The article A-a-atchoo starts off by explaining how economists are predicting that high pollen levels in Japan will end up lowering the quarterly GDP. However, the article’s main purpose is to discuss the weakness of the Japanese economy and how its recent expansion may be too short lived to repair the distressed economy. The path to recovery was strongly reliant on exports but more recently in December exports dropped to 5.6%. On a more positive note for the Japanese economy unemployment was at a low while the ratio of job openings to applicants was at a high.

Although the correlation to high pollen levels and low GDP may sound absurd, it is completely reasonable. People are not going to go out and spend money on leisure activities if they are seasonally sick, therefore the GDP will drop. The GDP is “the market value of all the final goods and services produced within a country within a given time period” (Chapter 5, Gross Domestic Product). Decreasing spending on leisure activities will negatively affect the GDP since a lower number of services are being produced. Additionally, GDP takes into consideration net exports, which is calculated by subtracting imports from exports (Chapter 5, Gross Domestic Product). When exports drop over 5% in an economy like Japan’s the GDP is going to be significantly lowered. This is especially true since Japan has little to no natural resources on the island. They rely heavily on imports for the production of goods and services. The fact that unemployment is low and the ratio of job openings to applicants is high is a much more positive sign for Japan’s economy. A lower unemployment rate is good for an economy because more goods and services can be produced when more people in the labor force are employed. Furthermore, if there are more job openings then applicants, people seeking jobs will not become discouraged workers (Chapter 6, Jobs and Wages). There is a greater chance for employment when openings outnumber applicants.

Word Count: 332