Beyond the Workplace

Tracing how institutions shape state and national economies

SS24.E.5c "Research and present information on the role and impact of economic institutions on state and national economies, including labor unions and nonprofit organizations."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one action by each institution, circle economic effects those actions might produce, and number the sources or limits that would help you test those effects.

From Local Action to Wider Impact

1. In Michigan, an auto plant's payroll reaches far beyond its gates. The United Auto Workers (UAW), a labor union, represents many workers at U.S. automakers and bargains with employers over pay, benefits, and working conditions. During the 2023 strikes against General Motors, Ford, and Stellantis, some workers stopped production while negotiations continued. A contract that raises wages may increase workers' spending in nearby stores, but higher labor costs may also influence company pricing and investment decisions. Because these companies sell vehicles nationwide and buy parts across state lines, a bargaining outcome in Michigan can affect suppliers, consumers, and employment elsewhere.

2. Nonprofits influence markets without distributing profits to private owners. Feeding America West Michigan, a nonprofit food bank, works with local partners to move donated food to people facing hunger. Its purchases, employees, and volunteers support a regional distribution network, while access to food can help households use limited income for other needs. Donations and grants fund much of this work, so a drop in support could reduce services even when demand rises. Its local operations connect to a national network of food banks that share practices and coordinate food sourcing, although a food bank cannot by itself eliminate the causes of hunger.

3. To assess economic impact, separate what an institution does from what might follow. A UAW contract can document negotiated wages, while federal labor data can show employment trends; neither source alone proves a contract caused statewide job growth. A food bank's annual report or IRS Form 990 can document revenue and spending, but the number of meals distributed does not measure every effect on household finances. Compare dates and geographic coverage before making a state or national claim. In a presentation, identify each source, explain a likely pathway from action to economic effect, and note at least one competing explanation or limit.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How could a UAW wage agreement affect Michigan businesses, and what possible cost must an automaker consider?

2. Explain one way Feeding America West Michigan could affect household finances and one reason its services might shrink.

3. Trace one way each institution's work could extend beyond its state or region.

4. Which source could document a UAW wage agreement, and why would it not, by itself, prove that the agreement caused statewide job growth?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a North Carolina hospital whose nurses bargain through a union and a separate nonprofit clinic that offers low-cost care. Write a 90 to 110 word briefing for a state legislator explaining one possible state economic effect of each institution and one national connection; name two types of evidence you would seek, and distinguish a stated fact from an inference.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 12 · SS24.E.5c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one action by each institution, circle economic effects those actions might produce, and number the sources or limits that would help you test those effects. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How could a UAW wage agreement affect Michigan businesses, and what possible cost must an automaker consider?	**Higher wages may increase workers' spending at nearby businesses, while higher labor costs may influence an automaker's pricing or investment decisions.**
2	Explain one way Feeding America West Michigan could affect household finances and one reason its services might shrink.	**Food access may leave households more income for other needs. A drop in donations or grants could reduce the food bank's services.**
3	Trace one way each institution's work could extend beyond its state or region.	**Automakers buy parts across state lines and sell vehicles nationwide, so a Michigan bargaining outcome may affect people elsewhere. The food bank participates in a national network that shares practices and coordinates food sourcing.**
4	Which source could document a UAW wage agreement, and why would it not, by itself, prove that the agreement caused statewide job growth?	**A UAW contract could document negotiated wages. It cannot establish what caused statewide employment changes, which may have other explanations.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In this hypothetical community, nurses bargain with their hospital, and a separate nonprofit clinic offers low-cost care. A contract with higher pay could increase spending at North Carolina businesses, although the hospital might face higher costs. Clinic services could help patients manage health needs and reduce missed work, but that outcome needs evidence. The state effects could reach other states if the hospital recruits nurses across state lines or clinic funding comes from national donors. I would check the nurses' collective bargaining agreement for pay terms and the clinic's IRS Form 990 for spending. These documents support descriptions of activities, not proof of statewide economic gains.

Accept other plausible economic pathways grounded in the passage. For the briefing, check that the student treats the scenario as given, labels predicted effects as possibilities, and names evidence relevant to both institutions.