

图书基本信息

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内容概要

上海外国语大学是全国大学英语专业四、八级考试命题中心,同时又是阅卷中心,在推动全国高校英语专业教学改革、研究和专业四、八级考试改革方面做出了巨大贡献。

本套试卷借助于具有多年教学经验的一线教师对英语专业四级考试改革方向的把握,力求做到紧跟命题改革方向,答案精确,解析深入,对考生备考四级具有较高的指导性。

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章节摘录

So firmly entrenched in the political economy has the minimum wage become that its latest increase to 5.35 (\$10.08) an hour, caused little stir. Yet the introduction of a national pay floor in 1999 was one of New Labours most radical economic policies. Although minimum wage rates had previously covered a few industries, this was the first time that a general rate had been set. During the 1997 election campaign the Conservatives said that the policy would destroy jobs. Some economists calculated that hundreds of thousands of people might be put out of work. These dire warnings proved way off the mark after the national minimum wage came into force seven years ago. The feared job losses did not materialise. However, that benign acquisition had much to do with the cautious approach the government, advised by the Low Pay Commission, at first adopted. In April 1999 the main rate — for workers aged 22 or over — was set quite low, at 3.60 an hour. Eighteen months later, the rate edged up to 3.70. At this level it was worth only 36% of average hourly earnings for all employees. Furthermore, workers aged 18 to 21 had a separate, lower rate, which began at 3 in 1999 and was raised to 3.20 in October 2000. The modest starting point for the minimum wage meant that it affected relatively few workers. The commission initially thought that it would raise the pay of around 2m workers but in practice only about a million gained. This limited any possible loss of jobs. After the initial period of caution, however, the government got bolder. This months increase pushed the main rate up by 6%, comfortably ahead of average earnings which went up by 4.4% in the past year. Since 1999 the minimum wage has risen by 49%, outstripping average earnings which increased by 32% in the past seven years. As a result, it is now worth 41% of average hourly earnings. This trajectory contrasts sharply with what has happened in America. The federal minimum wage has stayed at \$5.15 since September 1997. At this level, it is worth 27% of average hourly wages for all employees other than those working in agriculture or for the federal government — far stingier than Britains rate. The commission accepts that the period when the minimum wage rose faster than average earnings is over. The worry, however, is that it has already risen to a level that will hurt employment. The Confederation of British Industry said on September 24th that businesses in several parts of the economy, such as retailing, were struggling to cope with the minimum wage. A few days later the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) added that the latest increase would have "serious implications" for firms. David Kern, who advises the BCC, says, "There is now a distinct risk that the minimum wage will have an adverse effect on jobs." Whether employment will necessarily take a big knock is uncertain. Mainstream economic theory suggests that a minimum wage set too high will cost jobs. However, the evidence from other countries has been quite mixed. Some studies find no impact on employment whereas others find the jobs do indeed disappear, especially among young people. In a recent appraisal of employment policies in the worlds developed economies, the OECD said that "a moderate minimum wage generally is not a problem". Britains experience in the first few years of the policy bears out that judgment. But more recent increases have pushed the rate up to a level where it may inflict damage.

16. It can be inferred from Paragraph 1 that [A] people do not care about the minimum wage any more. [B] in the past, there were different minimum wage rates. [C] new Labor will introduce new economic policies. [D] a national pay floor is challenged by a few industries.

17. The phrase "way off the mark" in Paragraph 2 probably means [A] inaccurate. [B] precise. [C] ludicrous. [D] annoying.

18. As to whether a higher minimum wage will cause job losses, the author thinks its something of [A] capriciousness. [B] ambivalence. [C] incertitude. [D] urgency.

19. The phrase "bears out" in the last paragraph can be interpreted as [A] validates [B] refutes. [C] derides. [D] suspects.

20. What is the main idea of the passage ?

[A] The general pay floor has risen too far and too fast. [B] Whether employment will be negatively affected is uncertain. [C] Economic policies should be made with great caution. [D] The general pay floor began moderately, but now threatens jobs.

The embattled chief executive of Telstra, Sol Trujillo, helped pay his way through college in America by playing the trumpet in his familys Mariachi band. But his past 16 months as the head of Australias biggest telecoms firm have seen him reaching for the violin. His sorrowful refrain has become as

familiar to fund managers in Sydney as it is to policy wonks in Canberra. Mr. Trujillo bemoans an overbearing government which is both his firm's main shareholder and its regulator. In recent months, Mr. Trujillo has grappled with the government over board nominations ; his A \$ 8.7m (\$ 6.7m) pay packet ; and, most seriously, a thicket of regulations designed to ensure that the former monopoly continues to provide rural telephone services across a vast country with the world's sixth-largest landmass but only the 52nd-largest population. Even the flashy launch of Telstra's advanced third-generation mobile-phone network, completed months ahead of schedule, struck an awkwardly discordant note. As Mr. Trujillo strutted his stuff on stage, a sprinkler malfunctioned, his audience drenched in foul-smelling water. It is hardly the ideal background for a share offering called T3, the third and final phase of Telstra's partial privatisation, a drawn-out affair which began in 1997. At the T2 offering in 1999, in the midst of the telecoms boom, Telstra shares sold for A \$ 7.40. Now they are trading at A \$ 3.97. Over the same period, the Australian stockmarket has grown by some 93%. Burned by the T2 offering, many of the 1.6m retail investors who bought shares last time around have shied away, despite a variety of sweeteners to lure them back—not least a 28% dividend on the A \$ 2 first instalment. But as the deadline to apply for shares passed on November 9th, it appeared that wealthier retail investors had offset this weakness in demand, seemingly confident they are being offered decent value for money. Better still, there has also been a positive response from institutional investors in advance of their own offer, which opens on November 15th. It is a timely vote of confidence in Mr. Trujillo's five-year transformation plan. A veteran of the telecoms industry who earned his spurs at US West in America and then at Orange, a European mobile operator, Mr. Trujillo has set about drastically streamlining a famously unwieldy corporation. With the help of hired guns from his previous firms—three senior executives were drafted in from US West—he is trying to eliminate 80% of Telstra's 1,252 separate computer systems. He has also laid off 12,000 of the firm's 52,000 employees.

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