Where will I work after graduation?
What industries in the labour market in Hong Kong are available for me to choose?
Which level of position will I take up?
I have excellent qualifications. Can I easily find a job in the labour market?
Can I have a lifetime job, just like that of my grandfather?
**Prior Knowledge Worksheet (1): Job Survey of Family Members**

Conduct an interview with two elders in your family (e.g. Father, Mother, Grandfather, Grandmother or other relatives) and one sibling, ask about their working experience and fill in the table below.

Example: Relationship with the interviewee: **Mother**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Position of the interviewee</th>
<th>Company Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961-1970</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-1980</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>May Garment Factory</td>
<td>Garment worker</td>
<td>Clothing Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-2000</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Cafe de Coral Fast Food Restaurant</td>
<td>Cleaning worker</td>
<td>Catering Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001- present</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Hong Kong Young Women's Christian Association</td>
<td>Cleaning worker (Part-time)</td>
<td>Social Service Industry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Relationship with the interviewee:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Position of the interviewee</th>
<th>Company Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961-1970</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-1980</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-1990</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-2000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001- present</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Collect the survey results of your classmates, and analyze what jobs and positions the interviewees held during different periods of time.

2. How did the employment of the interviewees relate to the economic development of Hong Kong?
With the change of economic environment, Hong Kong has undergone changes in economic development for several times since 1842. Do you know what industries were dominant in Hong Kong during different periods of time? How does labour demand change along with time?

Prior Knowledge Worksheet (2):
Relationship between economic development of Hong Kong and labour

Students can learn the change of labour demand during different periods of time in Hong Kong by analyzing the cases below.

Source 1

Light industry was predominant in Hong Kong. It produced mainly low-tech products such as garment, electronic and plastic products for export overseas.

With factories moving to the mainland, Hong Kong experienced an economic restructure. It developed finance, tourism, trading, industrial and commercial support, as well as professional services gradually.

Moving towards a high value-added and knowledge-based society, the government proposed to develop key industries, including education services, innovation and technology, testing and certification, environmental industries, as well as cultural and creative industries.
Labour demand varied with the economic environment. Below are the stories of three people. Try to analyze and learn about the labour characteristics of Hong Kong in different periods of time.

In the late 1940s, Hong Kong was a famous entrepot worldwide and goods were shipped to different places around the world through Hong Kong. At that time, I went to the dock everyday with my neighbours and we worked as “coolies” – dockers, while other people worked as seamen. In the past, only children from rich families could go to schools and the like of us had to work at an early age to support our families.

I grew up in the 1960s. At that time, most people would work after graduating from primary school, and most of them worked in factories. I remember that my first job was in a garment factory. I was responsible for cloth cutting. I was living a happy life even though I had to do something routine every day. However, with most of the factories moved to the mainland in the 1980s, I lost my job afterwards!

I am a “Post-80s”. I have been looking for my dream job after graduating from university this year. What I am looking for is simple. As I majored in Finance in university, I’d like to find a cushy office job which requires working with a computer only. I don’t mind undertaking further courses if the work requires.
According to the above sources, analyze the major industries that the labour was mainly involved and the qualification and skills required at different periods in Hong Kong.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Representative person</th>
<th>Industries that labour mainly engaged in</th>
<th>Qualification and skills required for the job</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1842 - 1950</td>
<td>Grandpa Cheung</td>
<td>Import and export trade, transportation</td>
<td>No requirement on specific qualification and skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950 - 1970</td>
<td>Uncle Ng</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>Low education level and low skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2000</td>
<td>Dreamer Li</td>
<td>Service Industry</td>
<td>High education level with professional skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relationship between the economic development and labour demand of Hong Kong.

Labour demand of Hong Kong has undergone great changes in the past few decades. During the 1970s and 1980s, light industries were predominant in Hong Kong with manufacturing industries as the backbone of the economy. Labour-intensive industries, such as garment, toys and textile had a huge demand for low-skilled and less-educated labour force. However, with most of the factories moving to the mainland since the 1990s for a lower production cost, manufacturing industries declined gradually in Hong Kong. With the booming of service industries such as finance and trading, Hong Kong economy became more dependent on service industries.

Nowadays, Hong Kong is a service-oriented economy. The government encourages the development of a knowledge-based economy, focusing on high value-added services, such as finance, trading and logistics, tourism, industry and commerce support, as well as professional services. It reveals a change of demand on the labour force. Professional, educated and skilled labour is preferable for its economic development.
1. What is the direction for the future development of Hong Kong? How can I know about the future demand in the labour market at the time of my graduation? And how can I prepare for it?

(Any reasonable answers are acceptable.) At the time of my graduation, Hong Kong will become a knowledge-based economy which focuses on high-value-added service industries. The labour market will demand for workers with high qualifications, professional knowledge and high-tech skills. As a student, I should play attention to the changes of the labour market and work hard to acquire knowledge and skills, in particular the generic skills, so as to meet the needs of a knowledge-based economy.

2. What are all-round abilities? Can I equip myself with these abilities for the ever changing work requirements?

Generic skills, such as communication skills, problem-solving skills and creative thinking are all-round abilities. I can equip myself through interaction with others and participation in various activities.
Information about the working population of Hong Kong in recent years

In the following section, teachers can clarify the definition of working population in Hong Kong first, and further explain that working population includes employed population and unemployed population.

Hong Kong has a population of about 7 million. Does it mean that the working population in Hong Kong is 7 million?

**Source**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Employed Population ('000)</th>
<th>Unemployed Population ('000)</th>
<th>Working Population ('000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>3483.9</td>
<td>145.7</td>
<td>3629.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>3518.8</td>
<td>130.1</td>
<td>3648.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>3479.9</td>
<td>196.7</td>
<td>3676.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census and Statistics Department
According to Census and Statistics Department, persons, who aged 15 or above, are willing and able to work will be counted as working population. It includes employed population and unemployed population. Accordingly, working population is only part of the total population.

**Definition:**
Working population: the number of people, who aged 15 or above, are willing and able to work, including employed population and unemployed population.

1. Are you a member of the working population? Why?

   No, because I am under 15 and/or I am a student. I am not willing to work at this moment.
2. According to the statistics above, what are the changes of working population, employed population and unemployed population from 2007 to 2009?

- The total working population increased year by year. Unemployed population dropped in 2008 but increased in 2009. And the employed population increased in 2008 but declined in 2009.

3. Read the following cases carefully, and analyze whether the persons below are members of the working population or not. If yes, are they employed or unemployed population?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Labour Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Leo is the CEO of an international corporation.</td>
<td><strong>Employed population</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Jacqueline Fong is a waitress, and she works as auxiliary police at spare time.</td>
<td><strong>Employed population</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Jane is a primary 6 student. She has always been unmotivated in her study and dreaming of becoming a young model.</td>
<td><strong>Non-working population</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Aunt Susan is a cleaning worker. She has just received a Termination Letter from her boss, telling her she will be dismissed effective from next month.</td>
<td><strong>Employed population for the time being, but unemployed population from next month on</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Karen is a post-90s who are vibrant and alive. She has been looking for a job for more than half a year but still cannot find a suitable job.</td>
<td><strong>Unemployed population</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Kenneth has decided to give up his showbiz career and go overseas for a full-time film course.</td>
<td><strong>Non-working population</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unemployment rates of Hong Kong

We often see the following headlines in newspapers:

**Headline 1:**
Construction of the Express Rail Link Project Begins
More Construction Job Vacancies but Higher Unemployment Rate

**Headline 2:**
Factories Move to the Mainland
Hard for the Middle-aged to Change Jobs
Local Unemployment Rate Records High

**Headline 3:**
Impact of Financial Tsunami Emerges, Unemployment Rate Increases

**Headline 4:**
More Training Opportunities for Youths
Unemployment Rate Records a Moderate Growth

Newspapers often report on the unemployment situation of Hong Kong, so I would like to know:

1. What are unemployment and unemployment rate?
2. Is Hong Kong facing a severe unemployment situation? Which age group faces the problem of unemployment most easily?
3. Why does unemployment occur? And what are the factors affecting it?

---

**Knowledge Content**

- Unemployment rate refers to the proportion of the unemployed population to the working population. Unemployed population refers to those who are 15 years old or above, available and able to work, but still finding jobs.

- Unemployment rate calculation: \( \frac{\text{unemployed population}}{\text{working population}} \times 100\% \)
Worksheet (2): Analysis of the employment situation of Hong Kong according to the statistics

Describe the changes of unemployment rate of Hong Kong between 1989 and 2009 with reference to the following chart.

1. During these 20 years, when did the lowest and highest unemployment rates occur? What were the percentages respectively?

   During these 20 years, the lowest unemployment rate occurred in 1989, which was only about 1%.
   It reached the highest point of about 8% in 2003.
2. What was the overall trend of unemployment rates in Hong Kong during these 20 years?

The trend of unemployment rate in Hong Kong was an overall increase during the period between 1989 and 2009, though there was a drop after 2003. However, it rose up again to about 5.5% in 2009.

3. Do you think there is a relationship between the unemployment rates and the social economic situation? Why?

When economic recession occurs, people lack confidence in economic outlook, employers cut down production and hence a lower demand for labour, which pushes up the unemployment rates.

4. Identify the major events which had an impact on the unemployment rates in Hong Kong in the following period of time by referring to the information on the Internet and reference books.
5. Which of the above events is a local factor? And which are external factors?

SARS Outbreak in 2003 is a local factor; and the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997 and Financial Tsunami in 2008 are external factors.

Worksheet for Extended Discussion:
How to reduce the local unemployment rate?

Try to analyse the impacts of the following measures on local unemployment rate.

**Measure 1: Capital Investment Entrant Scheme**

The government intends to extend the existing Capital Investment Entrant Scheme, encouraging investors to establish their business in Hong Kong and to employ local labour here.

In your opinion, how will this measure affect the local employment situation as well as the unemployment rate?

If the government encourages investors to invest more in Hong Kong, it can create more job opportunities and reduce the unemployment rate.
Measure 2: Applying for hosting the Asian Games

In order to increase the chance of hosting the Asian Games, the Hong Kong Government has planned to spend HK$ 2 billions to build ten stadiums. In your opinion, how will this measure affect local employment situation as well as the unemployment rate?

The more infrastructure projects the Government launches, the higher the demand for construction labour and other relating industries. As a result, it will reduce the unemployment rate and improve the employment situation of Hong Kong.

Measure 3: Distribution of shopping vouchers

Assume that the Hong Kong Government follows the measure taken by Taiwan to distribute shopping vouchers and encourage people to spend. In your opinion, how will this measure affect local employment situation as well as the unemployment rate?

Distribution of shopping vouchers will stimulate people’s desire to consume. As a result, the employers will increase their production and hence the labour demand, which will in turn reduce the unemployment rate.
How to reduce local unemployment rate?

Generally speaking, the unemployment rate is closely related to the economic environment. The unemployment rate goes up during economic recession. When the economy is prosperous, the unemployment rate will maintain at a low level. Therefore, unemployment rates can be improved by stimulating economic growth.

In order to reduce local unemployment rate, we may consider to:

1. **Stimulate consumption:** Once people are willing to spend, employers would hire more workers to increase the production, which in turn lower the unemployment rate.

2. **Increase government expenditure:** The launch of various major infrastructure projects by the government such as cruise terminal and Express Rail Link will create abundant job opportunities in the local labour market.

3. **Increase investment:** Encourage capital inflow from overseas to Hong Kong will have a positive impact on local economic development. It creates more job opportunities for investment-related industries, such as accountants and lawyers.

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Measure 4: Reviewing the working hours of security guards

After reviewing the existing working situation of security guards, security companies proposed to change the existing system from three-shift to two-shift, i.e., the working hours of every guard would be increased from 8 hours to 12 hours. In your opinion, how will this measure affect local employment situation as well as the unemployment rate?

Under the change from three-shift to two-shift, there will be some security guards out of work, which would reduce the local employed population and increase the unemployment rate.
Worksheet (3): Analyse the employment situation for different age groups according to the statistics

1. Which age group has the highest unemployment rate? What is its unemployment rate? What’s the meaning of it?

   The age group of 15-19 has the highest unemployment rate. The unemployment rate is 22%.
   
   It means that there is one unemployed person for every 4 to 5 persons in that group.

2. Why are the youth aged 15-19 facing the biggest employment difficulty?

   Most people in this group are less-educated with less working experience. As a result, they lack competitiveness and have difficulty in finding a job.
Young people are assumed to be energetic, flexible and at a relatively low wage level, they should be competitive in the market. However, their unemployment rate is four to five times higher than the overall unemployment rate. Let’s go through the cases below to find out the underlying causes.

Here is a dialogue between Ms. Chan, a counselor, and Raymond, a teenager.

Ms. Chan: “Raymond, can you briefly introduce yourself and share with me your interests?”

Raymond: “My name is Raymond Leung. I graduated with an associate degree last year, majoring in Computing Graphic Design. I like to play music in bands with my friends and play online games in my spare time. Last year, I spent a long time in the band rooms in an industrial building, which made my Dad and Mom worry. So they rented a private band room that near their accounting firm for me. They said it was easier for them to contact me anytime.”

Ms. Chan: “Have you ever tried to find a job after your graduation? How’s it going?”

Raymond: “Of course. Over the past half year, I have sent out eight application letters and gone for two interviews. I got an offer from a company, but the salary was only HK$7,000, which was even less than my pocket money, and I had to work from Monday to Saturday. What’s more, the boss only asked me to do simple documentary work, which had nothing to do with design. It is not my dream job. So, I decided to wait for a better one.”
Try to analyse the case above. What are the factors that make it difficult for Raymond to find a job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors of Consideration</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Ability and attitude** (e.g. qualifications, professional skills, aptitude and work attitude) | - Raymond has high education qualification and professional skills (in computing graphic design). But the jobs he found were not ideal for him. That’s why he hasn't had a job for such a long time.  
- Raymond sent eight application letters in the past half year which shows that he was passive in finding a job. |
| **Socioeconomic background** | - Raymond has a relatively good socioeconomic background, with a good economic and emotional support from his family.  
- Since his parents run an accounting firm, he has no economic pressure, thus he is not eager to find a job.  
- His pocket money is even more than the salary he may earn, which makes him reluctant to accept a low-paid job. |
This is Nancy’s narration. She is a Secondary 6 graduate this year.

“My family is poor and I don’t have a good academic performance, so I plan to start working as soon as possible. So I can gain more working experience, and to earn money to release my family’s financial burden. I prefer working in the tourism or retail industry. During the past six months since my graduation, I have failed several interviews. When I was asked for my strengths and professional skills, I have no idea to answer the interviewers. Perhaps due to my lack of confidence and weak communication skills……I am really stressed.

The number of visitors in Hong Kong has been decreasing due to economic recession. In addition, more and more people are engaging in the tourism industry, which leads to a keen competition. It is hard for me to find a job such as a tour guide.

Sometimes, I feel sad about my poor family background. My classmate, Amy from F.6B, her academic performance was worse than mine. However, she got many job referrals from her relatives!!
Try to analyze the case above. In your opinion, what are the factors that make it difficult for Nancy to find a job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors for Consideration</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ability and attitude</strong></td>
<td>• Nancy is less-educated (F.6 qualification only) and without any professional skills, which makes it hard for her to find a job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g. qualifications, professional skills, aptitude and work attitude)</td>
<td>• Lack of confidence and weak communication ability make it difficult for her to meet the requirements of working in tourism or retail industries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socioeconomic background</strong></td>
<td>• Nancy has a weak socioeconomic background and without sufficient family support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• She has limited life experience which affects her social skills when getting along with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Her family background affects her social network too, leaving her little opportunity to get job referrals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There are fewer visitors come to visit Hong Kong due to the poor economy. Therefore, the needs for tour guides and related job vacancy reduced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• More and more people engage in the tourism industry, resulting in keen competition.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Watch the video clip of *Sunday Report – the Y Generation* - 08:44-11:48 carefully, use what you have learnt in class and your knowledge to discuss the questions below.

Teachers can use some cases in real life for extended discussion, and ask the students to discuss the reasons of youth unemployment.

1. Henry has a bachelor degree, majoring in Economics. It has been half a year since he has quitte from his last job in a bank. Why does he face unemployment problem even though he has a bachelor degree?

   Henry’s parents give him financial support for living expenditure, leaving him little economic pressure. So he is not eager to find a job. Therefore, Henry hopes to wait until he found an ideal job. He has a high expectation on jobs that he chooses.

2. What can be learned from his sharing of experience in term of attitude?

   Any reasonable answers are acceptable.
3. What are the ways to increase youngsters’ competitiveness in the job market? Give three suggestions.

(a) Keep on further learning and master some skills that are required in the market;

(b) Start with a low-level position to accumulate practical working experience;

(c) Adopt a positive attitude. When we encounter difficulties or challenges, we should seek advice from others and learn modestly.

According to the statistics of Unemployment Rate by Age in 2009, the youngest age group has the highest unemployment rate while the middle age group has relatively lower unemployment rate. It reflects the employment situation and difficulties facing different age groups.
Age 15-19  Most of the younger job seekers lack educational or professional qualification and working experience, resulting in lower competitiveness and greater difficulties in finding jobs.

Age 20-29  People belong to this group have accumulated some experience, usually they are devoted to work, and willing to try and learn new things regardless of salary earned. Therefore, the unemployment rate of this age group is relatively low.

Age 30-39  Most of them have been promoted and gained some working experience in the industry. Job-hopping means giving up the remuneration of the existing job. As they have little chance to get a better job and have to bear their family’s financial burden, most of them are unwilling to quit but stay in their current positions. Hence the unemployment rate of this age group is relatively low.

Age 40-59  Due to economic restructuring, the number of job vacancies in the industries they have worked for have decreased. It’s difficult for them to find other suitable jobs, causing difficulties in employment.
Assume you are a manager of a human resources consultancy and your responsibilities are to provide professional advices to job seekers and assist them in finding suitable jobs. The following are the curriculum vitae (CVs) of three applicants. According to the information provided, try to think of:

a. The reasons why they cannot find a suitable job.
b. Your advices to them.
c. Courses/programs that may help them.

**Case one: Chan Keung**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Curriculum Vitae</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name:</strong> CHAN Keung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age:</strong> 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational qualifications:</strong> Secondary 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work experience:</strong> None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language proficiency:</strong> Fluent in Cantonese, fair command of English and Putonghua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills:</strong> Computer skills (excluding Microsoft Office)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal profile:</strong> I have been trying to look for a job since my graduation. Half a year passed and I still cannot find an ideal job and only a few interviews have been offered. Dad often asks me to work as an intern in his design company but I am not very interested in it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Case two: Cheung Chun

**Curriculum Vitae**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>CHEUNG Chun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age:</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational qualification:</td>
<td>Secondary 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work experience:</td>
<td>Six years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language proficiency:</td>
<td>Fluent in Cantonese, fair command of written Chinese and English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills:</td>
<td>Sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal profile:</td>
<td>I have been working as a delivery worker in a logistics company after Secondary 3, so I am familiar with the general matters about warehouse. Since I am the only breadwinner in my family, I have to provide for my parents. The income of a delivery worker is very low. I hope that I will have some professional skills so that I can earn a higher income to improve my life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Case three: Wong Piu

**Curriculum Vitae**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Wong Piu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age:</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational qualifications:</td>
<td>Primary 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work experience:</td>
<td>Thirty five years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language proficiency:</td>
<td>Fluent in Cantonese and Chiu Chau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise:</td>
<td>Garment manufacturing (shirts and jeans)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal profile:</td>
<td>Since the garment factory moved to Dongguan in 2000, I have been taking up temporary jobs including transport worker and construction worker. As I am getting old, I wish to have a stable job.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aims and design of the exercise:
This exercise is designed for students to analyse by applying the knowledge about employment difficulties. The following cases involve three typical types of people who may easily encounter employment difficulties in the labour market in Hong Kong today.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>People with employment difficulties in Hong Kong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Chan Keung</td>
<td>They are teenagers who have just graduated from secondary school. Since this group of people has a lower level of educational qualification and lacks relevant working experience, they have lower competitiveness in the labour market. They have the advantages of strong ability to learn and adapt, and willingness to try new things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cheung Chun</td>
<td>This group of people has certain working experience, but lacks professional skills and qualifications. Hence, there is a little chance for them to get promotion and they earn a low income. In addition, they have low competitiveness when facing economic restructuring and have difficulties in switching jobs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Wong Piu</td>
<td>They are middle-aged people with lower level of educational qualification. Although this group of people has rich working experience, which may not meet the needs arisen of economic restructuring. The knowledge and skills they possess have become outdated and they are getting old with low ability to learn and adapt to new environments, resulting in employment difficulties.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Select one of the above cases and analyse it with the following foci:
   a. The reasons why he cannot find a suitable job.
   b. Your advices to him.
   c. Courses/programs that may help him.
2. Summarise the analysis of the three cases; can you point out some factors causing employment difficulties?

- low level of educational qualification and job skills; the knowledge and skills they possess are liable to become outdated;
- lack of work experience;
- low ability to learn and adapt to a new environment;
- low socioeconomic background

There are lots of factors causing employment difficulties, generally can be categorised into personal and social factors. Personal factors include educational qualifications, professional qualifications, job skills, work attitude, socioeconomic background, etc. Social factors are related to external environment, such as economic development, economic restructuring, etc. These factors can help us analyse the reasons behind people’s employment difficulties.

1. Personal Factors

1.1 Educational qualifications

Some jobs have specific requirement on the applicants’ educational level. For example, applicants should achieve certain levels in all subjects in the Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (e.g. Level 2 or Level 3) including Chinese Language and English Language to show that they have attained certain language and calculating abilities. Some jobs may require applicants with college or university graduation qualification to fulfill the higher job requirements. Therefore, people with low level of education will be bounded by lots of limitations when they look for jobs and therefore they are more likely to face employment difficulties.
1.2 Professional qualifications
Apart from educational qualifications, obtaining professional qualifications, certification, etc. is another way to show that the applicants possess certain qualifications or ability and thus increase their job opportunities. Driving licence, machine operating licence or other professional qualifications such as qualified lawyers, accountants, etc. are some examples of qualifications that help job seekers to be employed in certain industries. Depending on the industries, some of these professional qualifications are permanently effective and some require renewal. Without any professional qualification, people can only apply for some elementary positions and they can be easily replaced by other people, resulting in employment difficulties.

1.3 Work skills
People can also increase their employment opportunities by improving relevant work skills, such as computer application, design, and even physical strengths, to meet with the relevant job requirements. Apart from skills applied in work, developing some generic skills (such as creativity and problem-solving ability) can also be helpful in seeking jobs. Without any skills or relevant work abilities, it would be difficult for people to be employed, resulting in employment difficulties.

1.4 Work attitude
Good work attitude is another key factor to increase employment opportunities. People have to deal with all kinds of pressure and challenges at work and have to cooperate with others. Therefore, good work attitude (such as punctuality, diligence and politeness) and interpersonal skills can help increase employment opportunities.

1.5 Socioeconomic background
Socioeconomic background has an effect on job opportunities. However, an interesting point to note is that either good or weak socioeconomic background can hinder the job seekers.
Job seekers with **relatively weak** socioeconomic background:

Usually, these job seekers do not have much financial support from their families. They have less exposure relatively, thereby limiting their social network and reducing their opportunities for job referrals. In addition, the travel expenses and other costs arisen in the job seeking account for relatively high proportion of their household expenditure. Therefore, their choice of job is limited by location.

Job seekers with **relatively good** socioeconomic background:

These job seekers have more financial support from their families generally. Without economic pressure, they are usually less eager to find a job. Moreover, these job seekers may receive enough pocket money that makes them unwilling to accept low-paid jobs. It weakens their motivation to look for a job indirectly.

2. **Social Factors**

2.1 **Economic recession**

Economic environment is one of the social factors affecting employment. Since the main economic activities of Hong Kong are closely connected with other regions in the world, local economic development can be easily affected by external factors. If there is an external economic recession, such as the Asian financial crisis in 1997 and global financial tsunami in 2008, Hong Kong’s economic performance will be seriously affected. Additionally, some occasional incidents, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2003, may also result in economic recession. Under such circumstances, to cut down operational cost, companies will reduce the number of recruits. Therefore, unemployment rate will rise in the years of economic recession.

2.2 **Economic restructuring**

From 1990s to the 21st century, Hong Kong has undergone economic restructuring. Hong Kong economy has changed from manufacturing industry-oriented into service-oriented, and it advocates the development of high-technology and high value-added industries. As the focus of economic development has shifted, workers who were originally engaged in certain industries face employment difficulties. They have to switch to other industries. During this process, it's unavoidable for some workers to be unemployed.
3. Other Factors

Apart from the above factors, there are also some unpredictable factors that will affect employment opportunities, such as fate and fortune of an individual, etc. Therefore, people with good qualities might experience unemployed as well. Improving personal qualities can help increase employment opportunities but it does not ensure for an ideal job.

Summary

Since employment difficulties can be caused by personal, social and some other factors beyond our control, we have to look into the various reasons behind employment difficulties from a wider perspective. We should not merely attribute employment difficulties to a few reasons. While encountering employment difficulties, people should be optimistic and shall be well-prepared for future job requirements with a positive attitude. Even if we are being employed, we have to well equip ourselves to meet any challenges in the future.

Extended Reading

A factor that cannot be ignored: age discrimination

While analysing the relationship between age group and unemployment rate, we can learn about the specific conditions facing the labour in different age groups from the perspective of the labour themselves; Besides, we can learn about the possible problem of age discrimination from the social perspective. Sometimes, people in different age groups might be stereotyped and ranked. They might be judged merely according to their age instead of individual capability. Thus it’s relatively difficult for people in younger and older age groups to be employed.
### Worksheet (5): Ways to enhance worker competitiveness

How to enhance our competitiveness while facing employment difficulties?

According to the difficulties facing the following five persons, select suitable plans for each of them and fill in the following boxes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ming</th>
<th>Kuen</th>
<th>Fanny</th>
<th>Fai</th>
<th>Keung</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He used to work in the clothing industry and lost his job when he was 40 as the factory was moved to the mainland. Now, he wants to enter the labour market through receiving proper training.</td>
<td>Having to take care of two young children, she can't go out to work. But due to the low household income, she wants to find a part-time job to support her family.</td>
<td>She is 16 years old. She quitted school when she was Secondary 2. She wants to learn some skills and find her career direction.</td>
<td>He works as an insurance broker with a goal of getting promoted in two years. He obtains the licence of Certified Financial Planner (CFP) which is recognized by the government.</td>
<td>He lives in Tin Shui Wai and works as a waiter in a restaurant in the area with low income. Recently, a relative referred him to work in a western restaurant with a higher salary in Tsim Sha Tsui. But he is hesitating due to the transport fees.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Answers:**
(A) Work Incentive Transport Subsidy Scheme (B) Placement-tied courses provided by the Employees Retraining Board (C) Continuing Education Fund (D) YPTP&YWETS (E) Nursery services provided by non-profit-making organisations
In an era of rapid development and keen competition, knowledge and skills quickly become outdated. Therefore, to maintain competitiveness in labour market, workers may start with the following three aspects:

1. **Personal level**
   Since Hong Kong is a knowledge-based economy, emphasising the qualities and skills of talents. Workers have to be well-prepared and continue learning and advance their skills. They have to master multiple skills in order to keep pace with the development of the society.

2. **Corporate level**
   Employers play an important role in enhancing worker competitiveness. Companies can provide on-the-job training to let workers master the most up-to-date information and skills of the industries. Quite a lot of Hong Kong-based enterprises have set up training centers for their employees. Some major local corporate groups organise management training courses and run training centers themselves. This can enhance worker competitiveness and increase corporate productivity.

3. **Government level**
   The government has adopted quite a lot of measures to enhance worker competitiveness, including some employment related courses provided by vocational training institutions. For example, the Skills Upgrading Scheme for frontline employees helps workers master the most up-to-date skills and thus enhancing their employability and competitiveness in the labour market. The government also provides pecuniary aid for workers to attend courses, such as Adult Education Subvention Scheme, Continuing Education Fund, etc. These measures provide chance for the job seekers’ to improve their education level and skills to meet the demand of the society.
Worksheet (6): Factors that Affect Wages

Work in groups of two, read the following two advertisements and discuss the following questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job no.: 001</th>
<th>Date: 18/8/2010</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job title:</td>
<td>Sector: Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticket seller</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Working Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m., 5.5 days per week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary: $6,500 per month</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirements: Completed Secondary 3, no work experience required, fluent in Cantonese, able to read and write Chinese and English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duties: General travel agency counter work, mainly assisting passengers to book and collect flight tickets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job no.: 002</th>
<th>Date: 18/8/2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job title:</td>
<td>Sector: Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour Guide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working hours: Irregular (required to work on public holidays)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary: $4,500 per month, plus commission, monthly salary can be up to $15,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirements: Completed Secondary 5, 3-year working experience, good communication skills, punctual, possessing effective Tour Escort Pass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duties: Leading outbound tours and responsible for all the related matters throughout the trip</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Summarising the information of the above two advertisements, explain why the salary of a tour guide is higher than that of a ticket seller?

- Higher level of education, e.g. completed Secondary 5;
- More working experience, e.g. tour guide must have 3-year working experience;
- Professional qualification, e.g. effective license is required for being a tour guide;
- Working hours, e.g. tour guides have to work on public holidays, hence a higher salary is offered as compensation.

2. Which job do you think is more liable to be affected by the change of economic environment?

- Economic environment will affect the income of both ticket sellers and tour guides, but with a larger impact on tour guides. Most of the income that tour guides received comes from commission. During economic downturn, the number of outbound tourists decreases. The income of tour guides will decrease significantly due to the largely reduced commission. On the contrary, if the economy flourishes, the number of outbound tourists will increase. The income of tour guides will increase correspondingly due to increased commission.

3. If a tour guide is introverted and is frequently late for work. Do you think that this kind of personality will affect his/her salary?

- According to the advertisement, tour guide must have good communication skills and be punctual. If this tour guide cannot meet these requirements, his/her salary will be affected. Since he/she is unable to meet the job requirements, he/she cannot lead outbound tours to earn commission and his/her income will hence decrease. In serious cases, he/she might be dismissed.
(This part is designed for students of higher ability as extended learning, leading them to think about the concept of “labour demand” and “labour supply”)

1. Do you think most of the working population in Hong Kong can work as tour guides? What factors will decide whether they can engage in a certain work?

   Each job requires the workers to have specific qualities. Working as a tour guide requires the possession of related license and certain level of language proficiency, communication skills and problem-solving abilities. Therefore, not all the working population can work as tour guides.

2. Can the employment market of Hong Kong absorb more tour guides? What factors will affect the types of jobs in the employment market?

   It depends on the development of tourism in Hong Kong. If the number of local people's outbound tours increases, the demand for tour guides will increase and more labour will be employed as tour guides.
3. If the number of workers who can be employed as tour guides is larger than that of job vacancies, what impact will that have on the income of tour guides? On the contrary, if the number of workers who can be employed as tour guides is smaller than that of job vacancies, what will happen?

If the number of potential tour guides is larger than that of job vacancies, the labour supply will exceed the demand and workers will have to compete with each other with lower salaries. On the contrary, if the number of potential tour guides is smaller than that of job vacancies, there will be a shortage of tour guides in the labour market and higher remuneration will be provided to attract more labour.

Factors that affect the income of workers can be divided into three levels: personal level, social level and policy level. Base on these, you can understand the reasons why workers of similar background have different income.

1. Personal level:

1.1 Personal abilities

Personal abilities generally refer to the relevant abilities of people who engage in a certain work, including educational qualifications, professional qualifications, working experience and skills. Workers with better personal abilities usually have higher productivity and are more competitive in the labour market, and thus having higher salaries.

1.2 Aptitude

Aptitude means innate qualities or qualities acquired by learning, including personalities, interests and expertise. As far as vocational aptitude is concerned, it is the personal qualities favorable for career development. Different people have different aptitude. Some people are friendly and have extrovert personality, suitable for engaging in work that requires good communication skills, such as...
cabin attendants. Some people are quiet and thoughtful, suitable for clerical work, such as accountant. If the jobs chosen can match with personal aptitudes, it is beneficial for improving productivity and income.

2. Social level:
2.1 Job nature
Job nature including working hours, nature of the job and working environment is also one of the factors that affects the income of workers. Some jobs require irregular working hours and shift duty or working on holidays, such as salesperson. Some are unpleasant jobs, such as cleaning and dressing up the dead. It’s difficult to employ workers for these kinds of jobs. In addition, if the jobs require workers to work in dangerous environments, such as disposing chemical wastes, higher salary is provided as compensation. The salary of these kinds of jobs is usually higher in order to attract people to enter the industry.

2.2 Economic environment
Wage levels are also affected by macroeconomic factors. During economic recession, employers may cut down the salary of workers to reduce costs. This will affect the income of workers, resulting in lower living standard. On the contrary, during economic boom, many companies will expand production scale, and the demand for workers will increase and companies are willing to give higher salary to attract workers, which makes the income of workers increases.

3. Policy level:
3.1 Setting up a minimum wage
A minimum wage is the lowest hourly, daily or monthly remuneration that employers may legally pay to workers. The Minimum Wage Ordinance passed in 2011 in Hong Kong. It aims at protecting workers who earn excessively low wages while sustaining Hong Kong’s economic growth and competitiveness. The statutory minimum wage (SMW) came into force on 1 May 2011 and the initial SMW is $28 per hour.
Concept Map of Labour Market of Hong Kong

Labour market of Hong Kong

Basic information of labour market of Hong Kong

Labour market situation
Occupation, trade and job nature

Working population situation
Population statistics, background information of labour (e.g. gender, educational qualifications)

Does the supply of labour meet with the demand in Hong Kong?

Conditions of people with employment difficulties (unemployment rate data)
- Characteristics of people with employment difficulties
- Factors that make it difficult for them to be employed
  - Low level of education, lack of professional skills and good work attitude, weak socioeconomic background

Conditions of employed population (employed population data)
- Ways to enhance worker competitiveness
- Factors that affect wages
  - Improving educational qualifications, professional qualifications, job skills, work attitude and socioeconomic background
- Employment training
- Providing vocational education and training courses

Personal level

Social level

Policy level

How does the government provide support for people with employment difficulties according to personal factors and social factors?

Core Concept

Extended Concept
1 Basic concepts:

1.1 What is working population?
- Working population refers to the population aged 15 or above and who are willing to engage in economic activities, including all the employed population and unemployed population.

1.2 What is unemployment rate?
- Unemployment rate represents the percentage of the unemployed population in the working population.

2 Why do some people have employment difficulties?

2.1 What personal factors will cause employment difficulties?
- Characteristics of personal factors
  - Educational qualifications: low level of education, difficult to be employed
  - Professional qualifications: lack of professional qualifications, difficult to be employed
  - Work skills: lack of work skills, difficult to be employed
  - Work attitude: lack of good work attitude, difficult to be employed
  - Socioeconomic background: weak socioeconomic background, difficult to be employed

2.2 What social factors will cause employment difficulties?
- Characteristics of social factors
  - Economic recession: investment and production decline, loss of jobs, difficult to be employed
  - Economic restructuring: with the change of the types of jobs, existing jobs are lost. It is difficult for workers to keep up their work skills with the change of jobs, thus leading to difficulties of switching jobs

3 How to enhance worker competitiveness?
- Personal level: sticking to the attitude of “lifelong learning”, persevering
- Social level: employment support provided by employers
- Policy level: governmental policies of supporting people with difficulty in employment to get re-employed, such as re-training and employment subsidy.
4 What factors will affect the income of employed people?

- Personal level: 1) personal abilities; 2) aptitude
- Social level: 1) job nature; 2) economic environment
- Policy level: policy of setting up minimum wage