two exits had been locked, the rusty fire escape collapsed, and the firefighters' ladders could reach only as high as the sixth floor. The factory's owners were put on trial. Angry families, workers, and local leaders demanded that factories improve safety, and more people joined unions. Being part of unions made factory workers more aware of their rights and gave them the power to secure safer conditions.



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QUESTIONS Use the articles above and on pp. 6-9 to answer these questions.

- What did the factory fire in New York and the building collapse in Bangladesh have in common?
 - Both factories were located outside the U.S.
 - Neither could have been avoided.
 - The victims were low-paid factory workers.
- How were workers in the fire and the building collapse alike?
 - Most were immigrants.
 - Most were union members.
 - Most were very poor.
- Which was true of the Triangle Waist Company fire?
 - It had fewer deaths than the Bangladesh building collapse.
 - It happened 100 years after the Bangladesh building collapse.
 - It prompted major retailers to call for better working conditions.
- What might have prevented the fire and the building collapse?
 - higher pay for workers
 - stricter building inspections
 - wider hallways
- What can you conclude about both tragedies?
 - The factory owners cared more about profits than workers.
 - The factory owners cared more about workers than profits.
 - More people should look for work in factories.

WRITING PROMPT

Why might a type of tragedy that happened so long ago in the U.S. have again occurred, in Bangladesh?