Reading the Recovery

Use unemployment data to identify trends and test a forecast.

USH.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 Circle the highest rate in the table, underline each year when the rate falls from the year before, and underline one sentence that explains why a prediction is uncertain.

What Five Years of Job Data Show

1 During the Great Recession, businesses cut jobs while households faced uncertain incomes. The table shows U.S. unemployment rates, measured as the share of the labor force without a job but actively seeking one. Each annual rate averages a full year, so it does not show every monthly change. Read the values as evidence, not as a complete story about workers.

U.S. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, ANNUAL AVERAGE

Year	Unemployment rate
2008	5.8%
2009	9.3%
2010	9.6%
2011	8.9%
2012	8.1%

2 A line connecting these yearly values would show movement across time, but the table gives the same numbers. To spot a turning point, compare neighboring years rather than only the first and last entries. Changes in rates are reported in percentage points. If a store's share of sales grows from 4% to 5%, that is a one-percentage-point increase.

3 A prediction extends a pattern beyond the last recorded year. It should name the evidence used and leave room for a different outcome. Hiring, layoffs, and changes in who seeks work can all shift the unemployment rate. A forecast from this table cannot tell what will happen, so treat an estimate as a reasoned guess, not a guaranteed result.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How many percentage points did the unemployment rate change from 2008 to 2010? State whether it rose or fell.

2. Which year is the turning point from rising rates to falling rates? Use the rates on both sides of that year as evidence.

3. Predict a rate for 2013 if the most recent downward trend continues. Which two rates support your estimate?

4. By 2012, had the rate returned to or fallen below its 2008 level? Use a difference in percentage points to support your answer.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Suppose a new report gives a 2013 rate of 8.5%. In three sentences, compare it with your prediction, explain whether the recent trend continued, and suggest one possible reason for the change without claiming the data prove that reason.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · USH.P.2.4.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle the highest rate in the table, underline each year when the rate falls from the year before, and underline one sentence that explains why a prediction is uncertain. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How many percentage points did the unemployment rate change from 2008 to 2010? State whether it rose or fell.	**It rose 3.8 percentage points, from 5.8% to 9.6%.**
2	Which year is the turning point from rising rates to falling rates? Use the rates on both sides of that year as evidence.	**2010 is the turning point. The rate rose from 9.3% in 2009 to 9.6% in 2010, then fell to 8.9% in 2011.**
3	Predict a rate for 2013 if the most recent downward trend continues. Which two rates support your estimate?	**About 7.3% is reasonable: the rate fell from 8.9% in 2011 to 8.1% in 2012, a drop of 0.8 percentage points.**
4	By 2012, had the rate returned to or fallen below its 2008 level? Use a difference in percentage points to support your answer.	**No. The 2012 rate of 8.1% was still 2.3 percentage points above the 2008 rate of 5.8%.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I predicted about 7.3% for 2013, but the hypothetical rate of 8.5% is 1.2 percentage points higher. It also rises 0.4 points from 2012, breaking the recent downward trend. A new wave of layoffs could be one reason, although these rates alone cannot establish the cause.

Accept supported 2013 estimates that extend the recent decline, even if they differ from 7.3%. In Part 3, the student should distinguish the hypothetical rate from recorded data and present the proposed cause as a possibility.