Trade Through Alabama

Trace how imports and exports connect Alabama to the world.

SS24.AS.25 "Explain the role of Alabama in the global economy based on its major imports and exports."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two examples of Alabama exports and circle two examples of imports. Number one sentence that explains how an import can help produce an export.

A Car's Two-Way Journey

1. At a vehicle plant in Alabama, workers attach parts made in several countries to a car assembled here. When those parts enter the United States from abroad, they are imports. Some finished cars built in Alabama later travel to buyers in other countries as exports. Companies such as Mercedes-Benz and Hyundai operate vehicle plants in the state, making Alabama part of a worldwide production network. A car sold overseas may contain imported electronics, so the same industry can depend on foreign suppliers while earning sales from foreign customers. That connection helps explain why trade matters beyond the factory gate.

2. Cars are not Alabama's only link to world markets. Alabama businesses also export aircraft, chemicals, and forest products. Coal mined in Alabama can travel through the Port of Mobile to overseas buyers. Meanwhile, businesses may import steel, machinery, and electronic components for production. Imported machinery can help a factory make goods for both domestic and foreign buyers. Imports do not automatically become exports: some are used to make products sold within the United States. Looking at both directions of trade reveals more than a list of goods. Alabama supplies products to world markets and purchases materials and equipment from them.

3. This exchange creates opportunities and risks. Orders from overseas can support jobs at Alabama factories and at businesses that transport their products. If demand for Alabama-made cars drops in another country, factories may receive fewer orders. If imported electronic parts arrive late, a plant may have trouble finishing vehicles even when foreign customers want them. The effects can spread to shipping firms and suppliers located in Alabama. A reliable flow of imports helps producers fill export orders, while exports give local businesses access to customers far beyond the state. Alabama's role in the global economy depends on both directions of trade.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How can a car assembled in Alabama show that the state is both an importer and an exporter?

2. What do Alabama coal sold overseas and steel bought from abroad show about the two directions of trade?

3. Why would looking only at car exports give an incomplete picture of Alabama's role in the global economy?

4. How could a drop in foreign demand and a delay in imported parts each affect Alabama workers?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine that overseas demand for Alabama-made cars rises just as a shipping delay holds up imported electronic parts. Write a five- or six-sentence briefing for a factory manager explaining how both changes could affect production, exports, and workers. Propose one realistic response.

ANSWER KEY

Trade Through Alabama

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.AS.25

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two examples of Alabama exports and circle two examples of imports. Number one sentence that explains how an import can help produce an export. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How can a car assembled in Alabama show that the state is both an importer and an exporter?	**An Alabama plant can use parts imported from other countries to build a car, then export the finished car to a buyer abroad.**
2	What do Alabama coal sold overseas and steel bought from abroad show about the two directions of trade?	**Coal sold overseas is an export that connects Alabama producers to foreign buyers. Steel bought from abroad is an import that Alabama businesses can use in production.**
3	Why would looking only at car exports give an incomplete picture of Alabama's role in the global economy?	**Alabama also exports goods such as aircraft, chemicals, forest products, and coal, while businesses import materials and equipment.**
4	How could a drop in foreign demand and a delay in imported parts each affect Alabama workers?	**Lower foreign demand could mean fewer orders for Alabama factories. Late imported parts could keep plants from finishing vehicles, affecting factory workers, suppliers, and shipping firms.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Higher demand from overseas could bring the factory more orders for Alabama-made cars. Those orders could support jobs at the plant and at local shipping firms. However, without imported electronic parts, workers might be unable to finish enough cars to fill the new export orders. The delay could also leave suppliers and shipping firms with less work than expected. The manager could ask other qualified suppliers whether they can provide the needed parts while the shipment is delayed.

Accept other passage-supported examples of imports and exports. For the briefing, look for a clear explanation of how demand and a parts delay have different effects, plus a plausible response.