**Text 1. Read and translate the text “Economics”. Answer the questions below.**

**Economics as a science**

Economics**,** [social science](https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-science) that seeks to analyze and describe the production, distribution, and [consumption](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/consumption) of wealth. In the 19th century [economics](https://www.britannica.com/topic/economic-theory) was the hobby of gentlemen of [leisure](https://www.britannica.com/topic/leisure) and the vocation of a few academics; economists wrote about economic policy but were rarely consulted by legislators before decisions were made. Today there is hardly a government, international agency, or large [commercial bank](https://www.britannica.com/topic/commercial-bank) that does not have its own staff of economists. Many of the world’s economists devote their time to teaching economics in colleges and universities around the world, but most [work](https://www.britannica.com/topic/work-economics) in various research or advisory capacities, either for themselves (in economics consulting firms), in industry, or in government. Still others are employed in accounting, commerce, [marketing](https://www.britannica.com/topic/marketing), and business administration; although they are trained as economists, their occupational expertise falls within other fields. Indeed, this can be considered “the age of economists,” and the demand for their services seems [insatiable](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/insatiable). Supply responds to that demand, and in the [United States](https://www.britannica.com/place/United-States) alone some 400 institutions of higher learning grant about 900 new Ph.D.’s in economics each year.

No one has ever succeeded in neatly defining the scope of economics. Many have agreed with [Alfred Marshall](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Alfred-Marshall), a leading 19th-century English economist, that economics is “a study of mankind in the ordinary business of life; it examines that part of individual and social action which is most closely connected with the attainment, and with the use of the material requisites of wellbeing”—ignoring the fact that sociologists, psychologists, and anthropologists frequently study exactly the same phenomena.

In the 20th century, English economist [Lionel Robbins](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Lionel-Charles-Robbins-Baron-Robbins-of-Clare-Market) defined economics as “the [science](https://www.britannica.com/topic/science) which studies [human behaviour](https://www.britannica.com/topic/human-behavior) as a relationship between (given) ends and scarce means which have [alternative](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/alternative) uses.” In other words, Robbins said that economics is the science of economizing. While his definition captures one of the striking characteristics of the economist’s way of thinking, it is at once too wide (because it would include in economics the game of chess) and too narrow (because it would exclude the study of the national income or the price level). Perhaps the only foolproof definition is that attributed to Canadian-born economist [Jacob Viner](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jacob-Viner): economics is what economists do.

Difficult as it may be to define economics, it is not difficult to indicate the sorts of questions that concern economists. Among other things, they seek to analyze the forces determining [prices](https://www.britannica.com/topic/price-economics)—not only the prices of [goods](https://www.britannica.com/topic/commodity) and services but the prices of the resources used to produce them. This involves the discovery of two key elements: what governs the way in which human [labour](https://www.britannica.com/topic/labor-in-economics), machines, and [land](https://www.britannica.com/topic/land-economics) are combined in production and how buyers and sellers are brought together in a functioning market. Because prices of the various things must be interrelated, economists therefore ask how such a “price system” or “market mechanism” hangs together and what conditions are necessary for its survival.

These questions are representative of [microeconomics](https://www.britannica.com/topic/microeconomics), the part of economics that deals with the behaviour of individual entities such as consumers, business firms, traders, and farmers. The other major branch of economics is [macroeconomics](https://www.britannica.com/topic/macroeconomics), which focuses attention on [aggregates](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/aggregates) such as the level of income in the whole economy, the volume of total employment, the flow of total investment, and so forth.

**Questions:**

1. What is economics?
2. What was economics in the 19th century?
3. Why is modern period called as “the age of economists”?
4. How did [Alfred Marshall](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Alfred-Marshall), a leading 19th-century English economist, characterize economics? Do you agree with his definition?
5. What questions does economics deal with?