

GMAT Reading Comprehension Practice Test 5

Some **observers** have attributed the dramatic growth in temporary employment that occurred in the United States during the 1980s to increased participation in the workforce by certain groups, such as first-time or reentering workers, who supposedly prefer such arrangements. However, statistical analyses reveal that demographic changes in the workforce did not correlate with variations in the total number of temporary workers. Instead, these analyses suggest that **factors affecting employers** account for the rise in temporary employment. One factor is product demand: temporary employment is favored by employers who are adapting to fluctuating demand for products while at the same time seeking to reduce overall labor costs. Another factor is labor's reduced bargaining strength, which allows employers more control over the terms of employment. Given the analyses, which reveal that growth in temporary employment now far exceeds the level explainable by recent workforce entry rates of groups said to prefer temporary jobs, firms should be discouraged from creating **excessive** numbers of temporary positions. Government policymakers should consider mandating benefit coverage for temporary employees, promoting pay equity between temporary and permanent workers, assisting labor unions in organizing temporary workers, and encouraging firms to assign temporary jobs primarily to employees who explicitly indicate that preference.

1. The primary purpose of the passage is to

- (A) present the results of statistical analyses and propose further studies
- (B) explain a recent development and predict its eventual consequences
- (C) identify the reasons for a trend and recommend measures to address it
- (D) outline several theories about a phenomenon and advocate one of them
- (E) describe the potential consequences of implementing a new policy and argue in favor of that policy

2. According to the passage, which of the following is true of the “factors affecting employers” that are mentioned in lines 10–19?

- (A) Most experts cite them as having initiated the growth in temporary employment that occurred during the 1980s.
- (B) They may account for the increase in the total number of temporary workers during the 1980s.
- (C) They were less important than demographic change in accounting for the increase of temporary employment during the 1980s.
- (D) They included a sharp increase in the cost of labor during the 1980s.
- (E) They are more difficult to account for than are other factors involved in the growth of temporary employment during the 1980s.

3. The passage suggests which of the following about the use of temporary employment by firms during the 1980s?

- (A) It enabled firms to deal with fluctuating product demand far more efficiently than they did before the 1980s.
- (B) It increased as a result of increased participation in the workforce by certain demographic groups.

- (C) It was discouraged by government-mandated policies.
- (D) It was a response to preferences indicated by certain employees for more flexible working arrangements.
- (E) It increased partly as a result of workers' reduced ability to control the terms of their employment.

4. The passage suggests which of the following about the workers who took temporary jobs during the 1980s?

- (A) Their jobs frequently led to permanent positions within firms.
- (B) They constituted a less demographically diverse group than has been suggested.
- (C) They were occasionally involved in actions organized by labor unions.
- (D) Their pay declined during the decade in comparison with the pay of permanent employees.
- (E) They did not necessarily prefer temporary employment to permanent employment.

5. The first sentence in the passage suggests that the "observers" mentioned in line 1 would be most likely to predict which of the following?

- (A) That the number of new temporary positions would decline as fewer workers who preferred temporary employment entered the workforce
- (B) That the total number of temporary positions would increase as fewer workers were able to find permanent positions
- (C) That employers would have less control over the terms of workers' employment as workers increased their bargaining strength
- (D) That more workers would be hired for temporary positions as product demand increased
- (E) That the number of workers taking temporary positions would increase as more workers in any given demographic group entered the workforce

6. In the context of the passage, the word "excessive" (line 23) most closely corresponds to which of the following phrases?

- (A) Far more than can be justified by worker preferences
- (B) Far more than can be explained by fluctuations in product demand
- (C) Far more than can be beneficial to the success of the firms themselves
- (D) Far more than can be accounted for by an expanding national economy
- (E) Far more than can be attributed to increases in the total number of people in the workforce

7. The passage mentions each of the following as an appropriate kind of governmental action EXCEPT

- (A) getting firms to offer temporary employment primarily to a certain group of people
- (B) encouraging equitable pay for temporary and permanent employees
- (C) facilitating the organization of temporary workers by labor unions
- (D) establishing guidelines on the proportion of temporary workers that firms should employ
- (E) ensuring that temporary workers obtain benefits from their employers