

Using NewsHour Extra Feature Stories

STORY

Higher Unemployment Rates Hamper Economic Recovery,

06/09/09

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/us/jan-june09/jobs_06-09.html

Estimated Time: One 45-minute class period with possible extension

[Student Worksheet](#) (reading comprehension and discussion questions without answers)

PROCEDURE

1. WARM UP

Use initiating questions to introduce the topic and find out how much your students know.

2. MAIN ACTIVITY

Have students read NewsHour Extra's feature story and answer the reading comprehension and discussion questions on the student handout.

3. DISCUSSION

Use discussion questions to encourage students to think about how the issues outlined in the story affect their lives and express and debate different opinions.

INITIATING QUESTIONS

1. What is unemployment?

2. Name some industries that are suffering from high unemployment now.

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – [Student Worksheet](#)

Higher Unemployment Rates Hamper Economic Recovery

1. What is the current national unemployment rate?

June's national unemployment rate climbed above 9 percent, the highest rate in 26 years.

2. What was the function of the Obama administration's stimulus package?

President Obama's signature domestic policy, the passage of a \$787 billion stimulus package, aimed at creating jobs during one of the worst recessions in a generation.

3. Why is the unemployment rate a complicated statistic?

The unemployment rate measures the number of people who are looking for work and cannot find a job, but people who are so discouraged with the rough job market that they have stopped looking for work are not counted as officially unemployed.

4. What are "underemployed" workers?

The 9 million workers who are employed but working fewer hours are known as "underemployed" workers.

5. Name the two car companies that recently filed for bankruptcy.

Two of the largest American car companies, General Motors and Chrysler, recently filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, meaning they have to radically cut back their workers, factories and dealerships to survive.

6. What spurred the Great Depression of the 1930's?

The Great Depression of the 1930s was spurred by the stock market crash of 1929

7. What was the highest rate of unemployment during the Great Depression?

During the Great Depression the unemployment rates rose above 20 percent for four straight years!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (more research might be needed)

1. Does the current unemployment number surprise you? Why or why not?

2. Do you see unemployment in your own community? Where?

3. Are you worried about finding a job yourself? Why or why not? What are your strategies?

4. Have any of your older relatives talked about living in the Great Depression? What do you think it would be like in modern America if unemployment was that high again?

Extension Activity

Have students write a 300-500 word essay on this topic providing clear examples. Send your completed editorial to NewsHour Extra (extra@newshour.org). Exceptional essays might be published on our Web site.