Tariffs Close to Home

How a federal trade policy can affect a Georgia community

USG.4.3 "Discuss specific foreign policy issues that impact local community and state interests."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the federal trade policy, circle two possible effects on people or businesses in Dalton, and number two interests Georgia officials might consider. Use your marks to trace how one policy can affect a community and a state in different ways.

Solar Panels, Jobs, and Prices

1 A solar panel can be made overseas, shipped to a U.S. port, and installed on a Georgia roof. In 2018, the U.S. government placed tariffs, or import taxes, on many solar panels made abroad. The policy aimed to give U.S. manufacturers a better chance to compete with lower-priced imports. Importers pay the tariff when the panels enter the country, but some of that cost may reach installers and customers through higher prices. Because trade rules are set by the federal government, a decision made in Washington can shape the choices of a school district or business far away.

2 Consider Dalton, Georgia, where a solar-panel factory employs local workers. If tariffs help U.S.-made panels compete, the factory may gain orders and support jobs in Dalton. Those jobs also matter to nearby restaurants and shops where workers spend their pay. But a Dalton installer who buys imported panels may face higher supply costs. The installer could charge customers more or take on fewer projects. Imagine a local school district considering panels for its gym roof: if bids rise, the district might delay the project or spend more of its budget on it.

3 Georgia officials have more than one interest in this policy. They may want manufacturing jobs and investment, but they may also want affordable solar projects across the state. More projects can create work for installers and help schools and businesses manage electricity costs over time. A tariff alone cannot guarantee new factory jobs, since hiring depends on demand, equipment, and other costs. Nor does it mean every solar project will stop; buyers can compare suppliers and prices. When discussing the policy, ask who may benefit, who may face a cost, and what evidence would show its effects in Georgia.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How could a federal tariff on imported solar panels help workers in Dalton?

2. How could the tariff affect the Dalton school district even if the district does not import panels itself?

3. How might the tariff affect Dalton restaurants and shops that do not sell solar panels?

4. Why might Georgia officials disagree about whether the tariff serves the state's interests? Use two possible effects from the passage.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four- or five-sentence statement to a Georgia state lawmaker about whether the state should ask federal officials to keep, change, or review solar-panel tariffs. Name a community group not named in the passage, predict one effect on that group, address a competing statewide interest, and propose evidence that could test your prediction.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · USG.4.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the federal trade policy, circle two possible effects on people or businesses in Dalton, and number two interests Georgia officials might consider. Use your marks to trace how one policy can affect a community and a state in different ways. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How could a federal tariff on imported solar panels help workers in Dalton?	**The tariff could help U.S.-made panels compete with imports, bringing the Dalton factory more orders and supporting local jobs.**
2	How could the tariff affect the Dalton school district even if the district does not import panels itself?	**An installer may pass higher costs for imported panels into its bid, so the district might delay its gym-roof project or spend more on it.**
3	How might the tariff affect Dalton restaurants and shops that do not sell solar panels?	**If the tariff helps the factory keep or gain orders, its workers may continue earning and spending pay at nearby restaurants and shops.**
4	Why might Georgia officials disagree about whether the tariff serves the state's interests? Use two possible effects from the passage.	**The tariff may support Georgia manufacturing jobs, but higher panel prices may make solar projects less affordable and reduce work for installers.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would ask the state to review the tariffs because Georgia farmers who want solar-powered irrigation pumps could face higher installation prices. Higher upfront costs might lead some farmers to delay replacing diesel pumps. Still, lowering tariffs could make it harder for Georgia panel factories to compete and could put manufacturing jobs at risk. State officials could compare farmers' installation bids with factory orders and hiring figures before asking federal officials to change the policy.

Accept other passage-supported links between the tariff and local or state interests. In Part 3, look for a group not named in the passage, a plausible effect, a competing state interest, and evidence relevant to the prediction.