

Unemployment rates in 10 countries, civilian labor force basis,
approximating U.S. concepts, seasonally adjusted, 1995-2009

Period	United States	Canada	Australia	Japan	France	Germany	Italy (1)	Netherlands	Sweden	United Kingdom
1995	5.6	8.6	8.2	3.2	11.3	8.2	11.3	7.1	9.1	8.7
1996	5.4	8.8	8.2	3.4	11.8	9.0	11.3	6.6	9.9	8.1
1997	4.9	8.4	8.3	3.4	11.7	9.9	11.4	5.6	10.1	7.0
1998	4.5	7.7	7.7	4.1	11.2	9.3	11.5	4.4	8.4	6.3
1999	4.2	7.0	6.9	4.7	10.5	(2)8.5	11.0	3.5	7.1	6.0
2000	4.0	6.1	6.3	4.8	9.1	7.8	10.2	(2)3.0	5.8	5.5
2001	4.7	6.5	(2)6.8	5.1	8.4	7.9	9.2	2.3	5.0	5.1
2002	5.8	7.0	6.4	5.4	8.8	8.6	8.7	2.8	5.2	5.2
2003	6.0	6.9	5.9	5.3	9.2	9.3	8.5	(2)3.7	5.8	5.0
2004	5.5	6.4	5.4	4.8	9.6	10.3	8.1	4.6	6.6	4.8
2005	5.1	6.0	5.1	4.5	9.6	(2)11.2	7.8	4.8	(2)7.7	4.9
2006	4.6	5.5	4.8	4.2	9.5	10.4	6.9	3.9	7.0	5.5
2007	4.6	5.3	4.4	3.9	8.6	8.7	6.2	3.2	6.1	5.4
I	4.5	5.4	4.5	4.0	9.0	9.2	6.2	3.6	6.3r	5.5
II	4.5	5.2	4.3	3.8	8.7	8.8	6.1	3.2	6.1	5.4
III	4.7	5.2	4.3	3.8	8.5	8.6	6.3	3.0	5.9r	5.3
IV	4.8	5.2	4.4r	3.9	8.1	8.2	6.3r	3.0	5.8r	5.2
2008	5.8	5.3	4.2	4.0	8.1	7.5	6.8	2.7	6.0	5.7
I	4.9	5.2	4.0	3.9	7.9	7.8	6.7	2.9	5.8	5.3
II	5.4	5.3	4.3	4.1	7.9	7.6	6.8	2.8	5.9r	5.4
III	6.0	5.3	4.3r	4.1	8.0	7.4	6.8r	2.6	6.0r	5.9
IV	6.9	5.6	4.5r	4.1	8.4	7.3	7.0	2.8	6.5r	6.3
Sep	6.2	5.4	4.3	4.0	8.1	7.3		2.7	6.2r	6.0
Oct	6.6	5.4	4.4	3.8	8.2	7.3		2.8	6.2	6.2
Nov	6.8	5.7	4.5	4.0	8.4	7.3		2.8	6.6r	6.3
Dec	7.2	5.8	4.5	4.4	8.5	7.4		2.8	6.6r	6.5
2009										
Jan	7.6	6.3	4.8	4.2	8.6	7.5		2.9	6.5r	
Feb	8.1	6.7	5.2						7.7	

r = revised.

(1) Labor force survey data are published on a quarterly basis only. No adjustments are made to create estimates on a monthly basis due to a lack of alternative data series.

(2) Break in series. See notes.

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NOTES

Quarterly figures for Italy and quarterly and monthly figures for France, Germany, and the Netherlands are calculated by applying annual adjustment factors to current published data and therefore should be viewed as less precise indicators of unemployment under U.S. concepts than the annual figures. Quarterly and monthly figures for Sweden are BLS seasonally adjusted estimates derived from Swedish not seasonally adjusted data. For further qualifications and historical data, see "International comparisons of annual labor force statistics, 10 countries, 1960-2007," October 21, 2008, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/ilc/flscomparelf.htm>.

The foreign country data are adjusted as closely as possible to U.S. concepts. Although the U.S. lower age limit is 16 years, the age limit for other countries varies from 15 to 16 years. No adjustment is made for the treatment of layoffs. For some countries, no adjustment is made for the treatment of unpaid family workers, persons waiting to start a new job, and passive job seekers (for example, persons only reading newspaper ads as their method of job search). In the United States, job search must be "active," such as placing or answering advertisements, and simply reading ads is not enough to qualify as active search. Except for the inclusion of passive job seekers in Canada (for which an adjustment is made), these "unadjusted" differences are believed to have a negligible effect on the comparisons. For further information on comparability issues, see Constance Sorrentino, "International unemployment rates: how comparable are they?" Monthly Labor Review, June 2000, pp. 3-20, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2000/06/art1full.pdf>.

Breaks in Series: There are breaks in the data series for Australia, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden.

Australia: The 2001 break reflects the introduction of a new questionnaire and a minor change in the definition of unemployed persons. The impact of the change was an increase in the adjusted unemployment rate by 0.1 percentage point beginning with April 2001.

Germany: The 1999 break reflects the incorporation of an improved method of data calculation and a change in coverage to persons living in private households only. In 1999, the impact of the change was a decrease in the adjusted unemployment rate by 0.1 percentage point from 8.6 to 8.5 percent. The 2005 break reflects a change in data collection from an annual to a continuous basis.

Netherlands: The 2000 break reflects a change in source data. The 2003 break reflects updated population controls.

Sweden: The 2005 break reflects the introduction of a new questionnaire.

SOURCE

Data used to calculate these unemployment rates come mainly from national statistical sources but also from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Statistical Office of the European Communities.

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