

## Elizabeth Jennings: Equal Rights Crusader

Today, in New York City, people of all races can ride the buses and subways. But before 1854, only white people were guaranteed that right. Then a young woman named Elizabeth Jennings won equal rights for African Americans.

In 1854, New York City had grown a great deal. The city had extended farther north in the past 20 years, so that it was at least two miles long. Horses pulled streetcars and buses that carried people around the city.

But African Americans were not always allowed to ride the cars and buses. Drivers decided who could ride, and they had whips to keep people off. They often told African Americans that they couldn't ride with white people. A few buses had signs that read "Colored Persons Allowed." But sometimes these buses didn't run.

On July 14, 1854, a teacher named Elizabeth Jennings wanted to ride to church. She got onto a streetcar, but the conductor told her to get off. First he said the car was full, but Elizabeth showed him that it wasn't. Then he said that the other passengers didn't want her to ride, but Elizabeth stayed where she was. Next he tried to drag her off, damaging her bonnet, getting her dress dirty, and hurting Elizabeth badly. Finally, he called a policeman, who helped him drag Elizabeth away.

The next day, there was a big rally at Elizabeth's church. Many people from the African-American community came. They talked about what to do next.

Elizabeth's father, Thomas Jennings, owned a tailor shop. He had also invented a new method for dry-cleaning clothes. He and his friends raised money for Elizabeth to **sue** the streetcar company. *To sue* means taking someone to court to be punished for acting improperly.

In 1855, Elizabeth won her case. A judge ruled that African Americans had the right to ride the streetcars. A month later, another African American named Peter Porter was kept off a different streetcar. He sued, too, and that company settled out of court. From then on, African Americans could ride any streetcar in New York City.



**What conclusion can you draw about what Elizabeth was like?**

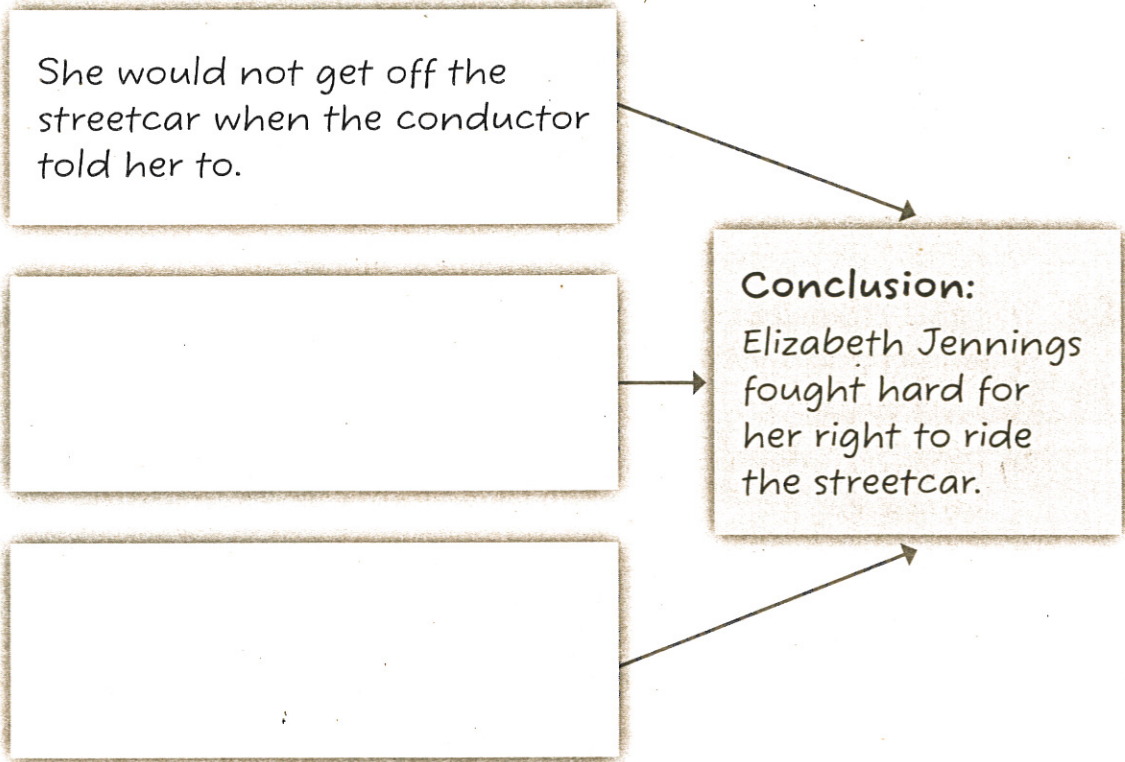
---

## Multiple-Choice Questions

- 1** Based on the article, what can you conclude about what things were like for African Americans in New York City in 1854?
- (A) Most African Americans in the city had good jobs.
  - (B) African Americans had the same rights as white people.
  - (C) African Americans did not have the same rights as others.
  - (D) Most African Americans lived only in one part of the city.
- 2** Which statement *best* supports the conclusion that New Yorkers often had to travel long distances?
- (A) But before 1854, only white people were guaranteed that right.
  - (B) The city had extended farther north in the past 20 years, so that it was at least two miles long.
  - (C) Then he said that the other passengers didn't want her to ride, but Elizabeth stayed where she was.
  - (D) A few buses had signs that read, "Colored Persons Allowed."
- 3** What conclusion can you draw from the fourth paragraph?
- (A) Elizabeth was determined not to get off the streetcar.
  - (B) Elizabeth was frightened and upset by what happened.
  - (C) The other people on the car did not agree with the conductor.
  - (D) The other people in Elizabeth's church did not agree with her.
- 4** According to the sixth paragraph, what can you conclude about Elizabeth's father?
- (A) He was very poor.
  - (B) He knew people who could help.
  - (C) He believed strongly in education.
  - (D) He worked for the city of New York.
- 5** What conclusion can you draw from the fact that Peter Porter was also kept off a streetcar?
- (A) Peter Porter broke the law.
  - (B) People forgot about Elizabeth Jennings.
  - (C) Some victories take more than one fight.
  - (D) Some people enjoy breaking the law.

## Short-Response Questions

- 6 Complete the web with two details that support the conclusion.



- 7 Why did New Yorkers need buses and streetcars in 1854?
- \_\_\_\_\_

- 8 What is one detail that supports the conclusion that African Americans faced real danger if they rode the streetcars?
- \_\_\_\_\_

- 9 Based on the fifth paragraph, how did the African-American community feel about Elizabeth's case?
- \_\_\_\_\_

- 10 Write a conclusion you have drawn about Elizabeth's father. Give two details to support that conclusion.

Conclusion: \_\_\_\_\_

Detail: \_\_\_\_\_

Detail: \_\_\_\_\_

## Writing Connection: Indefinite Pronouns

**Indefinite pronouns** replace nouns without telling which nouns they replace. Singular indefinite pronouns include **another, either, everyone, everything, neither, nobody, no one, nothing, other, somebody, someone, and something**. Some plural indefinite pronouns are **both, few, others, and several**. Some indefinite pronouns can be either singular or plural: **all, any, more, most, none, and some**.

Remember: Singular pronouns require singular verbs.  
Plural pronouns require plural verbs. For example:

Each of my neighbors takes the bus to work.  
singular pronoun                      singular verb

Many of them work for the same company.  
plural pronoun                      plural verb



### 1. Complete each sentence with the correct verb form.

Joe and Maria ride the bus. Both \_\_\_\_\_ across town from me. **live, lives**

Somebody in that family \_\_\_\_\_ a bus driver. **is, are**

Nobody on my block \_\_\_\_\_ the bus. **ride, rides**

Most of us \_\_\_\_\_ to ride the bus. **love, loves**

Each of the children \_\_\_\_\_ a half-price ticket. **get, gets**

Everyone here \_\_\_\_\_ to walk to the bus stop. **like, likes**

Some of my friends \_\_\_\_\_ the bus to school. **take, takes**

Others \_\_\_\_\_ on the bus to summer camp. **travel, travels**

### 2. Write two sentences about a ride you've had, using indefinite pronouns.

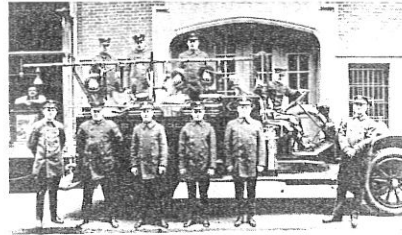
a \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## New York Fire Patrol

### What was the New York Fire Patrol?

The New York Fire Patrol was founded to protect property in New York City from fire and related water damage. It was a private institution, paid for by insurance companies which paid for the damage.



### Why was the New York Fire Patrol needed?

In the 1700s and 1800s, fire was a constant danger. Many buildings were made of wood and caught fire easily. Buildings were built close together. Fire could spread quickly, destroying everything in its path. Some people bought fire insurance, which paid for damages after a fire. Insurance companies wanted to reduce the payments they had to make for property damage. They supported groups like the New York Fire Patrol so there would be fewer fires.

### Who did the New York Fire Patrol help?

For many years, the New York Fire Patrol would help anyone who needed it, whether they had insurance or not.

### How large was the New York Fire Patrol?

At its peak, the New York Fire Patrol had 10 companies with nearly 400 men and women. It provided 24-hour service to the people of New York City.

### Time Line:

- 1803:** A group of private volunteers forms a fire-fighting company.
- 1835:** The Association of Fire Insurance Companies hires four men to act as “fire police.” They are the first paid firefighters in New York City. Later that year, a fire damages more than 500 buildings. As a result, several more men are hired.
- 1839:** The Association of Fire Insurance Companies hires 40 more private, paid firefighters. It also buys its first “fire truck,” which is drawn by horses.
- 1865:** The city of New York forms its first public paid fire department, known as the Metropolitan Fire Department. This later becomes the Fire Department of New York (FDNY).
- 2006:** The New York Fire Patrol closes its doors.

What conclusion can you draw about why the New York Fire Patrol closed?

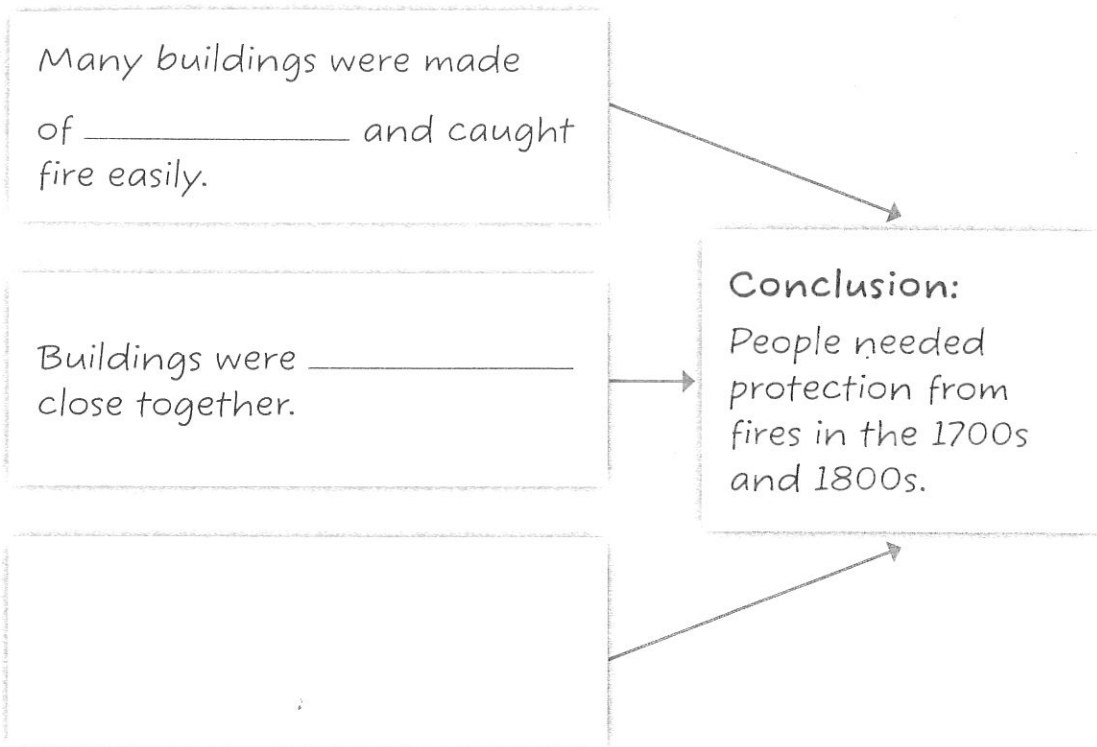
---

## Multiple-Choice Questions

- 1** Based on the second question and answer in the web entry, what conclusion can you draw about the insurance companies?
- (A) They were trying to hire women.
  - (B) They were trying to change city government.
  - (C) They were trying to expand employment.
  - (D) They were trying to save money.
- 2** According to the web entry, did people need fire insurance to be helped by the New York Fire Patrol?
- (A) First, people did need fire insurance, but later the Fire Patrol helped everybody.
  - (B) People never had to have fire insurance to be helped by the Fire Patrol.
  - (C) People always had to have fire insurance to be helped by the Fire Patrol.
  - (D) Sometimes people had to buy fire insurance after the Fire Patrol had helped them.
- 3** Based on the time line, what can you conclude about firefighting in 1835?
- (A) There were many more firefighters than the city needed.
  - (B) There were not enough firefighters to protect the city.
  - (C) Firefighters at the time were not being paid enough money.
  - (D) Firefighters at the time were being paid too much money.
- 4** Based on the 1865 entry in the time line, what can you conclude about why the Metropolitan Fire Department was founded?
- (A) The insurance companies paid the city to start a new company.
  - (B) The city wanted to wipe out all the private fire companies.
  - (C) Private and volunteer firefighters were not enough to protect the city.
  - (D) All the firefighters up to this time were poorly trained.
- 5** Which statement *best* supports the conclusion that the New York Fire Patrol did important work?
- (A) It was a private institution, paid for by insurance companies.
  - (B) Buildings were built close together.
  - (C) It provided 24-hour service to the people of New York City.
  - (D) A group of private volunteers forms a fire-fighting company.

## Short-Response Questions

- 6 Complete the web with details that support the conclusion.



- 7 Why did a group of private volunteers form a fire-fighting company?

---

- 8 Why were volunteers replaced with paid firefighters?

---

- 9 Why did the city form a public, paid fire department?

---

---

- 10 What information in the article supports the conclusion that both public and private fire departments were needed for many years?

---

---

## Writing Connection: Verb Tenses

Verbs in the **past tense** tell about something that has already happened. Verbs in the **present tense** tell about something that is happening now or that is always true.

Verbs in the **future tense** tell about something that will happen later.

Here are some examples for the verb ride.

PAST: **Yesterday, Terry rode the fire truck.**

PRESENT: **Every day, Terry rides the fire truck.**

FUTURE: **Tomorrow, Terry will ride the fire truck.**



### 1. Complete each sentence with the correct verb form in the past tense.

Pam \_\_\_\_\_ the fire bell loudly. **ring**

Martin \_\_\_\_\_ the fire truck very fast. **drive**

Kim \_\_\_\_\_ water from the hose. **spray**

### 2. Complete each sentence with the correct verb form in the present tense.

Every month, the firefighters \_\_\_\_\_ for training. **go**

Maria \_\_\_\_\_ their captain. **be** (forms of to be: am, is, are, was, were)

Luke \_\_\_\_\_ to be a lieutenant. **want**

### 3. Complete each sentence with the correct verb form in the future tense.

Next week, we \_\_\_\_\_ the firehouse. **visit**

Then we \_\_\_\_\_ all the fire trucks. **see**

We \_\_\_\_\_ with the fire dog! **play**

### 4. Write three sentences about fires or firefighters. Use the verb tenses shown below.

a **Past:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b **Present:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

c **Future:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_