Alabama's Global Tradeoffs

Weigh economic gains and losses since the 1990s

SS24.AS.24 "Develop an argument supporting or denying the premise that globalization has benefited Alabama's economy since the 1990s, considering industries gained and lost."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details about industries Alabama gained, circle one detail about an industry that lost jobs, and write 1 beside a detail that complicates a simple verdict.

New Plants, Closed Mills

1 In the early 1990s, a worker in an Alabama textile mill might have cut cloth for shirts sold across the United States. By the 2000s, many such mills faced competition from lower-priced clothing made abroad. Trade rules opened markets, and companies could move some production to places with lower labor costs. Alabama textile and apparel employment fell sharply, leaving some communities with fewer factory paychecks. Yet imports were not the only force at work: machines also allowed factories to produce more with fewer workers. A shuttered mill, then, cannot by itself show how much of the loss came from globalization.

2 At the same time, international investment changed what Alabama made. Germany's Mercedes-Benz began building vehicles near Tuscaloosa in 1997. Honda, based in Japan, opened a plant in Lincoln in 2001, and South Korea's Hyundai began production in Montgomery in 2005. These plants hired workers and bought parts and services from suppliers, spreading some benefits beyond the assembly lines. Cars built in Alabama could reach customers in other countries, linking local jobs to worldwide demand. But a job created at an auto plant does not automatically replace a textile job for the same worker or town.

3 Airbus, a European company, began assembling passenger jets in Mobile in 2015, adding another industry tied to overseas investment. Such projects can bring jobs and tax revenue, but they can also depend on decisions made far from Alabama and on changes in world demand. Globalization can therefore create opportunities while making communities vulnerable to shifts in distant markets. To judge whether Alabama's economy benefited overall, consider both the new industries and the older jobs lost. Also ask who gained, who lost, and whether evidence about new jobs proves that displaced workers found comparable work.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which detail best supports an argument that globalization benefited Alabama's economy? Explain how it supports that claim.

2. Which detail best supports an argument against an overall economic benefit? Explain its importance.

3. Why would counting new auto jobs and lost textile jobs still leave part of the economic question unanswered?

4. A classmate says foreign trade caused every textile job loss. What evidence from the passage challenges that claim?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write one paragraph arguing whether globalization has benefited Alabama's economy since the 1990s. Use evidence about at least one industry that gained and one that lost jobs, explain why your evidence supports your judgment, and address one opposing point or limit.

ANSWER KEY

Alabama's Global Tradeoffs

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.AS.24

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details about industries Alabama gained, circle one detail about an industry that lost jobs, and write 1 beside a detail that complicates a simple verdict. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which detail best supports an argument that globalization benefited Alabama's economy? Explain how it supports that claim.	**Foreign-owned auto plants hired Alabama workers and bought from suppliers, creating jobs and business for other companies.**
2	Which detail best supports an argument against an overall economic benefit? Explain its importance.	**Textile and apparel employment fell sharply as mills faced competition from clothing made abroad, leaving some communities with fewer factory paychecks.**
3	Why would counting new auto jobs and lost textile jobs still leave part of the economic question unanswered?	**The new jobs might not be in the same towns or go to the same workers, and the passage does not show whether displaced workers found comparable work.**
4	A classmate says foreign trade caused every textile job loss. What evidence from the passage challenges that claim?	**Machines allowed factories to produce more with fewer workers, so imports were not the only possible cause of job losses.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Globalization has benefited Alabama's economy, although its gains have been uneven. International investment brought Mercedes-Benz, Honda, and Hyundai auto plants to the state. Those plants hired workers and bought from suppliers, so their effects reached beyond vehicle assembly. Airbus also began assembling jets in Mobile. However, textile and apparel employment fell sharply as mills faced competition from clothing made abroad. New auto jobs did not necessarily help the workers or towns that lost mill jobs. I still judge the overall effect as beneficial because global investment established major new industries, but the passage does not provide enough job totals to measure the net gain.

Accept either position in Part 3 if the argument uses passage evidence about a gained industry and a lost industry, weighs their significance, and acknowledges an opposing point or limit. Do not require students to attribute every textile job loss to globalization.