Beyond Imported Oil

Use evidence to weigh two nations' energy policies

OKH.P.2.4.B "Construct arguments using a combination of evidence regarding solutions used by nations to address historical or contemporary economic issues."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the economic problem, number two pieces of evidence about each nation's solution, and circle one limit of each solution. Use your marks to build arguments about the policies.

Two Responses to Costly Oil

1. When oil prices jumped in the 1970s, countries that imported oil faced higher costs for transportation, electricity, and goods. France depended heavily on imported oil, so its leaders expanded nuclear power to generate electricity. New reactors required large investments and years of construction, but they reduced the need to burn oil to make electricity. By the late 1980s, nuclear plants produced most of France's electricity. This shift helped France limit its exposure to oil price swings in the power sector. It did not replace gasoline in cars, and nuclear power created radioactive waste that needed careful management.

2. Brazil faced a different version of the same problem: imported oil made driving and shipping more expensive. In 1975, its government launched Proálcool, a program to make ethanol fuel from sugarcane. It offered support for ethanol production and encouraged cars that could use the fuel. Ethanol replaced some gasoline, so Brazil could spend less foreign currency on imported oil for transport. Yet sugarcane required land, water, and processing facilities. Ethanol output also depended on harvests and sugar prices. A fuel made at home could reduce one economic risk while creating others for farmers, drivers, and government budgets.

3. Both governments tried to shield their economies from costly imported oil, but they targeted different uses of energy. France's reactors supplied electricity, while Brazil's ethanol supplied fuel for vehicles. Evidence that a solution reduced one kind of oil use does not prove that it solved every energy problem. France still needed fuel for cars, and Brazil still needed electricity from other sources. A strong argument about these policies should connect a specific economic need to a policy's results and costs. The better choice depends on whether a nation needs power for homes and factories, fuel for transportation, or both.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Argue that France's policy addressed an economic problem. Use two pieces of evidence and acknowledge one limit.

2. Argue that Brazil's policy addressed an economic problem. Use two pieces of evidence and acknowledge one limit.

3. A minister claims Brazil's ethanol program would have solved France's electricity problem. Make a counterargument using evidence from both nations.

4. A critic says neither policy helped because neither ended all oil use. Make a qualified argument using one benefit and one limit from the passage.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A fictional island nation relies on imported oil for electricity and cars but has little farmland. In one paragraph of 5 to 6 sentences, recommend which policy it should prioritize, using one piece of evidence from each nation's experience and explaining one trade-off.

ANSWER KEY

Beyond Imported Oil

HIGH SCHOOL · OKH.P.2.4.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the economic problem, number two pieces of evidence about each nation's solution, and circle one limit of each solution. Use your marks to build arguments about the policies. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Argue that France's policy addressed an economic problem. Use two pieces of evidence and acknowledge one limit.	**France's reactors reduced the oil burned for electricity and supplied most of its electricity by the late 1980s, limiting exposure to oil price swings. The policy did not replace gasoline in cars.**
2	Argue that Brazil's policy addressed an economic problem. Use two pieces of evidence and acknowledge one limit.	**Brazil supported sugarcane ethanol production and cars that could use it. Ethanol replaced some gasoline, reducing spending on imported oil for transport, but its production required land and water.**
3	A minister claims Brazil's ethanol program would have solved France's electricity problem. Make a counterargument using evidence from both nations.	**Brazil's ethanol replaced some gasoline used for transport, not oil used to generate electricity. France's nuclear reactors addressed electricity needs by reducing the oil burned for power.**
4	A critic says neither policy helped because neither ended all oil use. Make a qualified argument using one benefit and one limit from the passage.	**Ending all oil use was not necessary for either policy to help. France reduced oil use for electricity, although cars still needed fuel, and Brazil replaced some gasoline, although its ethanol program depended on sugarcane harvests.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The island nation should first consider nuclear power for electricity. France's reactors reduced the oil needed to generate electricity and supplied most of its electricity by the late 1980s. That result fits the island's need to rely less on imported oil for power. Brazil's ethanol replaced some gasoline, but its sugarcane needed land and water. Since the island has little farmland, a large ethanol program may be a poor first investment. Nuclear plants also cost a lot and take years to build, so leaders would need a plan for those costs.

Accept other defensible priorities if students use evidence from both nations and explain how a trade-off affects the island's choice. Do not require students to claim that either policy would end oil imports.