Backpacks Across Borders

How one backpack connects jobs in two countries

6.C.7.4.B "Explain economic interdependence as it relates to the outsourcing of jobs to developing regions."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the reason the company moves sewing work to Bangladesh. Circle one possible effect on U.S. workers and one possible effect on workers in Bangladesh.

The Journey of a Backpack

1. At a store in Ohio, Maya picks up a backpack made by a U.S. company. The company designs its bags in Ohio, but it pays a factory in Bangladesh to sew them. Moving this sewing work to a business in another country is called outsourcing. Bangladesh is a developing country, where average incomes are lower than in the United States. The company may pay less for sewing there, which can help it sell backpacks at prices more families can afford. The factory gains orders, and its workers earn wages.

2. Each backpack connects workers and businesses across borders. U.S. designers send plans to the factory, which buys cloth and zippers and turns them into bags. Ships carry the finished bags to U.S. stores. The company needs the factory to make enough backpacks on time, and the factory needs the company's orders to keep this work. Stores need bags to sell, while factory workers need paychecks to buy things in their communities. These linked needs show economic interdependence: people in different places rely on one another for work, goods, and income.

3. Outsourcing can also create difficult changes. If the Ohio company closes a local sewing shop, some U.S. workers may lose jobs, even while design and store jobs remain. In Bangladesh, factory jobs can bring income, but workers may worry if the company cuts orders. Suppose a storm delays ships carrying the backpacks. U.S. stores could run low, and the factory might wait for new orders if sales fall. A choice made by one business can affect people in both places because their work and spending are connected.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why might the Ohio company outsource sewing to Bangladesh, and how could that choice affect U.S. families?

2. How do the Ohio company and the Bangladesh factory depend on each other?

3. How could outsourcing sewing jobs affect workers in Ohio and Bangladesh differently?

4. If a storm delays backpack shipments, how could the problem spread from U.S. stores to the factory?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a U.S. soccer ball company moves ball-stitching jobs to a factory in a developing country. In four sentences, explain why it might do this, one possible effect on workers in each place, and what could happen in both places if orders stop.

ANSWER KEY

Backpacks Across Borders

GRADE 6 · 6.C.7.4.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the reason the company moves sewing work to Bangladesh. Circle one possible effect on U.S. workers and one possible effect on workers in Bangladesh. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why might the Ohio company outsource sewing to Bangladesh, and how could that choice affect U.S. families?	**Sewing may cost the company less in Bangladesh, helping it sell backpacks at prices more U.S. families can afford.**
2	How do the Ohio company and the Bangladesh factory depend on each other?	**The company needs the factory to make backpacks on time. The factory needs the company's orders to keep the work.**
3	How could outsourcing sewing jobs affect workers in Ohio and Bangladesh differently?	**Some Ohio sewing workers could lose jobs if their shop closes, while factory workers in Bangladesh could earn wages from the new orders.**
4	If a storm delays backpack shipments, how could the problem spread from U.S. stores to the factory?	**Stores could run low on backpacks. If sales then fall, the factory might have to wait for new orders.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The company might pay less for stitching in the developing country. Some U.S. stitchers might lose their jobs when the work moves. Workers at the new factory could earn wages by making balls for the company. If orders stop, those workers could lose income, and U.S. stores might eventually have fewer balls to sell.

Accept other passage-supported effects, including lower backpack prices or the loss of local sewing jobs. For Your Turn, look for a clear link between the company's orders and jobs or goods in both places.