

Directions: *There are 2 passages in this section. Each passage is followed by some questions or unfinished statements. For each of them there are four choices marked A), B), C) and D). You should decide on the best choice and mark the corresponding letter on Answer Sheet 2 with a single line through the centre.*

Passage One

Questions 46 to 50 are based on the following passage.

The subject of automation and its role in our economy has taken hold in American public discourse. Technology broadly and automation specifically are dramatically reshaping the way we work. And we need to have a plan for what's still to come.

We don't have to look further than our own communities to see the devastating impact of automation. From automated warehouses to cashierless grocery stores to neighborhood libraries that offer self-checkout lanes instead of employing real people—automation is increasingly replacing jobs and leaving too few good new jobs behind.

The statistics in manufacturing are staggering. Despite the widespread fears about trade, a recent report showed that just 13 percent of jobs lost in manufacturing are due to trade—the rest of the losses have been due to advances in technology.

That is why more people are criticizing the ever-increasing role of technology in our economy. Our country is manufacturing more than ever before, but we are doing it with fewer workers. However, it's not just factories that are seeing losses—software and information technology are also having a dramatic impact on jobs most people think are secure from the forces of a rapidly-changing economy. Something transformative is happening in America that is having an adverse effect on American families. Whether policymakers and politicians admit it or not, workers have made clear their feelings about their economic insecurity and desire to keep good jobs in America.

So why are people so insistent on ignoring the perils of automation? They are failing to look ahead at a time when planning for the future is more important than ever. Resisting automation is futile: it is as inevitable as industrialization was before it. I sincerely hope that those who assert that automation will make us more effective and pave the way for new occupations are right, but the reality of automation's detrimental effects on workers makes me skeptical. No one can currently say where the new jobs are coming from or when, and any sensible company or country should prepare for all alternatives.

I'm not overstating the danger: look at what's happened to the labor force. According to economic research, one in six working-age men, 25–54, doesn't have a job. Fifty years ago, nearly 100 percent of men that age were working. Women's labor force participation, meanwhile, has slipped back to the level it was at in the late 1980s.

American families and prominent business leaders are aware that there's a big problem with automation. The value of a college degree is diminishing, and our upward mobility is declining. If we want an economy that allows everyone to be economically secure, we need to start thinking about how we can rightfully address automation.

46. What can we observe from the author's description of our communities?
- A) The growing passion for automation.
 - B) The shift from manual jobs to IT ones.
 - C) Their changing views on employment.
 - D) Their fading employment opportunities.
47. What do we learn from a recent report?
- A) The manufacturing sector is declining at a fast rate.
 - B) The concerns about the effect of trade are exaggerated.
 - C) The fears about trade have been spreading far and wide.
 - D) The impact of trade on employment has been staggering.
48. What does the passage tell us about American workers in an era of transformation?
- A) They feel ignored by politicians.
 - B) They feel increasingly vulnerable.
 - C) They keep adapting to the changes.
 - D) They keep complaining but to no avail.
49. What does the author think of automation?
- A) It will have the same impact as industrialization.
 - B) It provides sensible companies with alternatives.
 - C) Its alleged positive effects are doubtful.
 - D) Its detrimental effects are unavoidable.
50. What should we attach importance to when dealing with automation?
- A) College graduates' job prospects.
 - B) Women's access to employment.
 - C) People's economic security.
 - D) People's social mobility.