

NEWS BREAK

Article: **How Gen Z is bucking the trend and reviving part-time jobs**

Section: **BUSINESS, C5**

Sunday's News Break selects an article from **Sunday, January 28, 2024** of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some teachers might use this as a take-home assignment and others might read and answer the questions in a small group or larger, class discussion.

****Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for your students.***

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Objectives:

Students will share their thoughts about teens working while in high-school. They'll discuss the pros/cons and will also spend time talking about some states loosening child labor laws that protect teen workers.

Pre-Reading Discussion:



- What do you think the article will be about, using these pictures?
- Are there any clues? What can you infer?

Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted words mean using *context clues*? A **context clue** is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the identities and meanings of unknown words.

“Many students at the school tend to work anyway to help their families but pay boost **incentivized** more 14- and 15-year-olds.”

Incentivized Guess:

Incentivized Definition:

Comprehension Questions:

1. More of today’s Gen Z highschoolers are making their way into the workforce, picking up after-school and summer jobs, and reversing what trend?
2. At least _____ more teenagers are now working compared to before the pandemic, part of a gradual but consequential shift that is boosting employment at restaurants and stores, and changing cultural norms.
3. In all, 37% of 16- to 19-year-olds had a job or were looking for one last year, the highest annual rate since _____.
4. An abundance of jobs, particularly entry-level positions in hospitality and retail, have helped draw teenagers into what?
5. In interviews, high school-age workers cited a number of reasons for working. What were they?
6. Inflation has also been a major factor-in what ways?
7. Employers across the country have improved starting pay, which has largely benefited _____.
8. People between 16 and 24 saw the largest jump in pay last year — _____%, nearly double the increase for all workers, according to an analysis of government data by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.
9. Those fast-rising wages have played a role in winning over younger workers, including in Washington state. When Tukwila raised its hourly minimum wage to \$_____ in July, there was a flurry of new interest from teenagers, according to Jennifer Fichamba, a counselor at Foster High School.
10. Plus, high school has become much more demanding: Teens today spend twice as much time on homework than they did in the mid-1990s, leaving them less time for what?
11. Getting into college has become more competitive, too, leading many high schoolers to prioritize a host of other activities — sports, debate team, even SAT prep — over what?

Discussion Questions (small/large groups), Journal Prompts or Essay Questions:

- ***What surprised (or stood out to) you in the article?***
- ***At first, I thought _____, but now I think _____?***
- ***What things did you already know from prior experience?***

But labor economists warn that working during the high school years can come with risks. Studies have shown holding a job in high school can contribute to lower grades and less likelihood of graduation, setting up teens for a lifetime of lower earnings and worse employment opportunities.

- ***What are your thoughts on working while in high-school? Do you have older brothers/sisters, cousins, neighbors or friends that work in high-school? Are they balancing school and work alright? Did your parents and grandparents work in high-school?***
- ***If you're able, take some time to ask them what they did and if they remember how much they were paid per hour.***

Teenagers with jobs are also at risk for being asked to work long, late hours that interfere with schoolwork and sleep, especially when employers are understaffed. Since 2020, fast-food companies have illegally scheduled thousands of teenagers to work late and long hours and to operate dangerous kitchen equipment, according to a recent Washington Post analysis of federal data.

This trend is happening as some states are taking steps to loosen child labor protections. Iowa and West Virginia have recently changed laws to allow teens as young as 16 to serve alcohol, according to a report by the Economic Policy Institute. Others are rapidly rolling back protections for 14- and 15-year-old workers. In Arkansas, for example, young teens no longer need parental approval to get a job, while New Jersey recently ruled that minors can work as many as six hours without a break.

- ***How do you feel about companies taking advantage of teens-having them working too long or too late?***
- ***What are your feelings around some states loosening child labor laws that protect teen workers?***

News Break is posted to the Web on Tuesday. Please share this NIE News Break program with other teachers. To sign-up for the print replica for your class, please [register online](#) or call 206/652-6290 or toll-free 1-888/775-2655.

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