



C. Essay-type Questions

Topic 1

International Economic Cooperation Since 1945







The essay-type questions are designed to facilitate learning and teaching, assessment for learning and assessment of learning. Teachers may adapt the questions and answers to address the diverse needs of students.

Question 1

Trace and explain the obstacles to European economic integration from 1945-2000.

Suggested approach:

- Students should break up the given time frame (1945-2000) into several periods. Within each period, students should firstly narrate the major obstacles to European integration and how these led to limited/extended scope of integration by the end of that particular period. Then, students should go on explaining the reasons for the obstacles mentioned. After such “tracing” and “explaining” tasks of the first period has been done, students can proceed to do the same tasks on the second, third, ... periods.
- Students may consider the following way of periodization:
 - 1945-1967 – period of initial economic cooperation and integration
 - 1967-1992 – period of further integration in diverse aspects under European Community
 - 1992-2000 – period of integration and consolidation under European Union
- Students may consider whether and how each of the following obstacles existed in each period:
 - *Fear for loss of autonomy:*
 - ▶ In agreeing to certain integration policies (e.g. removing tariff barriers), European nations had to forfeit their economic, political or military authority subsequently.
 - *The beginning of the Cold War (The Iron Curtain Speech):*
 - ▶ The Cold War divided Europe into two camps.
 - ▶ During the first two decades, there was little conversation between the two camps.
 - ▶ The clash between the US and the USSR made it very hard for European countries to come together.
 - *Economic differences:*
 - ▶ E.g.: Some parts of Italy were industrialized; France had a socialist, more open view of free market concepts.
 - ▶ E.g.: Holland was in serious need of thorough reconstruction; Belgium had to stabilize her currency; Italy wanted to get rid of the remaining traces of a Fascist economy.



- *Conflicting views/self-interests over crucial issues:*
 - ▶ West Germany’s future role: Expectation of a rehabilitated, strong West Germany assisting European integration vs. anti-German sentiments
 - ▶ Britain’s application for membership in EEC vs. Charles de Gaulle’s anti-British stance

Question 2

Assess the importance of national interests relative to other factors which hindered the process of European economic cooperation.

Suggested approach:

Writing the essay outline –

Before writing the essay, students should outline various factors, among which “national interests” must be included, which hindered the process of European economic cooperation. Students may consider the following factors and enlist supporting evidence accordingly:

Examples of factors	Examples of evidence
National interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Determination of France (under Charles de Gaulle’s presidency until 1969) to reject British application for EEC membership, for fear that French influence in EEC would be weakened.
Geographical distance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● EFTA members (e.g. Britain, Austria, etc.) were geographically dispersed and could not foster cooperation as effectively as EEC members did.
Ideological conflicts during the Cold War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mutual distrust between the US & the USSR (which was particularly intense from 1946 to the late 1960s) made East-West trade and economic cooperation improbable. ● The volume of trade between eastern and western European countries was maintained at a minimal level due to the Cold War, until the détente (1970s) when more East-West trade was found acceptable by both superpowers.
Wealth disparity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The huge wealth gap between members of the same bloc, e.g. between Greece (economically backward) and France and West Germany (most affluent on European continent), provided grounds for doubt on in-depth economic integration.



After enlisting enough evidence for each factor, students may proceed to weighing “national interests” against each “other factor”. If a student thinks that “national interests” was the most important factor among all, he needs to prove that “national interest” was more important than every “other factor”. This task may take about two to three paragraphs in order to arrive at a fair and unbiased conclusion.

Writing the essay –

Students may present their answer satisfactorily by following these steps:

- *Introduction*
 - Which several factors will be examined in your essay?
 - Express clearly your stance on the issue in the question:
 - ▶ Was “national interests” the most important factor (i.e. more important than all others)?
 - ▶ Or was it of lower importance than “other factors”?
 - ▶ Or was it the least important factor among all?
- *Body (1st half): Separate accounts of causal relationship*
 - How did “national interests” hinder economic cooperation?
 - How did “geographical distance” hinder economic cooperation?
 - How did “ideological conflicts during Cold War” hinder economic cooperation?
 - How did “wealth disparity” hinder economic cooperation?
- *Body (2nd half): Weighing “national interests” against “other factors”*
 - Why was “national interests” more/less important than every “other factor”?
 - What criterion/criteria has/have been used in these comparisons?
 - ▶ E.g. which factor was more long-lasting and had more sustained impact over the years?
 - ▶ E.g. which factor was a fundamental cause of other “factors”?
- *Conclusion*
 - Reiterate your stance on the importance of “national interests” relative to “other factors” in hindering European economic cooperation.



Question 3

Choose either one of the following periods and explain in what ways it was a turning point in the development of European economic integration.

- (a) The late 1960s
- (b) The early 1990s

Suggested approach:

- The late 1960s and the early 1990s are chosen as turning points in this topic because of the following reasons:

Period	Corresponding reasons
The late 1960s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In 1967, the ECSC, EEC and Euratom were merged to form the European Community. ● In 1968, the customs union in western Europe was completed. ● In 1968-69, the Common Agricultural Policy of the EC came into effect. ● In 1969, French President Charles de Gaulle resigned.
The early 1990s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In 1990, Germany was re-united. ● In 1991, the Warsaw Pact and the USSR were dissolved, and the Cold War came to an end. ● In 1992, the Maastricht Treaty was signed by EC members. ● In 1993, the European Union was officially established.

- In the following sample, the year 1967 is taken as the turning point in the development of European economic integration.
- When discussing the late 1960s as a turning point, students should elaborate on three elements:
 - (i) The general pattern of European economic integration from 1945 to the mid-1960s;
 - (ii) How, and through which events, some/all previous features of economic integration were changed in the late 1960s; and
 - (iii) The new general pattern of economic integration from the late 1960s to the late 1990s.



- Teachers may guide students to think about the change in the development of European economic integration from the following perspectives:
 - (i) The widening scope of cooperation (from merely economic to social and political aspects) between member states;
 - (ii) The formulation of common market policies (from non-existence to existence, e.g. Common Agricultural Policy, customs union, etc.)
 - (iii) The change in attitude towards British influence (from skepticism represented by France and Charles de Gaulle to acceptance and collaboration)
 - (iv) The widening geographical coverage of cooperation (from merely the Inner Six to other European states, e.g. original members of EFTA and former eastern European states).

- Students may need to know that the answering approaches described below are not the most satisfactory answers:
 - (i) Merely contrasting the patterns of economic integration before and after the late 1960s (i.e. this is an answer to the “compare and contrast” question type); and
 - (ii) Examining how the development in the late 1960s brought a new pattern of economic integration since the 1970s, without telling the pattern from 1945 to the mid-1960s (i.e. this is an answer to the “impact” question type).