

International Comparisons of Annual Labor Force Statistics

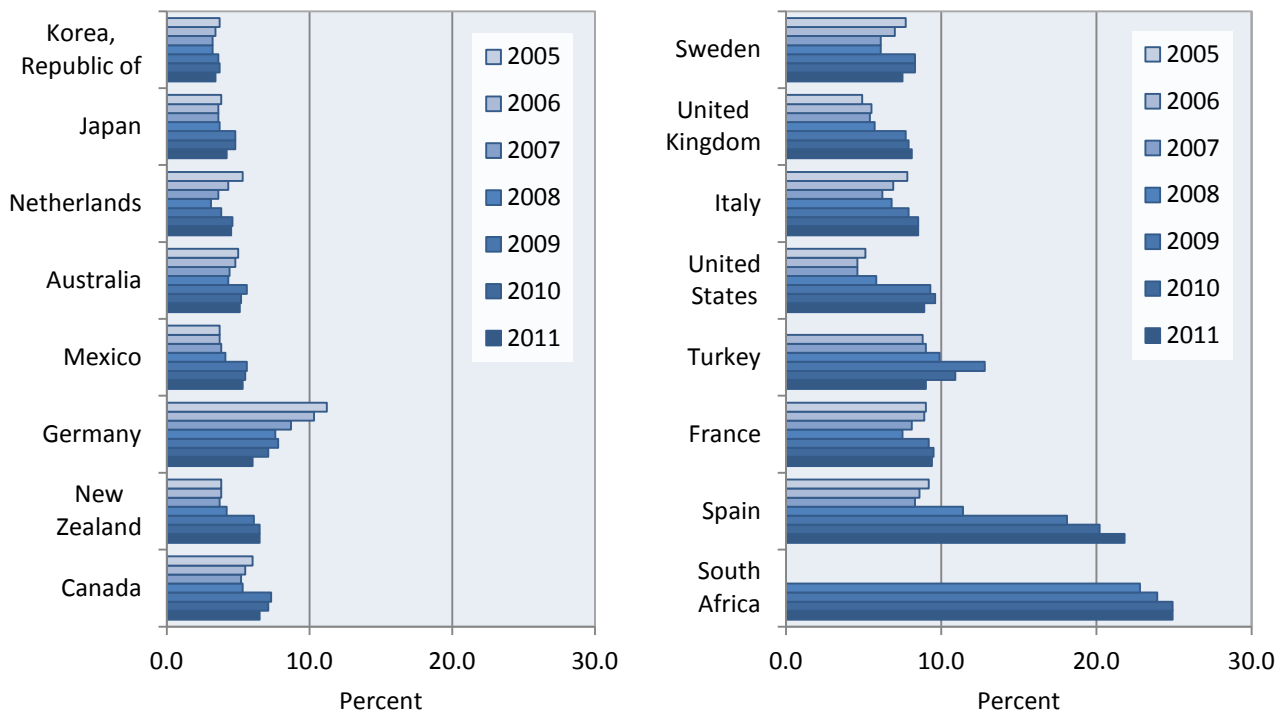


Adjusted to U.S. Concepts, 16 Countries, 1970-2011

June 7, 2012

This report presents highlights from annual labor force statistics for 16 countries, adjusted to U.S. concepts. For the first time, data are presented for the Republic of Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, Spain, and Turkey. Underlying levels and full time series, including monthly data, are available at www.bls.gov/ilc/#laborforce.

Chart 1. Unemployment rates, 2005-2011



NOTE: For South Africa, 2005-2007 data are not available. See [Table 1](#) for data and [unemployment notes](#) in this report for definitions.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics · Division of International Labor Comparisons · www.bls.gov/ilc

CONTENTS

CONTENTS	2
INTRODUCTION	3
CHARTS	5
CHART 2. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY SEX, 2011	5
CHART 3. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR TEENAGERS, PERSONS AGES 20-24, AND ADULTS, 2011	5
CHART 4. EMPLOYMENT-POPULATION RATIOS BY SEX, 2011	6
CHART 5. EMPLOYMENT SHARES BY SECTOR, 1980 AND 2011	6
TABLES	8
TABLE 1. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES.....	8
TABLE 2. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY SEX.....	8
TABLE 3. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR TEENAGERS AND PERSONS AGES 20 TO 24	9
TABLE 4. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS	9
TABLE 5. EMPLOYMENT-POPULATION RATIOS.....	10
TABLE 6. EMPLOYMENT-POPULATION RATIOS BY SEX	10
TABLE 7. EMPLOYMENT SHARES BY SECTOR, 1980 AND 2011.....	11
TABLE 8. LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES	11
TABLE 9. LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES BY SEX AND WOMEN’S SHARE OF THE LABOR FORCE	12
TABLE 10. INACTIVITY RATES	12
TABLE 11. INACTIVITY RATES BY SEX	13
TABLE 12. WORKING-AGE POPULATION	13
APPENDIX A. DEFINITIONS AND BACKGROUND	14
UNEMPLOYMENT.....	14
EMPLOYMENT	16
LABOR FORCE.....	18
WORKING-AGE POPULATION	19
APPENDIX B. COUNTRY NOTES	20
UNITED STATES.....	20
AUSTRALIA.....	20
CANADA	21
FRANCE.....	21
GERMANY	22
ITALY.....	22
JAPAN	23
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	23
MEXICO	23
NETHERLANDS.....	23
NEW ZEALAND	24
SOUTH AFRICA.....	24
SPAIN.....	24
SWEDEN	24
TURKEY.....	25
UNITED KINGDOM.....	25
APPENDIX C. PUBLICATIONS ON INTERNATIONAL LABOR FORCE STATISTICS	26
ABOUT US	27
DATA PRODUCED BY ILC.....	27
CONTACTS	27

INTRODUCTION

This report presents selected labor force statistics adjusted to U.S. concepts for 1970 onward for the United States and fifteen foreign countries: Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

Data in this report refer to the civilian working-age population and are based on figures mainly from national statistical agencies, but also from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT). The U.S. data are from a labor force survey (also referred to as a household survey) called the Current Population Survey (CPS). Foreign-country data are based mainly on labor force surveys. All data come from secondary sources; that is, BLS does not conduct any surveys to collect data for foreign countries.

Foreign-country data are adjusted to U.S. concepts to the extent possible. The [Definitions and Background](#) Appendix in this report provides an introduction to the U.S. concepts for the variables discussed but further details are available in the BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 1, “Labor force data derived from the Current Population Survey,” at www.bls.gov/opub/hom.

Why are adjustments necessary?

Persons counted as employed, unemployed, or not in the labor force may differ across countries. Some types of workers that are categorized differently include new entrants to the workforce, persons on layoff or working part-time, students, and unpaid family workers. For example, whereas most foreign countries count all unpaid family workers as employed, the U.S. only includes them if they worked at least 15 hours per week. Also, foreign countries sometimes include the career military or national defense force in the labor force, whereas U.S. data are based on the civilian labor force. Another difference between U.S. and foreign-country definitions is with regards to age limits. The

lower age limit of the working-age population according to U.S. concepts is 16 while most foreign countries collect data on the working-age population ages 15 and older. In addition, some countries may have an upper age limit.

To compare across countries, these definitional differences must be taken into account. Thus, the foreign-country data presented in this report are adjusted to a common framework – U.S. concepts. Adjustments made for each country are discussed in Appendix B, [country notes](#).

BLS does not adjust to U.S. concepts in the following cases:

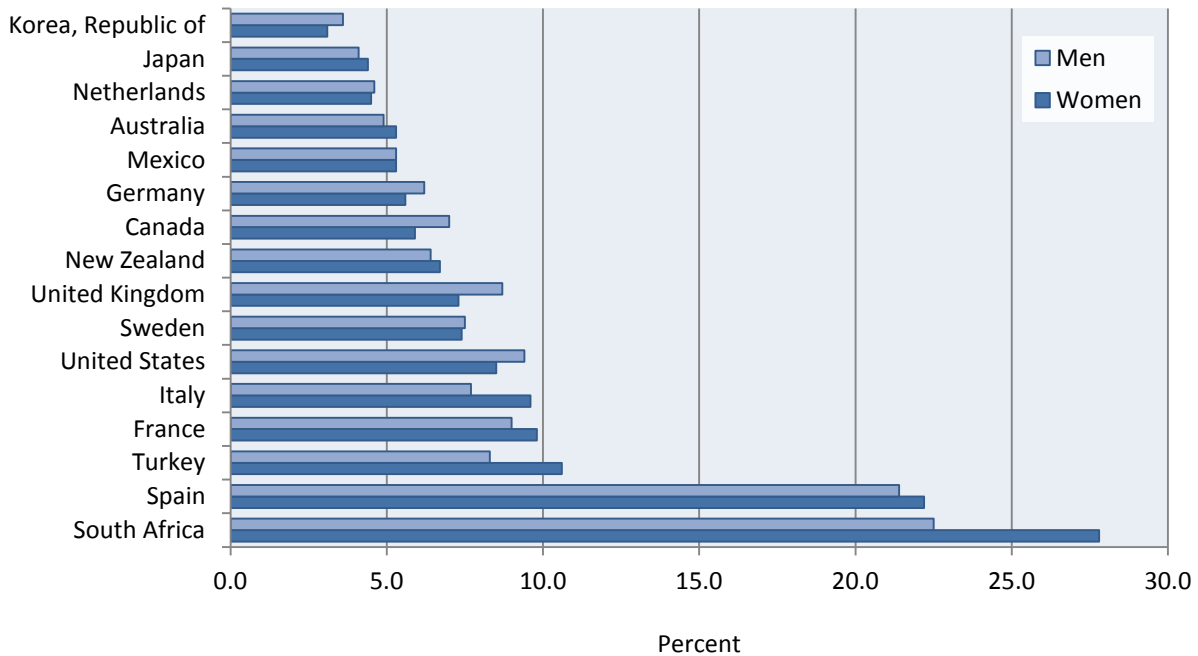
- Lower age limits are adjusted to the age at which compulsory schooling ends rather than the U.S. lower age limit of 16 (for exceptions, see the [working-age population](#) section of the [Definitions and Background](#) Appendix).
- In the United States, persons on layoff are classified as unemployed because of weak job attachment; however, in some countries, persons on layoff are classified as employed because of strong job attachment. Strong job attachment is determined by national circumstances and is evidenced by, for example, payment of salary or the existence of a recall date.
- For some countries, no adjustment is made for deviations from U.S. concepts in the treatment of unpaid family workers and persons waiting to start a new job.
- While Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and South Africa exclude passive jobseekers from the unemployed, in accordance with the U.S. concept, the other countries do not. An adjustment is made to exclude them in Canada only.
- Data for Netherlands and South Africa have upper age limits. Netherlands employment has an upper age limit of 64 and unemployment has a limit of 75. All data for South Africa have an upper age limit of 64.

For further information on comparability issues, see Constance Sorrentino, "International unemployment rates: how comparable are they?"

Monthly Labor Review, June 2000, pp. 3-20, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2000/06/art1full.pdf.

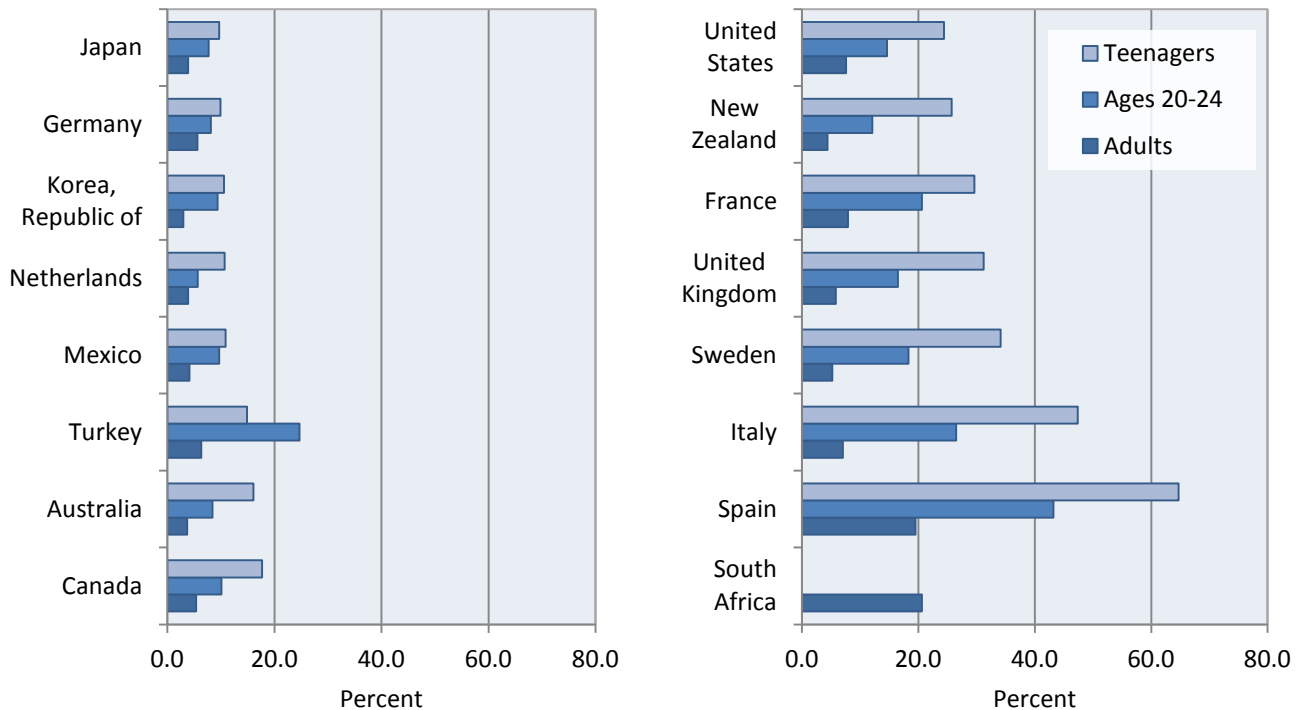
CHARTS

CHART 2. Unemployment rates by sex, 2011



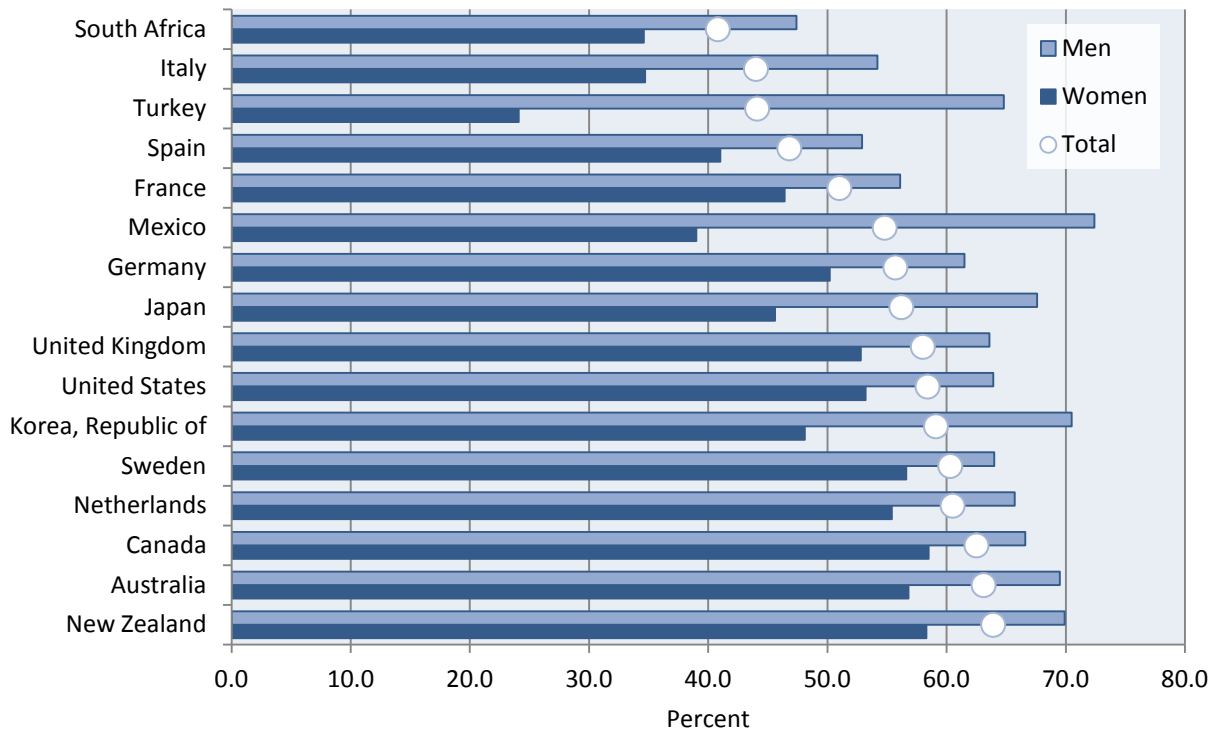
NOTE: See [Table 2](#) for data and [unemployment notes](#) in this report for definitions.

CHART 3. Unemployment rates for teenagers, persons ages 20-24, and adults, 2011



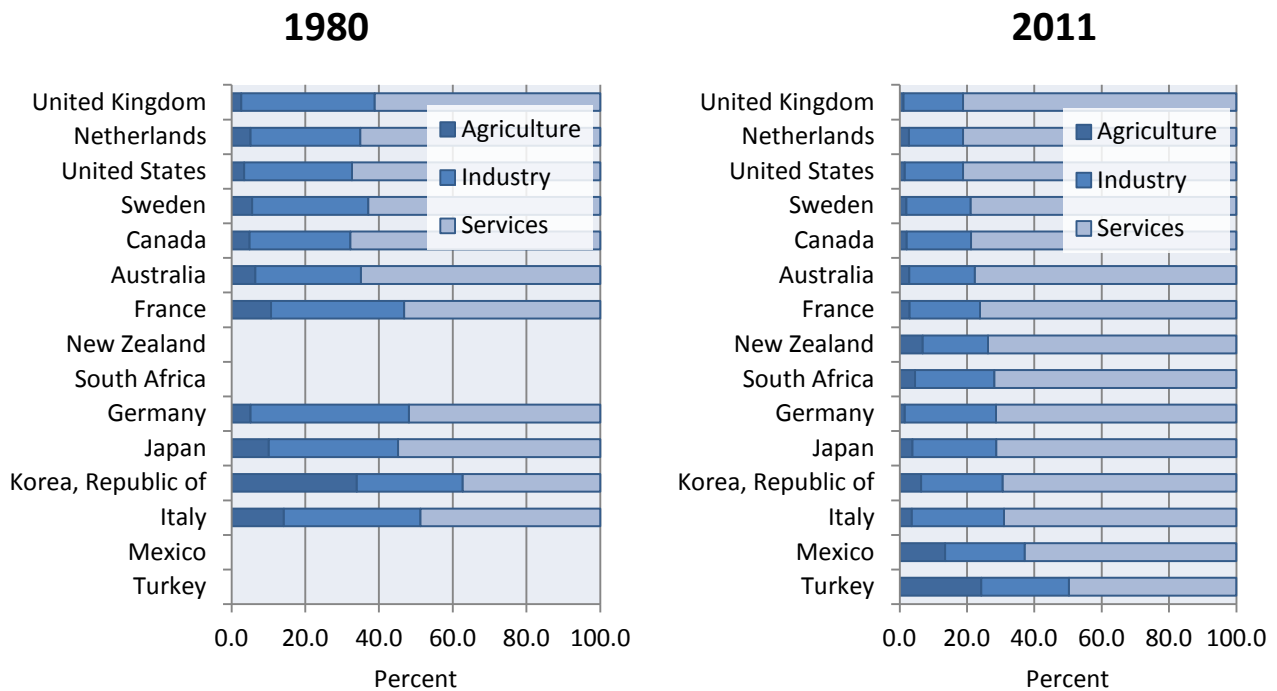
NOTE: Teenagers are defined as 14-19-year-olds in Mexico; 16-19-year-olds in Canada, Spain, Sweden, the United States, and the United Kingdom; and 15-19-year-olds in other countries shown. Adults are defined as persons 25 and older. Rates for teenagers and persons ages 20-24 are not available for South Africa. See [Table 3](#) and [Table 4](#) for data and [unemployment notes](#) in this report for definitions.

CHART 4. Employment-population ratios by sex, 2011



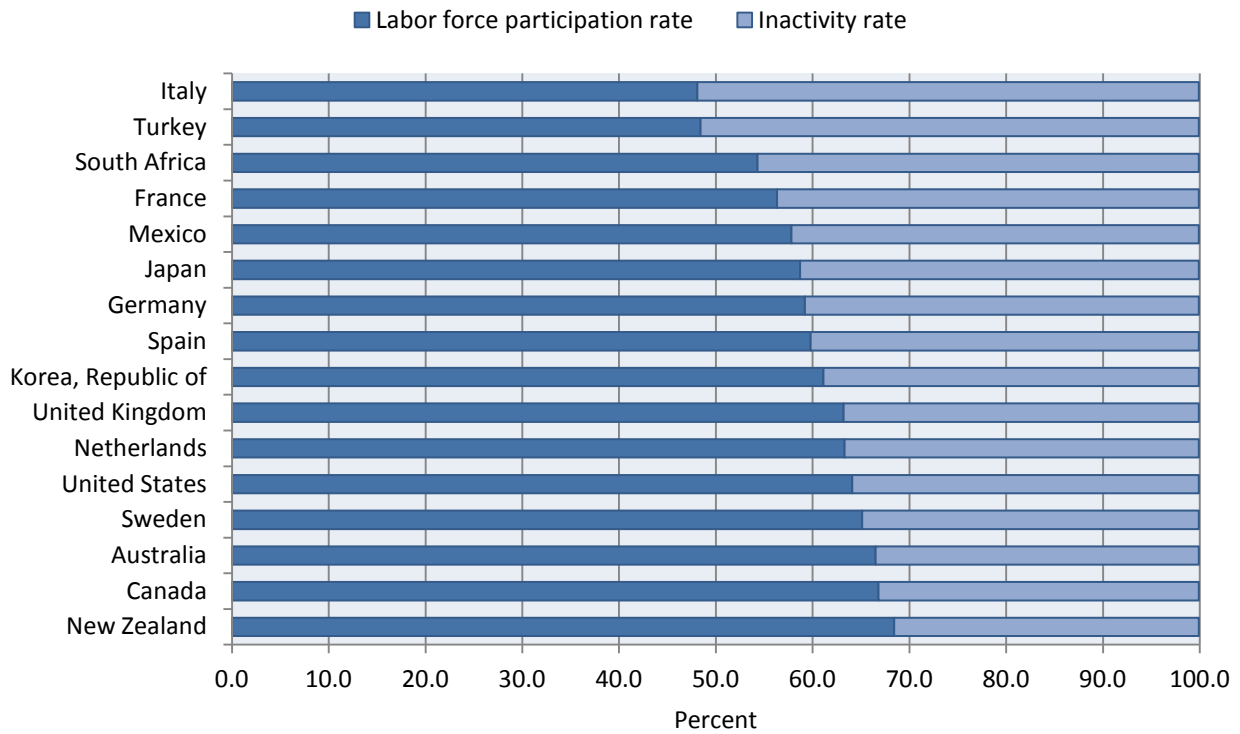
NOTE: See [Table 5](#) and [Table 6](#) for data and [employment notes](#) in this report for definitions.

CHART 5. Employment shares by sector, 1980 and 2011



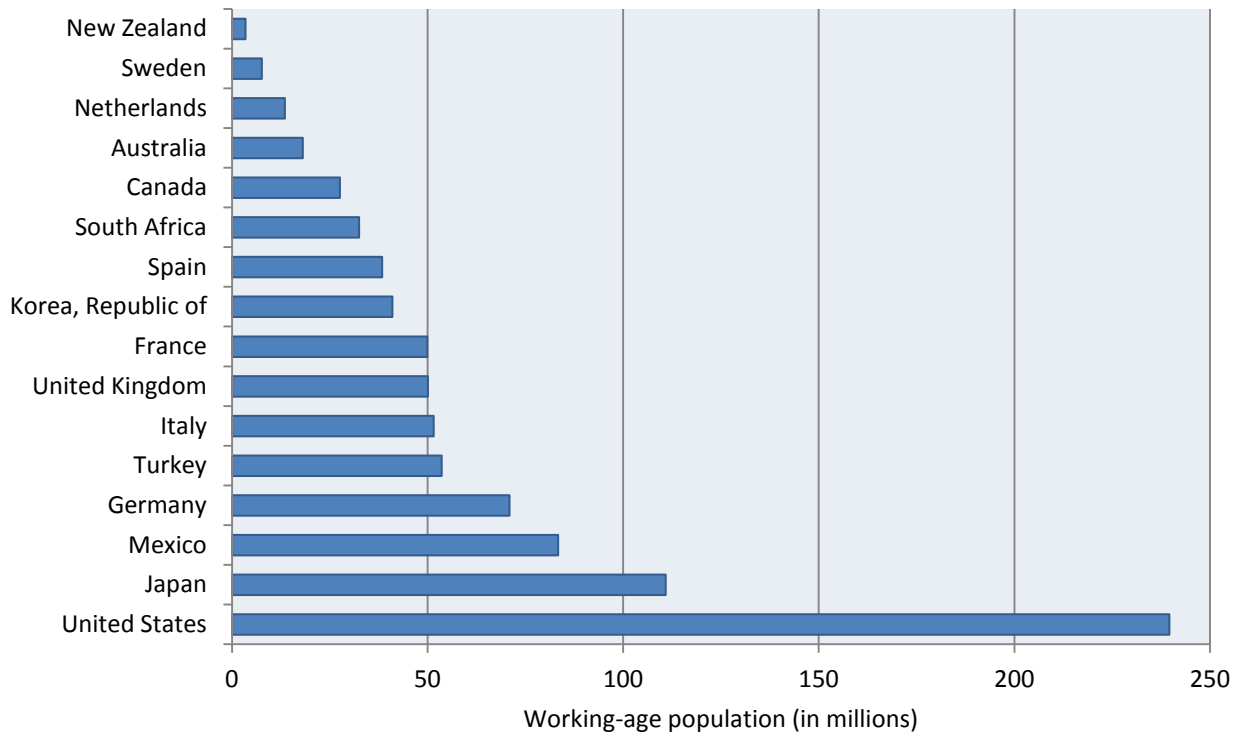
NOTE: Agriculture includes agriculture, forestry, hunting, and fishing. Industry includes manufacturing, mining, and construction. Services includes transportation, communication, public utilities, trade, finance, public administration, private household services, and miscellaneous services. 1980 data are not available for New Zealand, South Africa, Mexico, and Turkey. For Spain, BLS estimates of sectoral employment are not available. See [Table 7](#) for data and [employment notes](#) in this report for definitions.

CHART 6. Labor force participation rates and inactivity rates, 2011



NOTE: Labor force participation rates and inactivity rates are percentages of the working-age population. See [Table 8](#) and [Table 10](#) for data and [labor force notes](#) in this report for definitions.

CHART 7. Working-age population, 2011



NOTE: See [Table 12](#) for data and [working-age population notes](#) in this report for definitions.

TABLES

**TABLE 1. Unemployment rates
(In percent)**

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
United States	4.9	7.1	5.6	^b 4.0	5.1	4.6	4.6	5.8	9.3	9.6	8.9
Australia	1.7	6.1	^b 6.9	6.3	^b 5.0	4.8	4.4	4.3	5.6	5.2	5.1
Canada	5.7	^b 7.3	7.7	^b 6.1	6.0	5.5	5.2	5.3	7.3	7.1	6.5
France	2.5	^b 5.6	^b 8.0	8.6	9.0	8.9	8.1	7.5	9.2	9.5	9.4
Germany	0.5	2.8	^b 5.0	^b 7.8	^b 11.2	10.3	8.7	7.6	7.8	7.1	6.0
Italy	3.2	4.4	^b 7.0	^b 10.1	7.8	6.9	6.2	6.8	7.9	8.5	8.5
Japan	1.2	2.0	2.0	4.4	3.8	3.6	3.6	3.7	4.8	4.8	4.2
Korea, Republic of	4.4	5.2	2.4	^b 4.4	3.7	3.4	3.2	3.2	3.6	3.7	3.4
Mexico	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	3.7	3.7	3.8	4.1	5.6	5.5	^b 5.3
Netherlands	(na)	6.0	^b 7.6	^b 3.1	^b 5.3	4.3	3.6	3.1	3.8	^b 4.6	4.5
New Zealand	(na)	(na)	8.0	6.2	3.8	3.8	3.7	4.2	6.1	6.5	6.5
South Africa	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	22.8	23.9	24.9	24.9
Spain	(na)	11.7	16.5	^b 14.0	^b 9.2	8.6	8.3	11.4	18.1	20.2	21.8
Sweden	1.5	2.0	^b 1.8	5.8	^b 7.7	7.0	6.1	6.1	8.3	8.3	7.5
Turkey	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	8.8	9.0	9.9	12.8	10.9	9.0
United Kingdom	(na)	6.9	7.1	5.5	4.9	5.5	5.4	5.7	7.7	7.9	8.1

^b Indicates a break in series from the previous year shown; see [country notes](#) in this report for exact break year and more information.

(na) Not available.

NOTE: See [unemployment notes](#) in this report for definitions.

**TABLE 2. Unemployment rates by sex
(In percent)**

	2007		2008		2009		2010		2011	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
United States	4.7	4.5	6.1	5.4	10.3	8.1	10.5	8.6	9.4	8.5
Australia	4.0	4.8	4.0	4.6	5.7	5.4	5.1	5.4	4.9	5.3
Canada	5.6	4.8	5.8	4.8	8.5	6.1	7.8	6.2	7.0	5.9
France	7.6	8.6	7.0	8.0	9.1	9.4	9.2	9.8	9.0	9.8
Germany	8.6	8.8	7.5	7.7	8.2	7.3	7.6	6.5	6.2	5.6
Italy	5.0	7.9	5.6	8.6	6.9	9.3	7.7	9.7	7.7	9.6
Japan	3.2	4.2	3.2	4.3	4.4	5.2	4.6	5.0	4.1	4.4
Korea, Republic of	3.7	2.6	3.6	2.6	4.1	3.0	4.0	3.3	3.6	3.1
Mexico	3.5	4.2	3.9	4.3	5.5	5.6	5.6	5.4	^b 5.3	^b 5.3
Netherlands	3.2	4.0	2.9	3.4	3.7	3.8	^b 4.5	^b 4.6	4.6	4.5
New Zealand	3.4	4.0	4.1	4.2	6.1	6.1	6.2	6.9	6.4	6.7
South Africa	(na)	(na)	19.8	26.4	22.0	26.2	22.8	27.5	22.5	27.8
Spain	6.4	10.9	10.1	13.1	17.9	18.5	19.9	20.6	21.4	22.2
Sweden	5.8	6.4	5.8	6.3	8.6	7.9	8.5	8.2	7.5	7.4
Turkey	8.8	9.6	9.6	10.5	12.6	13.3	10.4	12.0	8.3	10.6
United Kingdom	5.7	5.0	6.2	5.1	8.7	6.5	8.7	6.9	8.7	7.3

^b Indicates a break in series; see [country notes](#) in this report for more information.

(na) Not available.

NOTE: See [unemployment notes](#) in this report for definitions.

**TABLE 3. Unemployment rates for teenagers and persons ages 20 to 24
(In percent)**

	2007		2008		2009		2010		2011	
	Teens	20-24	Teens	20-24	Teens	20-24	Teens	20-24	Teens	20-24
United States	15.7	8.2	18.7	10.2	24.3	14.7	25.9	15.5	24.4	14.6
Australia	13.7	6.3	12.8	6.1	16.4	8.2	16.9	8.1	16.1	8.4
Canada	13.5	7.9	14.2	8.0	18.5	11.2	18.6	10.7	17.7	10.1
France	26.1	17.5	23.9	17.5	31.0	21.6	29.8	21.4	29.6	20.6
Germany	12.9	11.5	11.0	10.3	11.3	11.1	10.7	9.5	9.9	8.1
Italy	31.7	18.2	35.1	18.6	40.3	23.1	45.7	25.0	47.4	26.5
Japan	8.6	7.3	7.8	6.8	9.6	8.7	9.8	8.8	9.7	7.7
Korea, Republic of	9.4	8.8	10.4	9.2	12.3	9.5	12.1	9.4	10.6	9.4
Mexico	8.0	7.2	8.8	7.5	11.2	10.1	11.3	9.6	^b 10.9	^b 9.7
Netherlands	9.9	4.5	8.4	4.5	9.5	6.2	^b 11.4	^b 7.1	10.7	5.7
New Zealand	14.6	6.5	16.2	7.4	23.3	11.7	24.8	12.2	25.7	12.1
South Africa	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)
Spain	29.2	15.3	40.0	20.7	56.3	33.9	62.4	37.7	64.7	43.2
Sweden	29.6	13.8	30.5	14.0	35.8	20.1	36.0	20.4	34.1	18.3
Turkey	17.6	25.6	18.0	27.5	22.0	33.3	17.7	29.3	14.9	24.7
United Kingdom	21.4	10.5	21.7	11.6	26.8	15.3	29.2	15.3	31.2	16.5

^b Indicates a break in series; see [country notes](#) in this report for more information.

(na) Not available.

NOTE: Teenagers are defined as 14-19-year-olds in Mexico; 16-19-year-olds in Canada, Spain, Sweden, the United States, and the United Kingdom; and 15-19-year-olds in other countries shown. Data are not available for South Africa. See [unemployment notes](#) in this report for definitions.

**TABLE 4. Unemployment rates for youth and adults
(In percent)**

	2007		2008		2009		2010		2011	
	Youth	Adults	Youth	Adults	Youth	Adults	Youth	Adults	Youth	Adults
United States	10.5	3.6	12.8	4.6	17.6	7.9	18.4	8.2	17.3	7.6
Australia	9.4	3.2	8.8	3.2	11.5	4.3	11.5	3.8	11.3	3.7
Canada	10.1	4.3	10.4	4.3	13.9	6.1	13.6	5.9	12.8	5.4
France	19.4	6.8	18.8	6.2	23.5	7.6	23.1	7.9	22.3	7.9
Germany	11.9	8.3	10.5	7.2	11.2	7.3	9.8	6.8	8.5	5.6
Italy	20.6	5.0	21.5	5.6	25.7	6.5	28.2	7.1	29.4	7.0
Japan	7.5	3.2	7.0	3.3	8.9	4.4	9.0	4.4	8.1	3.9
Korea, Republic of	8.8	2.8	9.3	2.7	9.8	3.2	9.8	3.3	9.6	3.0
Mexico	7.6	2.8	8.1	3.0	10.6	4.3	10.3	4.3	^b 10.2	^b 4.1
Netherlands	6.9	2.9	6.3	2.5	7.7	3.0	^b 9.0	^b 3.7	7.8	3.9
New Zealand	10.2	2.3	11.3	2.7	16.6	4.1	17.0	4.5	17.2	4.4
South Africa	(na)	(na)	45.5	18.2	48.1	19.3	50.5	20.3	49.8	20.6
Spain	18.5	7.1	25.0	9.8	38.5	16.0	42.3	18.1	47.1	19.5
Sweden	18.9	4.3	19.3	4.2	24.9	5.9	25.0	5.9	22.7	5.2
Turkey	22.8	5.6	24.1	6.5	29.3	8.9	25.3	7.7	21.4	6.3
United Kingdom	14.4	3.7	15.2	4.0	19.3	5.6	19.9	5.8	21.2	5.8

^b Indicates a break in series; see [country notes](#) in this report for more information.

(na) Not available.

NOTE: Youth are defined as 14-24-year-olds in Mexico; 16-24-year-olds in Canada, Spain, Sweden, the United States, and the United Kingdom; and 15-24-year-olds in other countries shown. Adults are defined as persons ages 25 and over. See [unemployment notes](#) in this report for definitions.

**TABLE 5. Employment-population ratios
(In percent)**

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
United States	57.4	59.2	^b 62.8	^b 64.4	62.7	63.1	63.0	62.2	59.3	58.5	58.4
Australia	61.1	58.3	^b 60.2	60.3	62.1	62.7	63.3	63.9	62.9	63.0	63.1
Canada	54.5	^b 60.3	62.2	62.0	63.3	63.5	64.0	64.1	62.2	62.3	62.5
France	56.1	^b 53.9	^b 52.2	51.5	51.1	51.1	51.6	52.1	51.3	51.2	51.0
Germany	56.6	53.1	^b 52.3	^b 52.2	^b 51.1	52.1	53.2	54.0	54.0	54.4	55.7
Italy	47.4	46.0	^b 43.9	^b 44.5	44.9	45.5	45.6	45.6	44.6	44.0	44.0
Japan	63.8	61.3	61.3	59.0	57.3	57.5	57.6	57.4	56.4	56.2	56.2
Korea, Republic of	55.1	55.9	58.6	^b 58.5	59.7	59.7	59.8	59.5	58.6	58.7	59.1
Mexico	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	55.0	55.9	55.8	55.5	54.7	54.6	^b 54.8
Netherlands	(na)	52.1	^b 52.7	^b 61.1	^b 60.9	61.7	62.9	63.4	62.8	^b 60.8	60.5
New Zealand	(na)	(na)	58.8	61.3	65.2	65.7	65.9	65.6	64.0	63.6	63.9
South Africa	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	44.8	42.7	40.8	40.8
Spain	(na)	44.1	42.1	^b 45.9	^b 51.7	53.1	53.8	52.8	48.9	47.7	46.8
Sweden	63.1	65.6	^b 66.1	60.1	^b 59.8	60.4	61.3	61.3	59.5	59.5	60.3
Turkey	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	40.9	40.8	41.0	40.3	42.1	44.1
United Kingdom	(na)	58.5	59.8	59.4	60.0	60.0	60.0	59.9	58.5	58.2	58.0

^b Indicates a break in series from the previous year shown; see [country notes](#) in this report for exact break year and more information.
(na) Not available.

NOTE: See [employment notes](#) in this report for definitions.

**TABLE 6. Employment-population ratios by sex
(In percent)**

	2007		2008		2009		2010		2011	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
United States	69.8	56.6	68.5	56.2	64.5	54.4	63.7	53.6	63.9	53.2
Australia	70.4	56.4	70.7	57.2	69.1	56.9	69.5	56.6	69.5	56.8
Canada	68.7	59.5	68.8	59.6	65.9	58.7	66.2	58.5	66.6	58.5
France	57.3	46.6	57.6	47.1	56.5	46.7	56.3	46.5	56.1	46.4
Germany	59.7	47.1	60.5	47.8	59.9	48.3	60.2	48.9	61.5	50.2
Italy	57.3	34.9	56.9	35.3	55.3	34.7	54.4	34.5	54.2	34.7
Japan	70.1	46.1	69.6	45.9	68.0	45.7	67.5	45.7	67.6	45.6
Korea, Republic of	71.3	48.9	70.9	48.7	70.1	47.7	70.1	47.8	70.5	48.1
Mexico	75.1	38.9	74.5	38.9	72.4	38.8	72.2	38.8	^b 72.4	^b 39.0
Netherlands	69.6	56.3	69.8	57.2	68.6	57.1	^b 66.4	^b 55.3	65.7	55.4
New Zealand	73.0	59.3	72.1	59.5	70.1	58.4	69.7	57.8	69.9	58.3
South Africa	(na)	(na)	52.7	37.4	49.7	36.2	47.7	34.3	47.4	34.6
Spain	64.6	43.4	62.2	43.7	56.2	41.9	54.3	41.4	52.9	41.0
Sweden	65.4	57.4	65.5	57.3	63.0	55.9	63.5	55.6	64.0	56.6
Turkey	62.5	19.9	62.4	20.4	60.4	20.9	62.3	22.6	64.8	24.1
United Kingdom	66.7	53.6	66.4	53.8	64.1	53.2	63.8	52.9	63.6	52.8

^b Indicates a break in series; see [country notes](#) in this report for more information.

(na) Not available.

NOTE: See [employment notes](#) in this report for definitions.

**TABLE 7. Employment shares by sector, 1980 and 2011
(In percent)**

	Agriculture		Industry		Manufacturing		Services	
	1980	2011	1980	2011	1980	2011	1980	2011
United States	3.4	^b 1.6	29.3	^b 17.3	22.1	^b 10.2	67.3	^b 81.1
Australia	6.5	^b 2.9	28.6	^b 19.5	19.4	^b 8.5	64.9	^b 77.6
Canada	4.9	2.1	27.3	19.1	19.1	10.2	67.8	78.8
France	10.7	^b 3.0	36.1	^b 20.9	26.3	^b 13.4	53.2	^b 76.1
Germany	5.2	^b 1.6	42.9	^b 27.0	34.0	^b 20.0	51.9	^b 71.4
Italy	14.2	^b 3.7	37.0	^b 27.3	26.9	^b 19.0	48.8	^b 69.0
Japan	10.1	3.8	35.1	24.9	25.0	16.8	54.8	71.3
Korea, Republic of	34.0	^b 6.4	28.7	^b 24.2	21.6	^b 16.9	37.3	^b 69.4
Mexico	(na)	^b 13.5	(na)	^b 23.7	(na)	^b 15.4	(na)	^b 62.8
Netherlands	5.2	^b 2.8	29.7	^b 16.1	21.3	^b 10.2	65.1	^b 81.1
New Zealand	(na)	^b 6.9	(na)	^b 19.4	(na)	^b 11.3	(na)	^b 73.7
South Africa	(na)	4.6	(na)	23.6	(na)	13.3	(na)	71.8
Spain	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)
Sweden	5.6	^b 2.0	31.5	^b 19.1	24.3	^b 12.2	62.9	^b 78.9
Turkey	(na)	24.3	(na)	26.0	(na)	18.4	(na)	49.7
United Kingdom	2.6	^b 1.2	36.2	^b 17.7	28.3	^b 9.8	61.2	^b 81.1

^b Indicates a break in series from the previous year shown; see [country notes](#) in this report for exact break year and more information.
(na) Not available.

NOTE: Agriculture includes agriculture, forestry, hunting, and fishing. Industry includes manufacturing, mining, and construction. Services includes transportation, communication, public utilities, trade, finance, public administration, private household services, and miscellaneous services. For Spain, BLS estimates of sectoral employment are not available. See [employment notes](#) in this report for definitions.

**TABLE 8. Labor force participation rates
(In percent)**

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
United States	60.4	63.8	^b 66.5	^b 67.1	66.0	66.2	66.0	66.0	65.4	64.7	64.1
Australia	62.1	62.1	^b 64.7	64.4	65.4	65.8	66.2	66.7	66.7	66.5	66.5
Canada	57.8	^b 65.0	67.4	66.0	67.3	67.2	67.5	67.7	67.2	67.0	66.8
France	57.5	^b 57.2	^b 56.8	56.3	56.2	56.1	56.2	56.3	56.6	56.5	56.3
Germany	56.9	54.7	^b 55.0	^b 56.7	^b 57.5	58.1	58.3	58.4	58.5	58.6	59.2
Italy	49.0	48.1	^b 47.2	^b 49.5	48.7	48.9	48.6	49.0	48.4	48.1	48.1
Japan	64.5	62.6	62.6	61.7	59.5	59.6	59.8	59.5	59.3	59.1	58.7
Korea, Republic of	57.6	59.0	60.0	^b 61.2	62.0	61.9	61.8	61.5	60.8	61.0	61.1
Mexico	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	57.1	58.0	58.0	57.8	57.9	57.7	^b 57.8
Netherlands	(na)	55.4	^b 57.0	^b 63.0	^b 64.2	64.5	65.2	65.4	65.2	^b 63.7	63.3
New Zealand	(na)	(na)	63.9	65.3	67.8	68.3	68.5	68.5	68.2	68.0	68.4
South Africa	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	58.0	56.1	54.3	54.3
Spain	(na)	49.9	50.5	^b 53.3	^b 57.0	58.1	58.6	59.6	59.7	59.8	59.8
Sweden	64.0	66.9	^b 67.4	63.8	^b 64.8	64.9	65.3	65.3	64.8	64.9	65.1
Turkey	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	44.9	44.9	45.5	46.2	47.2	48.4
United Kingdom	(na)	62.8	64.3	62.8	63.1	63.5	63.4	63.5	63.4	63.2	63.2

^b Indicates a break in series from the previous year shown; see [country notes](#) in this report for exact break year and more information.
(na) Not available.

NOTE: See [labor force notes](#) in this report for definitions.

TABLE 9. Labor force participation rates by sex and women's share of the labor force (In percent)

	2007		2008		2009		2010		2011		Women's share of labor force
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	
United States	73.2	59.3	73.0	59.5	72.0	59.2	71.2	58.6	70.5	58.1	46.6
Australia	73.3	59.3	73.6	60.0	73.3	60.1	73.3	59.8	73.1	60.0	45.6
Canada	72.8	62.5	73.0	62.6	72.0	62.5	71.8	62.4	71.7	62.2	47.2
France	62.0	51.0	62.0	51.2	62.1	51.6	62.0	51.6	61.7	51.5	48.0
Germany	65.4	51.6	65.4	51.8	65.3	52.1	65.1	52.4	65.5	53.2	46.2
Italy	60.3	37.9	60.2	38.6	59.4	38.2	59.0	38.2	58.7	38.4	41.6
Japan	72.4	48.1	71.9	48.0	71.2	48.2	70.8	48.2	70.5	47.7	42.1
Korea, Republic of	74.0	50.2	73.5	50.0	73.1	49.2	73.0	49.4	73.1	49.7	41.5
Mexico	77.9	40.6	77.5	40.6	76.7	41.1	76.5	41.0	^b 76.4	^b 41.2	37.5
Netherlands	71.9	58.7	71.9	59.1	71.2	59.4	^b 69.6	^b 58.0	68.9	58.0	46.5
New Zealand	75.6	61.8	75.2	62.1	74.7	62.2	74.4	62.1	74.6	62.5	47.0
South Africa	(na)	(na)	65.8	50.8	63.7	49.0	61.8	47.4	61.2	47.9	45.4
Spain	69.0	48.7	69.3	50.3	68.4	51.4	67.8	52.1	67.2	52.8	45.2
Sweden	69.5	61.3	69.5	61.2	69.0	60.7	69.4	60.6	69.2	61.1	47.4
Turkey	68.6	22.1	69.0	22.8	69.1	24.1	69.6	25.6	70.6	27.0	28.4
United Kingdom	70.7	56.4	70.8	56.7	70.2	56.8	69.9	56.8	69.7	56.9	46.2

^b Indicates a break in series; see [country notes](#) in this report for more information.

(na) Not available.

NOTE: See [labor force notes](#) in this report for definitions.

TABLE 10. Inactivity rates (In percent)

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
United States	39.6	36.2	^b 33.5	^b 32.9	34.0	33.8	34.0	34.0	34.6	35.3	35.9
Australia	37.9	37.9	^b 35.3	35.6	34.6	34.2	33.8	33.3	33.3	33.5	33.5
Canada	42.2	^b 35.0	32.6	34.0	32.7	32.8	32.5	32.3	32.8	33.0	33.2
France	42.5	^b 42.8	^b 43.2	43.7	43.8	43.9	43.8	43.7	43.4	43.5	43.7
Germany	43.1	45.3	^b 45.0	^b 43.3	^b 42.5	41.9	41.7	41.6	41.5	41.4	40.8
Italy	51.0	51.9	^b 52.8	^b 50.5	51.3	51.1	51.4	51.0	51.6	51.9	51.9
Japan	35.5	37.4	37.4	38.3	40.5	40.4	40.2	40.5	40.7	40.9	41.3
Korea, Republic of	42.4	41.0	40.0	^b 38.8	38.0	38.1	38.2	38.5	39.2	39.0	38.9
Mexico	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	42.9	42.0	42.0	42.2	42.1	42.3	^b 42.2
Netherlands	(na)	44.6	^b 43.0	^b 37.0	^b 35.8	35.5	34.8	34.6	34.8	^b 36.3	36.7
New Zealand	(na)	(na)	36.1	34.7	32.2	31.7	31.5	31.5	31.8	32.0	31.6
South Africa	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	42.0	43.9	45.7	45.7
Spain	(na)	50.1	49.5	^b 46.7	^b 43.0	41.9	41.4	40.4	40.3	40.2	40.2
Sweden	36.0	33.1	^b 32.6	36.2	^b 35.2	35.1	34.7	34.7	35.2	35.1	34.9
Turkey	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	55.1	55.1	54.5	53.8	52.8	51.6
United Kingdom	(na)	37.2	35.7	37.2	36.9	36.5	36.6	36.5	36.6	36.8	36.8

^b Indicates a break in series from the previous year shown; see [country notes](#) in this report for exact break year and more information.

(na) Not available.

NOTE: See [labor force notes](#) in this report for definitions.

**TABLE 11. Inactivity rates by sex
(In percent)**

	2007		2008		2009		2010		2011	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
United States	26.8	40.7	27.0	40.5	28.0	40.8	28.8	41.4	29.5	41.9
Australia	26.7	40.7	26.4	40.0	26.7	39.9	26.7	40.2	26.9	40.0
Canada	27.2	37.5	27.0	37.4	28.0	37.5	28.2	37.6	28.3	37.8
France	38.0	49.0	38.0	48.8	37.9	48.4	38.0	48.4	38.3	48.5
Germany	34.6	48.4	34.6	48.2	34.7	47.9	34.9	47.6	34.5	46.8
Italy	39.7	62.1	39.8	61.4	40.6	61.8	41.0	61.8	41.3	61.6
Japan	27.6	51.9	28.1	52.0	28.8	51.8	29.2	51.8	29.5	52.3
Korea, Republic of	26.0	49.8	26.5	50.0	26.9	50.8	27.0	50.6	26.9	50.3
Mexico	22.1	59.4	22.5	59.4	23.3	58.9	23.5	59.0	^b 23.6	^b 58.8
Netherlands	28.1	41.3	28.1	40.9	28.8	40.6	^b 30.4	^b 42.0	31.1	42.0
New Zealand	24.4	38.2	24.8	37.9	25.3	37.8	25.6	37.9	25.4	37.5
South Africa	(na)	(na)	34.2	49.2	36.3	51.0	38.2	52.6	38.8	52.1
Spain	31.0	51.3	30.7	49.7	31.6	48.6	32.2	47.9	32.8	47.2
Sweden	30.5	38.7	30.5	38.8	31.0	39.3	30.6	39.4	30.8	38.9
Turkey	31.4	77.9	31.0	77.2	30.9	75.9	30.4	74.4	29.4	73.0
United Kingdom	29.3	43.6	29.2	43.3	29.8	43.2	30.1	43.2	30.3	43.1

^b Indicates a break in series; see [country notes](#) in this report for more information.

(na) Not available.

NOTE: See [labor force notes](#) in this report for definitions.

**TABLE 12. Working-age population
(In thousands)**

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
United States	137,085	^b 167,745	^b 189,164	^b 212,577	^b 226,082	228,815	231,867	233,788	235,801	237,830	239,618
Australia	8,819	10,778	^b 13,051	14,902	16,099	16,371	16,701	17,015	17,401	17,854	18,121
Canada	14,528	^b 18,032	20,852	23,687	25,345	25,711	26,094	26,486	26,883	27,250	27,578
France	36,151	39,750	43,344	46,113	48,124	48,502	48,827	49,119	49,390	49,653	49,918
Germany	46,094	49,848	53,438	^b 69,365	^b 70,752	70,892	70,968	71,021	70,943	70,858	70,991
Italy	40,279	43,860	48,016	^b 48,029	49,606	49,913	50,301	50,711	51,064	51,311	51,579
Japan	78,616	89,078	100,656	108,120	109,828	109,959	110,189	110,270	110,271	110,261	110,882
Korea, Republic of	17,468	24,463	30,887	^b 36,186	38,300	38,762	39,170	39,598	40,092	40,590	41,052
Mexico	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	73,292	74,282	75,538	76,761	78,314	79,260	^b 83,409
Netherlands	(na)	10,588	^b 11,865	^b 12,703	^b 13,075	13,128	13,190	13,271	13,368	13,459	13,533
New Zealand	(na)	(na)	2,612	2,938	3,199	3,252	3,297	3,335	3,379	3,427	3,465
South Africa	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	30,967	31,494	32,007	32,494
Spain	(na)	26,369	30,160	^b 33,430	^b 36,326	36,920	37,575	38,112	38,325	38,375	38,398
Sweden	6,106	6,441	6,823	7,043	7,243	7,312	7,387	7,467	7,547	7,620	7,683
Turkey	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	(na)	49,174	49,994	50,772	51,686	52,541	53,593
United Kingdom	(na)	42,570	44,706	46,085	47,792	48,197	48,611	48,998	49,363	49,741	50,112

^b Indicates a break in series from the previous year shown; see [country notes](#) in this report for exact break year and more information.

(na) Not available.

NOTE: See [working-age population notes](#) in this report for definitions.

APPENDIX A. DEFINITIONS AND BACKGROUND

UNEMPLOYMENT

In the United States, unemployment includes all persons who, during the reference week:

1. Had no employment,
2. Were available for work, except for temporary illness, and
3. Had actively sought work during the 4-week period ending with the reference week.

Active job search methods are those that have the potential to result in a job offer without further action on the part of the jobseeker. For example, sending a resume to an employer would be considered active, whereas simply reading newspaper advertisements would not.

Persons who were waiting to start a new job must have fulfilled these criteria to be considered unemployed. However, persons who were waiting to be recalled to a job from which they had been laid off need not have been looking for work.

The unemployment rate represents the percentage of persons in the [labor force](#) who are unemployed.

HOW IS UNEMPLOYMENT MEASURED?

Because unemployment insurance records, which many people think are the source of total unemployment data, relate only to persons who have applied for such benefits, and since it is impractical to actually count every unemployed person each month, the United States Government conducts a monthly sample survey to measure the extent of unemployment in the country.

Use of a labor force survey to count the unemployed, a longstanding practice in the United States, is also common in most foreign industrialized countries. Countries in the European Union are now required to use a labor force survey to count the unemployed, although some had previously depended on administrative sources, such as employment office registrations or unemployment insurance records, to measure unemployment. Countries also may continue to produce unemployment statistics from administrative sources. Administrative statistics from employment office registrations or unemployment insurance records relate only to persons who have registered or applied for benefits and are not an accurate measure of total unemployment because only a subset of workers is covered. Labor force surveys, on the other hand, provide a more complete measure of unemployment because the data are based on a representative sample of the population. However, concepts and definitions of unemployment in labor force surveys may differ from country to country, and thus BLS makes adjustments to provide foreign-country data that are more comparable with U.S. concepts and definitions.

Annual averages of unemployment figures and other labor force statistics adjusted to U.S. concepts are presented in this report. BLS also publishes a monthly report with seasonally adjusted monthly and quarterly unemployment rates and employment indexes, at www.bls.gov/ilc/intl/unemployment_rates_monthly.htm.

BOX 1 Youth unemployment

In "A portrait of the youth labor market in 13 countries, 1980-2007," (*Monthly Labor Review*, July 2009, pp. 3-21, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2009/07/art1full.pdf), Gary Martin analyzes the youth unemployment picture in a selected group of industrialized countries over the 1980–2007 period. Data are presented for the United States, Canada, Japan, Korea and 8 European countries.

The article begins with historical background information, providing a context for which the current youth labor market situation can be understood. Trends for a wide variety of labor market indicators are then discussed, including unemployment rates by age, labor force participation rates, and the employment population ratio among students ages 15 to 24.

ALTERNATIVE MEASURES OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Although there is only one official unemployment rate in the United States, several other rates with alternative definitions of unemployment are also published by BLS. These rates are known as U1 through U6 and have the following definitions:

- U-1: Persons unemployed 15 weeks or longer, as a percent of the civilian labor force
- U-2: Job losers and persons who completed temporary jobs, as a percent of the civilian labor force
- U-3: Total unemployed, as a percent of the civilian labor force (official unemployment rate)
- U-4: Total unemployed plus discouraged workers, as a percent of the civilian labor force plus discouraged workers
- U-5: Total unemployed, plus discouraged workers, plus all other marginally attached workers, as a percent of the civilian labor force plus all marginally attached workers
- U-6: Total unemployed, plus all marginally attached workers, plus total employed part time for economic reasons, as a percent of the civilian labor force plus all marginally attached workers

(A brief discussion of discouraged and marginally attached workers is provided in the [labor force](#) section.)

U-3, the official unemployment rate, is the most widely reported by the media and, most importantly, it is the basis of the international comparisons presented in this report.

Although BLS does not prepare regular international comparisons of alternative measures of unemployment as described in this section, several articles have been published on the topic, including:

- Constance Sorrentino, "International unemployment indicators, 1983-1993," *Monthly Labor Review*, August 1995, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/1995/08/art4full.pdf;
- Constance Sorrentino, "International comparisons of unemployment indicators," *Monthly Labor Review*, March 1993, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/1993/03/art1full.pdf;
- Gary Martin, "Employment and unemployment in Mexico in the 1990s," *Monthly Labor Review*, November 2000, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2000/11/art1full.pdf; and
- Toshihiko Yamagami, "Utilization of labor resources in Japan and the United States," *Monthly Labor Review*, April 2002, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2002/04/art3full.pdf.

EMPLOYMENT

According to U.S. definitions, employment includes all persons who, during the reference week:

1. Worked at least 1 hour as paid employees, worked in their own business, profession, or on their own farm, or worked at least 15 hours as unpaid workers in a family-operated enterprise, and
2. All those who did not work but had jobs or businesses from which they were temporarily absent due to vacation, illness, bad weather, childcare problems, maternity or paternity leave, labor-management dispute, job training, or other family or personal reasons, regardless of whether they were paid for the time off or were seeking other jobs.

Each employed person is counted only once, even if he or she holds more than one job. For purposes of industry classification, multiple jobholders are counted in the job at which they worked the greatest number of hours during the reference week.

Persons whose only activity consisted of work around their own house (painting, repairing, or own home housework) or volunteer work for religious, charitable, and other organizations are excluded.

The employment-population ratio represents the proportion of the [working-age population](#) that is employed.

CAN I MEASURE JOB GROWTH WITH YOUR EMPLOYMENT DATA?

No, the BLS comparative employment data in this report cover employment rather than jobs. Employment and jobs are different concepts. In a tally of employment (based on a labor force survey), persons who hold more than one job are counted only once. In a tally of jobs (based on an establishment survey), persons who work in more than one establishment are counted each time their names appear on payrolls. There are additional differences between the U.S. labor force (household) and establishment (payroll) surveys, as described in “Employment from the BLS household and payroll surveys: summary of recent trends”, at

www.bls.gov/web/ces_cps_trends.pdf.

Note that across countries, labor force surveys provide greater comparability of labor force statistics than do establishment surveys. However, using employment data from a labor force survey to measure change over time would represent employment growth rather than job growth.

EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR

Employment levels and distributions are shown for four broad economic sectors: agriculture, industry, manufacturing (a sub-sector of industry), and services.

Sectoral employment data are based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) for the United States for 2000 onward and Canada for 1976 onward. Effects of the change in classification system are discussed in the [country notes](#). For all other countries covered, sectoral employment data are based on the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC).

BOX 2 Family and work

In "Families and Work in Transition in 12 Countries, 1980-2001," (*Monthly Labor Review*, September 2003, pp. 3-31, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2003/09/art1full.pdf), Gary Martin and Vladimir Kats discuss the work-family relationship with a particular focus on the role of women. Data are presented for 12 countries: the United States, Canada, Japan, and 9 European countries.

The article begins with historical background information, setting the stage for a more current description of major demographic and sociological changes directly influencing family composition: fertility rates, age composition of the population, marriage and divorce rates, and births out of wedlock. Trends in household composition are discussed, followed by a consideration of family employment patterns, mainly through an analysis of employment-population ratios, first for women and then, more specifically, for mothers.

Tables found in the article have been updated by BLS on a yearly basis and are published by the Census Bureau in the *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, at www.census.gov/compendia/statab (go to International Statistics > Population, Households).

LABOR FORCE

The labor force is comprised of persons who are in [employment](#) and [unemployment](#). All members of the [working-age population](#) are eligible for inclusion in the labor force, and those 16 and over (in the United States; age limits vary by country) who have a job or are actively looking for one are so classified. All others—those who have no job and are not looking for one—are counted as "not in the labor force."

The labor force participation rate represents the proportion of the [working-age population](#) that is in the labor force. Conversely, the inactivity rate represents the proportion of the [working-age population](#) that is *not* in the labor force.

WHO IS NOT IN THE LABOR FORCE?

All persons in the civilian non-institutional working-age population who are neither employed nor unemployed are considered not in the labor force. Many who do not participate in the labor force are going to school or are retired. Family responsibilities keep others out of the labor force. Still others have a physical or mental disability which prevents them from participating in labor force activities.

In the United States, persons not in the labor force who want and are available for a job and

who have looked for work sometime in the past 12 months (or since the end of their last job if they held one within the past 12 months), but who are not currently looking, are designated as "marginally attached to the labor force." The marginally attached are divided into those not currently looking because they believe their search would be futile—so-called "discouraged workers"—and those not currently looking for other reasons such as family responsibilities, ill health, or lack of transportation.

For discouraged workers, the reasons for not currently looking for work are that the individual believes that:

- No work is available in his or her line of work or area;
- He or she could not find any work;
- He or she lacks necessary schooling, training, skills, or experience;
- Employers would think he or she is too young or too old; or
- He or she would encounter hiring discrimination.

This report does not provide international comparisons for discouraged workers but several relevant articles are cited in the [unemployment](#) section.

WORKING-AGE POPULATION

The labor market statistics provided in this report describe the working-age population. In the United States, the working-age population is more specifically known as the civilian non-institutional working-age population:

- “Civilian” refers to persons who are not on active duty in the military;
- “Non-institutional” refers to persons who are not in institutions, such as prison inmates or those in a mental institution; and
- “Working-age” refers to persons 16 years of age and older.

Data also refer to the civilian non-institutional working-age population for the foreign-country data except for Japan and Germany, where the institutional population is included. The lower age limit is 16 for the United States; the lower age limits for the foreign countries are shown in Figure 1 on this page.

Data are, in fact, adjusted to the age at which compulsory schooling ends for each country except for Canada and the Netherlands. For Canada, adjusted data cover persons ages 16 and over for 1976 onward, whereas the age at which compulsory schooling ends remains at 15. For the Netherlands, adjusted data cover persons ages 15 and over for 1975 onward, although the age at which compulsory schooling ends is now 16.

For some countries, the data reported by the national statistical agency have an upper age limit. For all countries except South Africa, BLS adjusts for this divergence from the U.S. concept; therefore, the adjusted series for most countries have no upper age limit. Working-age population for South Africa has an upper age limit of 64.

The working-age population data presented in this section are used to calculate employment-population ratios ([Table 5](#) and [Table 6](#)), labor force participation rates ([Table 8](#) and [Table 9](#)), and inactivity rates ([Table 10](#) and [Table 11](#)).

FIGURE 1 LOWER AGE LIMITS

Country	Unadjusted	Adjusted
United States	16	16
Australia	15	15
Canada		
1970-75	15	15
1976-present	15	16
France	15	16
Germany		
1970-74	14	15
1975-83	14/15	15
1984-present	15	15
Italy		
1970-92	14	14
1993-present	15	15
Japan	15	15
Republic of Korea	15	15
Mexico	14	14
Netherlands		
1973-74	13	14
1975-87	14	15
1988-present	15	15
New Zealand	15	15
South Africa	15	15
Spain	16	16
Sweden		
1970-2004	16	16
2005-present	15	16
Turkey	15	15
United Kingdom		
1970-72	15	15
1973-present	16	16

APPENDIX B. COUNTRY NOTES

Various methodological changes, such as changes in national data sources and BLS adjustment methods, have created breaks in the historical continuity of series for most countries. In the tables, a superscript letter b appears next to the first year shown that contains data affected by the change. Some breaks have little or no effect on data and are therefore relatively inconsequential, while others affect comparability over time. This section provides background for each country's breaks in series and measures the impact when overlapping data are available, as well as a description of the data sources and adjustments (except for age limits, which are indicated in the [working-age population](#) section).

UNITED STATES

Unadjusted and adjusted unemployment rates are from a monthly labor force survey called the Current Population Survey (CPS).

Adjustments. None.

Breaks. While current survey concepts and methods are very similar to those introduced at the inception of the CPS in 1940, various changes have been made over the years to improve the accuracy and usefulness of the data. These methodological changes and others, such as the introduction of new population controls from the decennial censuses, have caused many breaks in series, most of which had only a small impact on the comparability of data; however, the 1994 and 1990 breaks in series reflect major changes in methodology and are the first to be discussed below.

The 1994 break reflects a major redesign of the labor force survey questionnaire and its methodology. The redesign raised the unemployment rate by 0.1 percentage point in 1994. The 1990 break reflects the introduction of the 1990 census-based population controls, which raised the unemployment rate by 0.1

percentage point in 1990; female employment-population ratios and labor force participation rates are not affected by this break.

The 2004, 2003, 2000, 1999, 1998, 1997, 1986, and 1972 breaks also reflect revised population controls, although these breaks do not affect all series and their impacts are negligible. Additionally, there is a small break for employment and labor force levels in 1978, which reflects the introduction of an expansion in the sample and revisions in the estimation procedures. For further information on the breaks in series and their impacts, see "Historical comparability" in the "Household data" section of the BLS publication, *Employment and Earnings*, at www.bls.gov/cps/eetech_methods.pdf.

Sectoral employment is based on NAICS for 2000 onward and the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system for prior years. The change in classification system, which created a break in the sectoral employment series in 2000, reduced employment for 2000-02 in all sectors except services. The share of employment in agriculture decreased from 2.6 to 1.8 percent; in industry, from 22.2 to 22.0 percent; and in manufacturing (a subsector of industry), from 14.8 to 14.4 percent. Employment in services increased from 75.2 to 76.2 percent. For all sectors except agriculture, there is an additional break in 1983, which reflects revisions to the industry classification system.

AUSTRALIA

Unadjusted and adjusted unemployment rates are from a labor force survey, which has been monthly since 1978 and was quarterly for prior years.

Adjustments. None. The unemployment rate is virtually unchanged when it is adjusted to U.S. concepts.

Breaks. For all series, there is a break in 1986. In April 2001, the Australian labor force survey

questionnaire was redesigned to adhere more closely to ILO guidelines; data were revised for April 1986 onward, creating a break in 1986. The redesign reduced the unemployment rate by 0.2 percentage point in 1986.

For the unemployment series, there is a break in 2001, which reflects the reclassification of persons waiting to start a new job from not in the labor force to unemployed. The reclassification raised the adjusted unemployment rate by 0.1 percentage point in 2001.

CANADA

Unadjusted unemployment rates are from a monthly labor force survey.

Adjustments. The adjusted series are based on labor force survey statistics. For 1976 onward, BLS adjusts unemployment to:

- Include full-time students looking for full-time work.
- Exclude passive jobseekers.
- Exclude persons unavailable for work due to personal or family responsibilities or vacation.
- Exclude persons waiting to start a new job who did not seek work in the past four weeks (for 1994 onward only since these persons are similarly counted among the unemployed in the United States for prior years).

Statistics Canada provides BLS with the adjusted data for 1976 onward. The adjustments have had a growing impact over time, reducing the annual unemployment rate by 0.7-1.0 percentage point in the 2000s, 0.4-0.9 percentage point in the 1990s, and 0.2-0.4 percentage point in the 1980s. For further information on the adjustments and their impacts, see Constance Sorrentino, "International unemployment rates: how comparable are they?" *Monthly Labor Review*, June 2000, pp. 3-20, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2000/06/art1full.pdf.

Breaks. For all series, there is a break in 1976, which reflects the incorporation of the 2001

Population Census results for 1976 onward. For the adjusted series, the 1976 break also reflects the implementation of the adjustments described above.

For the adjusted unemployment series, there is an additional break in 1994, which reflects a change in the definition of unemployment. Persons waiting to start a new job who did not actively seek work in the past four weeks are included among the unemployed prior to 1994; this group is excluded for 1994 onward.

Sectoral employment is shown on the NAICS basis for 1976 onward. Prior to 1976, data are shown on the Canadian SIC basis. The change in classification system, which created a break in the sectoral employment series in 1976, reduced the share of employment in manufacturing from 15.7 to 15.0 percent in 1998.

FRANCE

Unadjusted unemployment rates are based on a labor force survey, which has been continuous (i.e., covering all weeks of the year) since 2003 and was annual or semi-annual for prior years.

Adjustments. The adjusted series are based on labor force survey statistics. BLS adjusts employment to:

- Exclude unpaid family workers who worked less than 15 hours per week.
- Exclude military.

Breaks. For all series except working-age population, there is a break in 1975, which reflects a change in BLS estimation methods and a revised definition of unemployment due to the introduction of a criterion on work availability. For all adjusted series except unemployment and working-age population, there is an additional break in 1982 due to a change in sources. For the sectoral employment series, there is also a break in 2008, which reflects revisions to the industry classification system.

GERMANY

Unadjusted unemployment rates are based on registered unemployment and wage and salary workers from an establishment survey.

Adjustments. The adjusted series are based on labor force survey statistics. BLS adjusts employment to:

- Exclude unpaid family workers who worked less than 15 hours per week prior to 1991.
- Exclude career military.

Breaks. For all series there is a break in 1991, which reflects the inclusion of former East Germany. Data for 1991 onward are for Germany (unified); prior to 1991, data are for West Germany. The unification raised the adjusted unemployment rate from 4.3 to 5.6 percent in 1991.

For the unadjusted unemployment series, there is a break in 2005, which reflects a change in national legislation that broadened coverage of the registered unemployed.

For the adjusted series, there are breaks in 2005, 1999, and 1984; working-age population is not affected by the breaks in 1999 and 1984. The 2005 break reflects a change in the periodicity of the German labor force survey data collection. For 2005 onward, data are collected continuously; prior to 2005, data were collected in April of each year. 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. The 1984 break reflects a change in source: data are from the German Federal Statistical Office prior to 1984 and OECD for 1984 onward. For the sectoral employment series, there is an additional break in 2009, which reflects revisions to the industry classification system.

ITALY

Unadjusted unemployment rates are from a labor force survey, which has been continuous since 2004 and was quarterly for prior years.

Adjustments. The adjusted series are based on labor force survey statistics. BLS adjusts employment to:

- Exclude unpaid family workers who worked less than 15 hours per week.
- Exclude career military.

Breaks. For all series, there are breaks in 1993, 1991, and 1986; working-age population is not affected by the 1986 break. Italy's labor force survey became continuous in 2004 and Italy's National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) revised its definitions to more closely follow ILO and EUROSTAT recommendations; data were revised back to 1993, causing a break in that year. The revisions raised the unemployment rate by approximately 0.5 percentage point in 1993. The 1991 break reflects a revision in the method of weighting sample data, which raised the adjusted unemployment rate from 6.6 to 6.9 percent in 1991. The 1986 break reflects a revision in the survey questionnaire, resulting in a significant increase in the number of people reported as seeking work in the past 30 days. This revision raised the adjusted Italian unemployment rate from 6.3 to 7.5 percent in 1986. For the sectoral employment series, there is an additional break in 2008, which reflects revisions to the industry classification system.

JAPAN

Unadjusted unemployment rates are from a monthly labor force survey. All data for 2011 are based on referential estimates from the Statistics Bureau of Japan that include areas affected by the March 11, 2011 earthquake.

Adjustments. The adjusted series are based on labor force survey statistics. BLS adjusts employment to:

- Exclude unpaid family workers who worked less than 15 hours per week.
- Exclude military.

BLS also adjusts unemployment for 1985 onward to:

- Exclude inactive jobseekers awaiting the results of previous job applications.
- Include unemployed persons who have sought a job in the previous two to four weeks.
- Include unemployed persons waiting to start a new job.

Breaks. For the adjusted unemployment and labor force series, there is a break in 1985, which reflects a change in definitions due to the implementation of the adjustments to unemployment described above.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Unadjusted unemployment rates are from a labor force survey, which has been monthly since 1982 and was quarterly for prior years.

Adjustments. None.

Breaks. For all series, there is a break in 1991, which reflects updated population controls. For the unemployment series, there is an additional break in 2000, which reflects a change in the job search criterion from one week to four weeks.

MEXICO

Unadjusted unemployment rates are from a continuous labor force survey.

Adjustments. The adjusted series are based on labor force survey statistics. BLS adjusts employment to:

- Exclude unpaid family workers who worked less than 15 hours per week.
- Exclude all non-family unpaid workers.
- Exclude military.

Breaks. For all series, there is a break in 2011, which reflects updated population controls.

NETHERLANDS

Unadjusted unemployment rates are based on a combination of registered unemployment, wage and salary workers from an establishment survey, and a labor force survey, which has been continuous since 1986 and was biennial for 1973-85.

Adjustments. The adjusted series are based on labor force survey statistics. BLS adjusts employment to:

- Exclude unpaid family workers who worked less than 15 hours per week.
- Exclude military.

Breaks. For the unadjusted series, there is a break in 1996, which reflects updated population controls.

For the adjusted series, there are breaks in 2003, 2000, 1992, 1987, and 1983; working-age population is not affected by the 1992 break. The 2003 break reflects updated population controls. The 2000, 1987, and 1983 breaks reflect changes in sources. Prior to 1983, data are from Statistics Netherlands; for 1984-86, EUROSTAT; for 1987-2000, OECD; and for 2000 onward, EUROSTAT. The 1992 break reflects a change in labor force definitions. For adjusted employment, there is an additional break in 2010, which reflects a new survey method. For the sectoral employment

series, there is an additional break in 2008, which reflects revisions to the industry classification system.

NEW ZEALAND

Unadjusted unemployment rates are from a quarterly labor force survey.

Adjustments. None.

Breaks. For the sectoral employment series, there are breaks in 2003 and 1997, which reflect revisions to the industry classification system.

SOUTH AFRICA

Unadjusted unemployment rates are from a quarterly labor force survey.

Adjustments. The adjusted series are based on labor force survey statistics. BLS adjusts employment to:

- Exclude unpaid family workers who worked less than 15 hours per week.

Breaks. None.

SPAIN

Unadjusted unemployment rates are from a labor force survey, which has been continuous since 1999, quarterly from 1975-1998, and was semi-annual for prior years.

Adjustments. The adjusted series are based on labor force survey statistics. BLS adjusts employment to:

- Exclude unpaid family workers who worked less than 15 hours per week.
- Exclude military.

BLS estimates of sectoral employment are not available at this time.

Breaks. For all series, there is a break in 2005, which reflects the introduction of a new questionnaire. For the unemployment and

working-age population series, there is a break in 1996, which reflects updated population controls. For the unemployment series, there is an additional break in 2002, which reflects the introduction of a new definition of unemployment.

SWEDEN

Unadjusted unemployment rates are based on a labor force survey, which has been continuous since 1993 and was monthly for prior years.

Adjustments. The adjusted series are based on labor force survey statistics. BLS adjusts employment to exclude the career military. In addition, BLS adjusts unemployment for 1987-2004 to include full-time students who are both seeking work and available for work; this group was classified as not in the labor force by Statistics Sweden for 1987-2004. Lastly, BLS adjusts all series so that there is no upper age limit.

Breaks. For all series except working-age population, there are breaks in 2005 and 1987. The 2005 break reflects the introduction of a new questionnaire. For the unadjusted series, the 2005 break also reflects two additional changes: (1) the unemployment definition was revised to include full-time students who are both seeking work and available for work and (2) population coverage changed from persons ages 16-64 to ages 15-74. The latter change had a minimal impact while the inclusion of students raised the not seasonally adjusted monthly unemployment rate by approximately 2 percentage points for April-June 2005.

There are several reasons for the 1987 break. First, a new questionnaire was introduced in that year. Questions regarding availability for work were added and the period of active work-seeking was reduced from 60 days to 4 weeks. These changes reduced the unemployment rate by 0.4 percentage point in 1987. Second, Statistics Sweden implemented new estimation procedures and a new reference week system in 1993. These revisions were implemented for 1987 onward, which raised the unemployment

rate by 0.2-0.5 percentage point for 1987-93. Third, for the adjusted series, the break additionally reflects the classification of students seeking work as unemployed rather than not in the labor force for 1987-2004. This adjustment raised the unemployment rate by 0.1 percentage point in 1987 and by 1.0 to 2.2 percentage points for 1993-2004.

For the unadjusted series, there is an additional break in 1986, which reflects a change in population coverage from 16-74 years to 16-64 years.

TURKEY

Unadjusted unemployment rates are from a monthly labor force survey.

Adjustments. The adjusted series are based on labor force survey statistics. BLS adjusts employment to:

- Exclude unpaid family workers who worked less than 17 hours per week.

Breaks. None.

UNITED KINGDOM

Unadjusted unemployment rates are based on estimates from the United Kingdom's Office for National Statistics (ONS) as well as a labor force survey, which has been continuous since 1992, annual for 1984-91, and biennial for 1979-83.

Adjustments. The adjusted series for 1992 onward are based on labor force survey statistics. The 1971-91 series are based on administrative and labor force survey data and were created by ONS to be consistent with the series for 1992 onward. For the detailed methodology underlying the estimates, see Paul Doyle, "Consistent historical time series of labour market data," at www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/article.asp?id=418. BLS adjusts employment and labor force for all years to exclude the career military.

Breaks. For the sectoral employment series, there are breaks in 1997 and 1984. The 1997 break reflects revisions to the industry classification system. The 1984 break reflects a change in source: data are from OECD prior to 1984 and ONS for 1984 onward.

APPENDIX C. PUBLICATIONS ON INTERNATIONAL LABOR FORCE STATISTICS

Charting International Labor Comparisons, 2011 Edition, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, at www.bls.gov/ilc/chartbook.htm.

"A portrait of the youth labor market in 13 countries, 1980-2007," by Gary Martin, *Monthly Labor Review*, July 2009, pp. 3-21, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2009/07/art1full.pdf.

"International comparisons of hours worked: an assessment of the statistics," by Susan Fleck, *Monthly Labor Review*, May 2009, pp. 3-31, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2009/05/art1full.pdf.

"Comparative civilian labor force statistics, 10 countries: a visual essay," by Jennifer Raynor, *Monthly Labor Review*, December 2007, pp. 32-37, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2007/12/art4full.pdf.

"A visual essay: international labor market comparisons," by Marie-Claire Guillard, *Monthly Labor Review*, April 2006, pp. 33-40, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2006/04/ressum.pdf.

"Families and work in transition in 12 countries, 1980-2001," by Gary Martin and Vladimir Kats, *Monthly Labor Review*, September 2003, pp. 3-31, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2003/09/art1full.pdf.

"Providing comparable international labor statistics," by Patricia Capdevielle and Mark K. Sherwood, *Monthly Labor Review*, June 2002, pp. 3-14, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2002/06/art1full.pdf.

"U.S. labor market performance in international perspective," by Constance Sorrentino and Joyanna Moy, *Monthly Labor Review*, June 2002, pp. 15-35, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2002/06/art2full.pdf.

"Utilization of labor resources in Japan and the United States," by Toshihiko Yamagami, *Monthly Labor Review*, April 2002, pp. 25-43, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2002/04/art3full.pdf.

"Employment and unemployment in Mexico in the 1990s," by Gary Martin, *Monthly Labor Review*, November 2000, pp. 3-18, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2000/11/art1full.pdf.

"The role of entrepreneurship in U.S. and European job growth," by Robert W. Bednarzik, *Monthly Labor Review*, July 2000, pp. 3-16, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2000/07/art1full.pdf.

"International Unemployment Rates: How Comparable are They?" by Constance Sorrentino, *Monthly Labor Review*, June 2000, pp. 3-20, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2000/06/art1full.pdf.

"The role of self-employment in U.S. and Canadian job growth," by Marilyn E. Manser and Garnett Picot, *Monthly Labor Review*, April 1999, pp. 10-25, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/1999/04/art2full.pdf.

"Low unemployment in the Czech Republic: 'miracle' or 'mirage'?" by Robert J. Gitter and Markus Scheuer, *Monthly Labor Review*, August 1998, pp. 31-37, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/1998/08/art3full.pdf.

"Part-time and temporary employment in Japan," by Susan Houseman and Machiko Osawa, *Monthly Labor Review*, October 1995, pp. 10-18, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/1995/10/art2full.pdf.

"International unemployment indicators, 1983-1993," by Constance Sorrentino, *Monthly Labor Review*, August 1995, pp. 31-50, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/1995/08/art4full.pdf.

"Employment and unemployment in Mexico's labor force," by Susan Fleck and Constance Sorrentino, *Monthly Labor Review*, November 1994, pp. 3-31, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/1994/11/art1full.pdf.

"Employment change and sectoral distribution in 10 countries, 1970-90," by Todd Godbout, *Monthly Labor Review*, October 1993, pp. 3-20, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/1993/10/art1full.pdf.

"Japan's low unemployment: a BLS update and revision," by Sara Elder and Constance Sorrentino, *Monthly Labor Review*, October 1993, pp. 56-63, at www.bls.gov/fls/mpres93.pdf.

"International comparisons of unemployment indicators," by Constance Sorrentino, *Monthly Labor Review*, March 1993, pp. 3-24, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/1993/03/art1full.pdf.

ABOUT US

In an increasingly global economy, international labor statistics can shed light on the relative progress, competitiveness, and performance of the world's economies. However, direct comparisons of statistics across countries can be misleading, because concepts and definitions often differ from one country to the next.

To foster comparisons of international labor statistics, BLS adjusts all data to a common conceptual framework. We pioneered in the field of comparative international labor statistics and have been producing comparisons for over 40 years. Our longstanding commitment to comparability, accuracy, timeliness, and impartiality has bolstered our status as a premier source of international labor statistics.

Our data are available on the International Labor Comparisons (ILC) section of the BLS website at www.bls.gov/ilc.

DATA PRODUCED BY ILC

ILC is the only division in BLS that provides international comparisons. Topics include:

- Unemployment, employment, labor force, and related indicators
- Hourly compensation costs in manufacturing
- Productivity and unit labor costs in manufacturing
- GDP per capita and per employed
- Consumer price indexes

CONTACTS

General information and data inquiries

ILChelp@bls.gov or (202) 691-5654

Subscribe to ILC's e-newsletter *Just Out!*

E-mail ILCpr@bls.gov with "subscribe" in the subject line. This e-newsletter will provide you with links to the latest ILC releases, which usually occur once or twice per month.