Jobs in Crisis

Weigh evidence about two national responses to recession

E.P.2.4.B "Construct arguments using a combination of evidence regarding solutions used by nations to address historical or contemporary economic issues."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each nation's policy, circle at least two pieces of evidence about its effects, and write 1 and 2 beside one limitation of each policy.

Two Ways to Protect Jobs

1. In 2008, a global financial crisis led businesses to cut spending and jobs. In the United States, employers cut millions of jobs, and unemployment reached 10 percent in October 2009. Germany's factories also faced falling orders, especially from customers abroad. Both governments wanted to limit harm to workers, but they chose different tools. A strong argument about either tool needs more than a result. It should connect the policy to what happened and consider what else may have shaped the outcome. These responses show how a nation might try to save existing jobs or create new demand.

2. Germany expanded Kurzarbeit, or short-time work, during the crisis. Employers reduced workers' hours instead of laying them off, and the government replaced part of the wages lost from those reduced hours. This let firms keep trained employees ready for a recovery. In 2009, Germany's economy shrank sharply, yet its unemployment rate rose far less than many observers had feared. That pairing supports the argument that the program helped protect jobs during a sudden drop in sales. However, some workers, such as temporary staff, did not get the same protection, and the government had to pay for wage support.

3. The United States used the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to support spending as private demand collapsed. It funded public projects and aid to state governments and included tax cuts. State aid helped some schools and other public services avoid deeper job cuts. Economists at the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated that the law raised employment compared with what it would have been without the law. Yet the national unemployment rate still hit 10 percent in October 2009, and the act added to federal borrowing. A fair argument must weigh the estimated jobs supported against continued unemployment and the policy's cost.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Make a claim about how Germany's policy helped protect jobs. Support it with two connected details from the passage.

2. What argument supports the U.S. policy? Use two different pieces of evidence from the passage.

3. Which policy more directly kept employees with their current employers? Defend your answer with evidence about both policies.

4. Someone argues that the U.S. policy failed because unemployment reached 10 percent. Use evidence from the passage to explain why that result alone does not settle the argument.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A nation faces a sudden downturn. Many workers have short-term contracts, and local schools face layoffs. Choose whether it should prioritize short-time wage support or aid to schools and public projects. In five or six sentences, argue your choice using at least two distinct pieces of passage evidence, address one limitation of your choice, and explain how the short-term contracts affect your reasoning.

Jobs in Crisis

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each nation's policy, circle at least two pieces of evidence about its effects, and write 1 and 2 beside one limitation of each policy. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Make a claim about how Germany's policy helped protect jobs. Support it with two connected details from the passage.	**Kurzarbeit likely helped protect jobs because employers could cut hours rather than lay off trained workers, and unemployment rose less than feared even as Germany's economy shrank sharply.**
2	What argument supports the U.S. policy? Use two different pieces of evidence from the passage.	**The act helped support employment: state aid helped some schools avoid deeper job cuts, and the Congressional Budget Office estimated that employment was higher than it would have been without the law.**
3	Which policy more directly kept employees with their current employers? Defend your answer with evidence about both policies.	**Germany's policy more directly kept employees with their employers by paying part of the wages lost when firms cut hours instead of laying workers off. The U.S. policy supported spending through measures including public projects, state aid, and tax cuts.**
4	Someone argues that the U.S. policy failed because unemployment reached 10 percent. Use evidence from the passage to explain why that result alone does not settle the argument.	**The 10 percent rate shows that unemployment remained severe, but the Congressional Budget Office estimated that employment was higher than it would have been without the law. The policy can have supported jobs without ending unemployment.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The nation should prioritize aid to schools and public projects. In the United States, state aid helped some schools avoid deeper job cuts, and the Congressional Budget Office estimated that the 2009 law raised employment compared with no law. Germany's short-time program protected jobs at firms that cut hours, but temporary workers did not receive the same protection. Because many workers here have short-term contracts, the German approach might leave too many people out. The U.S. approach adds to government borrowing, so officials should track its costs.

Accept either policy in Part 3 if the argument connects at least two distinct passage details to the choice, addresses a limitation of that choice, and considers the short-term workforce. Do not treat the U.S. unemployment rate alone as proof that the act had no effect.