Who Gets Hired?

Trace how workers' skills and choices shape pay, benefits, and growth.

SS24.E.6a "Explain how the characteristics of the labor force influence wages and non-wage benefits and affect economic growth."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two labor-force characteristics in the passage, circle the wages or benefits they affect, and number the steps in one chain from a labor-force characteristic to economic growth.

A Battery Plant Builds Its Workforce

1. When a battery plant opens near a midsize city, it needs technicians who can maintain automated equipment. Only a few local workers have that training, so nearby employers compete for the same people. To attract technicians, the plant offers higher wages than it pays for entry-level assembly work. This difference does not mean assembly workers contribute nothing; it reflects how scarce the needed skills are relative to demand. If a community college trains more technicians, the supply of qualified applicants may rise, easing wage pressure over time.

2. The plant also needs enough people to fill its evening shift. Many qualified residents care for children or older relatives and cannot take an unpredictable schedule. Managers offer fixed shift times and paid family leave, which are non-wage benefits, to encourage some caregivers who were not seeking work to apply. These policies cost money, but they may reduce resignations and the expense of hiring replacements. With more experienced workers staying, machines spend less time idle. A larger, more reliable workforce can help the plant produce more batteries, although benefits alone cannot guarantee higher output.

3. Assembly workers then form a union and negotiate for higher pay and health insurance. Their ability to bargain together gives them more influence over the wage and benefit package than each worker had alone. The agreement raises the plant's labor costs, so managers also invest in better tools and on-the-job training. If these changes let workers make more batteries per hour, the plant can expand output while paying more. Suppliers may receive more orders, and workers may spend more at local businesses. If costs rise faster than productivity, however, the plant might cut hiring instead of expanding, limiting regional economic growth.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why does the plant offer technicians higher wages than assembly workers, and how could community college training change that wage pressure?

2. How could fixed shifts and paid family leave affect both who seeks work and how many batteries the plant produces?

3. How does union bargaining change compensation, and under what condition could the plant expand output while paying more?

4. Explain how greater output at the plant could support economic growth beyond the plant itself.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A local pipe-repair company wants to expand, but certified inspectors are scarce; some inspectors who care for relatives would apply if shifts were predictable. In four or five sentences, explain how these labor-force characteristics could affect wages, a non-wage benefit, and economic growth, including one condition that could limit growth.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 12 · SS24.E.6a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two labor-force characteristics in the passage, circle the wages or benefits they affect, and number the steps in one chain from a labor-force characteristic to economic growth. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why does the plant offer technicians higher wages than assembly workers, and how could community college training change that wage pressure?	**Few local workers have the needed technical skills, so employers compete for them with higher wages. Training more technicians could increase the supply of qualified applicants and ease wage pressure.**
2	How could fixed shifts and paid family leave affect both who seeks work and how many batteries the plant produces?	**The benefits could encourage caregivers who were not seeking work to apply and help experienced workers stay. A larger, more reliable workforce could reduce idle machine time and increase output.**
3	How does union bargaining change compensation, and under what condition could the plant expand output while paying more?	**Bargaining together helps assembly workers negotiate higher pay and health insurance. The plant could expand output while paying more if better tools and training raise batteries produced per worker-hour.**
4	Explain how greater output at the plant could support economic growth beyond the plant itself.	**If the plant expands output, suppliers may receive more orders, and workers may spend more at local businesses.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Because certified inspectors are scarce, the company may offer higher wages to recruit them. Predictable shifts could draw inspectors who care for relatives into the workforce without increasing hourly pay. With more inspectors, crews could complete more repairs, allowing the company to expand and buy more from local suppliers. Training additional residents could ease the shortage and slow wage increases. Growth could stall if added labor costs rise faster than the value of the extra work.

Accept other supported causal chains that distinguish wages from non-wage benefits and connect labor-force characteristics to possible changes in output or regional economic activity. Growth claims should be conditional, not guaranteed.