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TOEFL TEST 5

Internet-based test

Reading
Listening
Speaking
Writing



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Reading Set 1

American worker

In recent years the American **workforce** has witnessed a diminishing degree of trust in the commitment of employers to its long-term well being. Company executives lay off workers, putting the demands of shareholders above the needs of the employees who form the backbone of **their** operations. Debacles such as the bankruptcy of Enron in October 2001 brutally remind us that even the purported stability promised by pensions and stock options is often illusory. The era of globalization has pitted American companies in direct competition with businesses in other parts of the world where labor laws are considerably more lax. Many companies have begun **outsourcing** their labor and building plants to countries where they are unencumbered by minimum-wage laws and fair-hiring practices. As a result, the covenant between employer and employee in American companies has been broken, and workers who once felt confident that they could hold a good job throughout their working lives and retire comfortably when they come of age are soberly rethinking their plans.

We hear sentimental lamentations about the "good old days," and a longing for a resurgence of manufacturing jobs providing a family wage, one that enables a man to support a stay-at-home wife and mother, and raise a brood of children with all the conveniences of modern life. But was there ever really such a deep commitment among employers to the well being of their employees? Except for a relatively brief stint during the twentieth century, those good old days of American labor were largely a myth. The idea of a family wage was a rallying cry for the labor union during the early years of the century, as workers came together to resist the **unconscionable** conditions and low wages that they experienced in the workplace. The clout of powerful, consolidated management, and a glut of workers fueled by brisk European immigration--especially from Italy, Ireland, and Eastern Europe--created a work environment where wages were low and recourse was minimal. The growth of powerful monopolies with formidable political clout, such as US Steel, put daunting obstacles in the path of the emerging labor movement, and the growing population of immigrant workers accustomed to subsistence wages put downward pressure on the pay scale.

◆ Ironically, some of the best wages of the day were paid by the Ford Company, which was categorically opposed to unionization. □ Henry Ford, the company's founder, took the practical approach of gambling on the supposition that, if his workers were well paid, they would be able to buy his cars. ▲ In 1914 he took the unprecedented step of doubling his workers' wages to the unheard of level of five dollars a day, and his company thrived. Not only were his workers now able to buy cars, but they had reason to stay with the company, saving the business the considerable expense of employee turnover. ○ In fact, when Ford instituted his new wage scale, qualified workers flocked to his company from all over the country, and as a result he was able to build a stable, qualified work force.

Ford's philosophy and his success exemplify the contradiction that has plagued the American worker for more than a hundred years. On the one hand, there need to be safeguards in place to prevent the worst kinds of employer abuses, such as the cruelly long work days and unconscionably low wages that were typical before the passage of early labor laws between 1912 and 1918. On the other hand, some of the most innovative developments in the history of American labor have come not from legislation or union pressure, but from the innovative actions of forward thinking entrepreneurs who grasp the connection between a friendly work environment, a motivated workforce, and a profitable company. Labor laws are necessary to prevent abuses that are **detrimental** to the health and well being of the workers who are exploited, as well as the society that must care for them when they are poor and sick. But, ultimately, the most advantageous working

conditions have to come from holistically minded business owners who truly understand that treating their workers with respect and paying them fairly is a smart business policy.

1. The word **workforce** in the passage is closest in meaning to
 - (A) company
 - (B) union
 - (C) employees
 - (D) public

2. The word **their** in the passage refers to
 - (A) executives
 - (B) workers
 - (C) demands
 - (D) shareholders

3. The word **outsourcing** in the passage is closest in meaning to
 - (A) purchasing on credit
 - (B) changing locations
 - (C) loaning money to others
 - (D) contracting with outside suppliers

4. What does the author imply in paragraph 1 about American employers?
 - (A) They have mistreated their employees.
 - (B) They violated an international agreement.
 - (C) They have not changed much recently.
 - (D) They are committed to employee well being.

5. The word **unconscionable** in paragraph 2 is closest in meaning to
 - (A) impartial
 - (B) unscrupulous
 - (C) indignant
 - (D) dirty

6. Which of the following best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence? Incorrect choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.
 - (A) Immigrants from Ireland, Italy and other European countries were willing to work in harsh conditions for very low wages.
 - (B) Management clout led to a rush of immigrants from Italy, Ireland, and Eastern Europe, creating a congenial work atmosphere.
 - (C) Strong management and a surplus of workers, particularly Europeans, combined to produce low salaries and labor oppression.
 - (D) Management consolidation, in conjunction with European immigration, led to a work environment with high wages and maximum recourse.

7. Look at the four symbols [◆, □, ▲, ○] that indicate where the following sentence can be added to the passage.

"There is one rule for the industrialist and that is: Make the best quality of goods possible at the lowest cost possible, paying the highest wages possible," Ford said.

Where would this sentence best fit?

8. According to paragraph 3, what is true of Henry Ford?
- (A) He embraced unionization.
 - (B) His company floundered.
 - (C) He doubled employee salaries.
 - (D) He loved to gamble.
9. What happened after Ford doubled workers' wages?
- (A) Business improved.
 - (B) Car sales declined.
 - (C) The workers unionized.
 - (D) He sold the company.
10. The word **detrimental** in the passage is closest in meaning to
- (A) excessive
 - (B) germane
 - (C) empowering
 - (D) damaging
11. Which of the following is mentioned in paragraph 4 as an example of employer abuse?
- (A) lack of rests
 - (B) long work days
 - (C) unsanitary conditions
 - (D) beatings
12. Who does the author credit for innovative labor developments?
- (A) unions
 - (B) government
 - (C) entrepreneurs
 - (D) media
13. An introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below. Complete the summary by selecting the THREE answer choices that express important ideas in the passage. Some sentences do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas in the passage. ***This question is worth 2 points.***

In recent years there has been a rift between American employees and their workers.

(A) Scandals involving executives of major companies, such as Enron, are eroding employees' trust in their employers.

(B) A key change in the American workforce happened in the 1970s, when millions of women began going to work.

(C) In 1914, Henry Ford doubled the wages of his workers, and his automobile company subsequently thrived.

(D) Though many employees long for the "good old days," the fact is that US workers have always struggled for their rights.

(E) A series of labor laws passed between 1912 and 1918 began to address some of the worst employer abuses.

(F) While some government regulation is necessary, it is primarily the employers' responsibility to create a good work environment.

LISTENING SECTION**Lecture**

Narrator: Listen to part of a lecture from a geology class. (Listening 1)

1. What is the lecture mainly about?
 - (A) Radioactive dating
 - (B) Igneous rock formation
 - (C) Chemicals of rocks
 - (D) Half lives
2. What happens during radioactive decay?
 - (A) Daughter elements become parent elements.
 - (B) Lava cools and turns into rock.
 - (C) Parent elements become daughter elements.
 - (D) Sand empties from the top of the hourglass.

3. Listen again to part of the lecture. Then answer the question. (Listening 2)

Why does the professor say this:

Are you with me so far?

- (A) He doesn't think the students understand.
 - (B) He is checking the students' comprehension.
 - (C) He is reminding the students to review the material.
 - (D) He is trying to wake up a sleeping student.
4. According to the professor, what does a half-life measure?
 - (A) Type of rock
 - (B) Number of elements
 - (C) Age of the Earth
 - (D) Rate of decay

5. Listen again to part of the lecture. Then answer the question. (Listening 3)

What can be inferred about the professor when he says this:

AHA! We're on to something.

- (A) He is not very good at math.
 - (B) He is inexperienced.
 - (C) He is enjoying teaching.
 - (D) He has just learned something new.
6. Why does the professor discuss an hourglass?
 - (A) To explain ancient beliefs
 - (B) To make a comparison
 - (C) To illustrate an hypothesis
 - (D) To point out a myth.

Conversation

Narrator: Listen to a conversation between a student and a university professor. (Listening 4)

7. Why does the student visit the professor?
 - (A) To invest in stocks
 - (B) To review for a test
 - (C) To challenge a grade
 - (D) To receive clarification

8. How is price-to-earnings ratio determined?
 - (A) Divide current earnings by annual price
 - (B) Divide current price by annual earnings
 - (C) Divide annual price by current earnings
 - (D) Divide annual earnings by current price

9. What is the professor's attitude toward the student?
 - (A) Arrogant
 - (B) Rude
 - (C) Patient
 - (D) Patronizing

10. Listen again to part of the conversation and answer the question. (Listening 5)

What does the professor mean when she says this:

With me?

- (A) She wants to know if the student understands.
 - (B) She wants to know if the student is done writing.
 - (C) She is asking the student to accompany her.
 - (D) She wants to know if the student is paying attention.
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11. What does the professor encourage the student to do?
 - (A) Buy a stock
 - (B) Ask a question
 - (C) Study harder
 - (D) Take better notes