

大同大學 九十一 學年度研究所招生入學考試試題

考試科目：經濟學 所別：事業經營研究所 第 2/2 頁

註：本次考試不可以參考書籍及筆記；不可以使用字典；可以使用計算器

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6. Short case. (25%)

According to the short case excerpted from New York Times on February 9, 2000.

- (1) Please define "productivity growth."
- (2) Discuss the role of technology.
- (3) Identify the relationship among productivity, wages and prices.

U.S. Productivity Rose at 5% Rate in 2nd Half of '99

By Louis Uchitelle

The efficiency of American workers surged at an annual rate of 5 percent in the last six months of 1999, the Labor Department reported yesterday. With these final numbers, the 1990's entered the books as the decade that produced the greatest improvement in productivity since the golden 1960's. (A: 5/1)

Productivity, an arcane statistic, nevertheless explains—more than any other single statistic—how the economy can grow as strongly as it has the last four years without generating more inflation. Workers, in effect, are producing much more without having to be paid more, and that takes pressure off corporate America to raise prices.

Almost all of the improvement came in the last four years, when computers became much faster and the Internet expanded rapidly, suggesting to some economists that the new technologies played a role in lifting labor productivity. Others insist that technology has made only a small contribution.

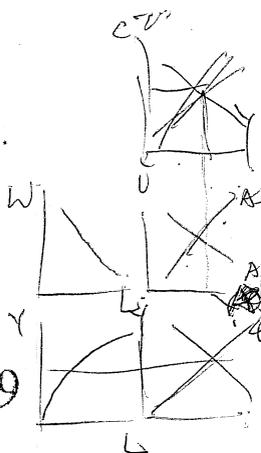
Productivity rises when a worker produces more goods or services in an hour on the job than he did in the prior year. A phone operator who handled 100 toll calls in 1998, for example, handled 103 in 1999. This extra revenue can be used to raise profits or the wage paid to the operator, or both prof-

its and wages. In any case, customer tolls do not have to rise to cover the extra outlay.

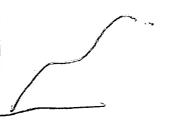
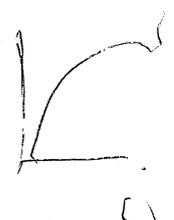
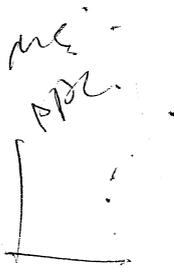
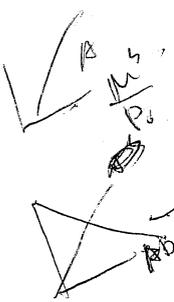
Starting in the early 1970's, the productivity growth rate fell sharply, averaging no more than 1.5 percent a year until 1995, a sea change from the 1960's when the average was a spectacular 2.9 percent a year. Productivity no longer made possible the improvement in wages, and living standards, that had benefited so many Americans in the 1960's. And to compensate, millions of people worked longer hours or at more than one job to keep from falling behind.

But starting in late 1995, productivity surged. The growth rate jumped to 2.6 percent annually, on average, pulling up the performance for the entire decade to 2 percent a year.

The latest numbers reinforced this improvement. Productivity in the fourth quarter rose at an unusually strong annual rate of 5 percent, the Labor Department said. An earlier third-quarter estimate was revised to 5 percent from 4.9 percent, and thanks to the last six months, the growth rate for all four quarters of the last year of the century averaged 2.9 percent, the highest for any year in the 1990's except for 1992, when there was a momentary jump.



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