Reading the Economy

Use economic data to identify trends and make a cautious forecast.

USG.P.2.4.A "Evaluate economic data from charts and graphs, noting trends and making predictions."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two sentences that explain why a prediction could be uncertain. Circle the numbers in the table that you use to identify a trend and make a forecast.

Jobs in Harbor Point

1 The fictional city of Harbor Point tracks the number of residents with jobs and its unemployment rate each year. Jobs are reported in thousands, so 80 means 80,000 residents have jobs. The unemployment rate is the share of the labor force without a job who are available and actively looking for work. The table shows both measures from 2022 through 2025.

HARBOR POINT ANNUAL ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Year	Residents with jobs (thousands)	Unemployment rate
2022	80	7%
2023	84	6%
2024	88	5%
2025	92	4%

2 A change in the number of jobs can signal growth, while the unemployment rate offers another view of the labor market. These measures do not always move together. Someone who stops actively looking for work is no longer counted as unemployed, even if that person would still like a job. Consider what each measure includes before drawing a conclusion.

3 A forecast uses earlier data to estimate what might happen next. A steady pattern can support an estimate, but it does not promise that the pattern will continue. Unexpected changes in hiring or in the size of the labor force could shift the next reading. A useful prediction names the pattern it follows and the uncertainty that remains.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. From 2022 to 2025, how did each measure change? Give the size of each change.

2. Compare the increase in residents with jobs from 2022 to 2023 with the increase from 2024 to 2025. What trend do these changes suggest?

3. If both patterns continue for one more year, predict the two measures for 2026. Explain how you found them.

4. The unemployment rate fell each year. Does that trend prove that everyone who wanted a job found one? Use the passage and table to explain.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Suppose Harbor Point's largest employer announces layoffs for 2026. In three sentences, predict a 2026 job count below the steady-trend forecast, explain your reasoning, and name one piece of data you would seek to test your prediction.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two sentences that explain why a prediction could be uncertain. Circle the numbers in the table that you use to identify a trend and make a forecast. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	From 2022 to 2025, how did each measure change? Give the size of each change.	**Residents with jobs increased by 12,000, from 80,000 to 92,000. The unemployment rate fell by 3 percentage points, from 7% to 4%.**
2	Compare the increase in residents with jobs from 2022 to 2023 with the increase from 2024 to 2025. What trend do these changes suggest?	**Both increases were 4,000 jobs. The number of residents with jobs rose by the same amount each year shown.**
3	If both patterns continue for one more year, predict the two measures for 2026. Explain how you found them.	**Predict 96,000 residents with jobs and a 3% unemployment rate. That adds 4,000 jobs and subtracts 1 percentage point from the 2025 figures.**
4	The unemployment rate fell each year. Does that trend prove that everyone who wanted a job found one? Use the passage and table to explain.	**No. The 2025 rate was still 4%, and people who stopped actively looking for work were not counted as unemployed.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I predict 91,000 residents with jobs in 2026, below the steady-trend forecast of 96,000. Layoffs at the city's largest employer could offset hiring elsewhere and reverse the recent growth. I would seek the employer's planned number of layoffs to test my prediction.

For the open task, accept any job count below 96,000 if the explanation connects it to the layoffs and names relevant data to check. Distinguish percentage-point changes from percent changes when assessing the unemployment trend.