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Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level

ECONOMICS **9708/21**

Paper 2 AS Level Data Response and Essays **October/November 2025**

2 hours

1461351986

You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **three** questions in total:
  - Section A: answer Question 1.
  - Section B: answer **one** question.
  - Section C: answer **one** question.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.
- You may use a calculator.
- You may answer with reference to any economy you have studied where relevant to the question.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 60.
- The number of marks for each question or part question is shown in brackets [ ].

This document has **4** pages.

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Section A

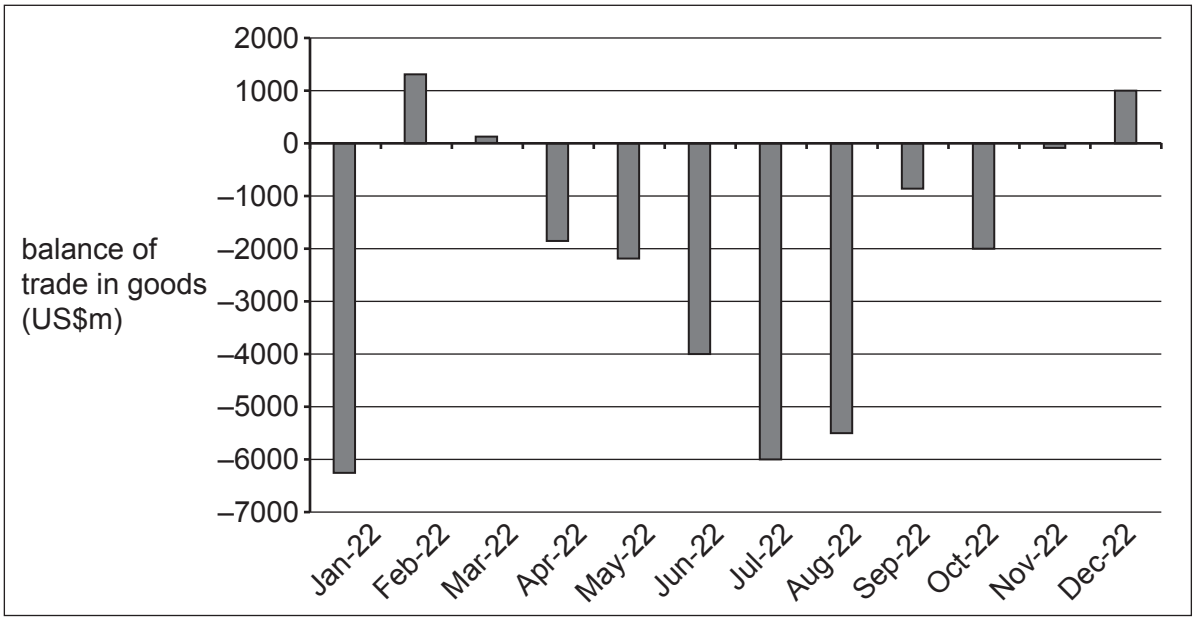
Answer all parts of Question 1.

1 Mexico's backward-looking energy policy is bad for the country and the planet

In 2023, Mexico's energy policies looked increasingly out of step with those in the rest of the world. The Mexican President reversed recent reforms of Mexico's energy market. These reforms increased the role of private sector firms. He changed the balance of the mixed economy by prioritising state-owned companies and stressed that Mexico should produce its own energy rather than importing it.

The government invested in a new oil refinery and decided to keep coal-fired power stations running. It also gave state-owned electricity and oil companies priority over private sector rivals, so it was harder for private firms to obtain permits to generate electricity or to explore for oil.

Mexico has traditionally exported crude oil and imported natural gas. However, the new plan is that the oil will be used to generate the country's electricity. There has been a global shift towards energy self-sufficiency but it is unclear whether Mexico has the capacity to produce enough electricity for its 130 million people. There may also be an impact on the country's balance of trade in goods which was in deficit for nine months of 2022, as shown in Figure 1.1.



Source: tradingeconomics.com

Fig. 1.1 Mexico's balance of trade in goods, January 2022 to December 2022

Energy is likely to become more expensive. Operating costs of the state-owned electricity producers are significantly higher than their private sector rivals. Its old and inefficient plants are expensive to maintain. These costs will be passed on to the consumer, either directly or by the government having to spend more on subsidies to keep down the price.

The environment will also suffer. Mexico will see less investment in renewable energy because of its change in energy policy. In the past, domestic and foreign firms in the private sector did much of the investing. The policy change means that Mexico is unlikely to meet its pledge to produce 35% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2024.

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The impact of the energy policy may be felt in the economy more broadly. The earlier energy reforms had helped to bring manufacturers to Mexico by making power cheaper and more reliable. Now the uncertainty is deterring investors.

The opportunity cost of Mexico's new energy policy is huge. Economists reckon that Mexico could have produced almost half its electricity from renewable sources long before its target of 2050. Multinational companies were looking at Mexico as an alternative location to other countries, but because of Mexico's change in energy policy, those companies are likely to go elsewhere.

Source: Adapted from: 'Mexico's energy policy', The Economist, The World Ahead 2023, published 2022

(a) Using the information provided, explain whether Mexico is a mixed economy. [2]

(b) Explain what is meant by 'The opportunity cost of Mexico's new energy policy is huge.' [2]

(c) Consider the extent to which direct provision of electricity in Mexico through state-owned companies may be advantageous to consumers. [4]

(d) With the help of a diagram, assess whether the potential advantages of providing a subsidy to keep down the price of electricity in Mexico will outweigh the potential disadvantages. [6]

(e) Assess the potential benefits and limitations of Mexico keeping its oil to generate the country's electricity. [6]

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Section B

Answer **one** question.

EITHER

2 **(a)** With the help of a formula, explain what is meant by price elasticity of demand for a product **and** consider the importance of time in determining whether demand for the product is likely to be relatively price elastic or relatively price inelastic. [8]

(b) Assess whether knowledge of a product's income elasticity of demand is more important to a firm producing it than knowledge of its cross elasticity of demand. [12]

OR

3 **(a)** With the help of examples, explain the nature and characteristics of free goods and private goods (economic goods) **and** consider the significance of the distinction between these two types of good. [8]

(b) Assess whether education should be classified as a public good or a merit good. [12]

Section C

Answer **one** question.

EITHER

4 **(a)** Explain the possible causes of frictional unemployment and technological unemployment **and** consider whether some element of frictional unemployment is inevitable in an economy. [8]

(b) Assess whether the consequences of technological unemployment are likely to be more serious than those of cyclical unemployment. [12]

OR

5 **(a)** Explain **two** tools of protection used by a country when trading internationally **and** consider whether one is likely to have more of an impact on the country's economy than the other. [8]

(b) Assess whether all consumers, all producers and the government in a country will benefit equally from protectionism. [12]

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