When Work Stops

Use evidence to weigh national responses to lost income.

USG.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 government action, circle details showing whom it helped, and number the limits of each action. Use your marks to build arguments about the policies.

Two Responses to Lost Work

1. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic closed restaurants, hotels, and shops around the world. Germany expanded Kurzarbeit, a long-standing program often called short-time work. Under this policy, a firm could reduce employees' hours instead of laying them off, while the government replaced part of their lost wages. Workers kept a link to their jobs, and firms could bring experienced staff back when business returned. The policy reached employees at participating firms, not every person whose income disappeared. It also required public spending even when the government could not know how long closures would last.

2. The United States used a different mix of tools. Congress authorized direct relief payments to eligible households, including payments of up to $1,200 per adult in the first round in 2020. Congress also temporarily expanded unemployment assistance, allowing many self-employed and gig workers to qualify for benefits they usually could not receive. These measures sent money to people even if they had no employer willing to keep them on staff. However, state agencies faced huge numbers of applications, and some people waited weeks for benefits. A payment could help with rent or groceries, but it could not reopen a closed workplace.

3. Imagine two workers during the same shutdown: a hotel cook whose employer expects to reopen and a freelance event photographer whose clients cancel every booking. Germany's approach could help the cook remain on the payroll if the hotel participates, but it would not automatically cover the photographer. Expanded U.S. unemployment assistance could reach the photographer, while a direct payment could help either worker with immediate expenses. Neither nation's policy erased the pandemic or guaranteed a job afterward. To judge a solution, consider whom it reaches, what problem it addresses, and what it costs.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Argue why Germany's policy could help a hotel prepare to reopen. Use two details from the passage and name one limit.

2. Which U.S. policy could better reach the freelance photographer, expanded unemployment assistance or a program tied to an employer? Defend your choice with two passage details.

3. A leader claims that direct payments alone could keep workers connected to their jobs. Use evidence from both nations to support or challenge that claim.

4. A leader claims that Germany's approach was better for every worker in the passage. Make an argument for or against the claim using evidence about both workers.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A nationwide factory shutdown lasts four months. Some employees have their hours cut, while independent delivery drivers lose clients. Propose a national response for both groups in one paragraph. Use at least two specific details from the passage to support your plan and explain one limit or cost.

ANSWER KEY

When Work Stops

HIGH SCHOOL · USG.P.2.4.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each government action, circle details showing whom it helped, and number the limits of each action. Use your marks to build arguments about the policies. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Argue why Germany's policy could help a hotel prepare to reopen. Use two details from the passage and name one limit.	**Kurzarbeit let the hotel reduce employees' hours instead of laying them off, so it could bring experienced staff back. It required public spending.**
2	Which U.S. policy could better reach the freelance photographer, expanded unemployment assistance or a program tied to an employer? Defend your choice with two passage details.	**Expanded U.S. unemployment assistance could reach the photographer because it allowed many self-employed workers to qualify, while Germany's program covered employees at participating firms.**
3	A leader claims that direct payments alone could keep workers connected to their jobs. Use evidence from both nations to support or challenge that claim.	**Challenge: U.S. payments helped with expenses but could not reopen workplaces. Germany's short-time work kept participating employees on their firms' payrolls.**
4	A leader claims that Germany's approach was better for every worker in the passage. Make an argument for or against the claim using evidence about both workers.	**Against: The hotel cook could remain on the payroll through Kurzarbeit if the hotel participated, but the freelance photographer was not automatically covered. Expanded U.S. unemployment assistance could reach the photographer.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The government should offer short-time work support to factories and expanded unemployment assistance to independent drivers. In Germany, short-time work let firms reduce hours while keeping employees connected to their jobs, which could help factories restart after four months. The U.S. expansion allowed many self-employed people to qualify for benefits, so drivers without an employer could receive help too. This plan would cost public money, and drivers might still face delays like those reported by U.S. benefit applicants.

Accept other defensible claims when students combine accurate passage evidence. Do not require students to argue that either nation's response was best overall.