Who Gets Hired?

Labor force shifts and their economic effects

SS24.E.6 "Analyze data to describe the shifting demographics of the labor force of the United States in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, including age, education, gender, race, regional specialization, and socioeconomic background..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two changes in who works, circle the regional shift, and number the steps from a nurse shortage to pay or benefits to economic output.

A Changing Workforce

1 In 1950, an automobile plant near Detroit hired workers for assembly lines. Many workers were men, and fewer women joined the paid labor force than in later decades. The table gives the percentage of U.S. women ages 16 and older who were working or seeking work, not the percentage of jobs held by women.

U.S. WOMEN'S LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION, AGES 16 AND OLDER (BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS)

Year	Working or seeking work
1950	33.9%
2000	59.9%
2023	57.3%

2 By 2023, health care and technology offered jobs alongside manufacturing. The labor force included more older workers and was more racially and ethnically diverse than in 1950. More workers had college degrees, but family income still shaped access to education. As factory jobs declined in the Midwest, growing Sun Belt cities attracted workers and employers.

3 These shifts affect pay and benefits, not just who works. If hospitals need more nurses than the available supply, they may raise wages or offer tuition support. More training can increase workers' output and help the economy grow. Yet workers without affordable training may miss those jobs, and new employers may not reach every region.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did women's labor force participation change from 1950 to 2000? Use the table to describe the size of the shift.

2. How could family income affect which workers enter growing fields that require college education?

3. If hospitals need more nurses than are available, how might that change both wages and a non-wage benefit?

4. How could the movement of jobs from Midwest factories toward Sun Belt cities affect growth in the two regions?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a coastal county where shipping warehouses open as many older workers retire. In 4 to 5 sentences, use the table to identify a national labor force shift, then predict how local age and access to training could affect wages, one non-wage benefit, and economic growth.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 12 · SS24.E.6

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two changes in who works, circle the regional shift, and number the steps from a nurse shortage to pay or benefits to economic output. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did women's labor force participation change from 1950 to 2000? Use the table to describe the size of the shift.	**It rose from 33.9% to 59.9%, an increase of 26 percentage points.**
2	How could family income affect which workers enter growing fields that require college education?	**Family income shapes access to education, so workers who cannot afford training may miss jobs in growing fields.**
3	If hospitals need more nurses than are available, how might that change both wages and a non-wage benefit?	**Hospitals may raise wages and offer tuition support to attract nurses.**
4	How could the movement of jobs from Midwest factories toward Sun Belt cities affect growth in the two regions?	**Workers and employers moving to Sun Belt cities could support growth there, while declining factory jobs could limit opportunities in parts of the Midwest.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Women's labor force participation rose from 33.9% in 1950 to 57.3% in 2023, showing a change in the national pool of workers. In this county, retirements could reduce the supply of experienced warehouse workers even if more women apply. If warehouses compete for workers trained in inventory software, they might raise wages and offer paid training. Filling more jobs with trained workers could increase output and help the county's economy grow. Workers who cannot reach training sites might miss the higher-paying jobs.

Accept sound predictions that distinguish the national table trend from the imagined county's conditions. For the regional question, students may describe differences in job opportunities rather than claim that all Midwest communities declined.