

3.4 Firms

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 15 marks

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on **firms** 企业—the **size of firms** 企业规模, why some stay small, how firms **grow** 增长 (the three **mergers** 合并), and **business failure** 企业倒闭.

You must be able to:

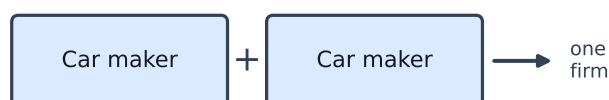
- state ways to measure the size of a firm and why some stay small
- describe horizontal, vertical and conglomerate mergers
- explain the causes of business failure

1 Worked examples

■ How firms grow

Horizontal

same stage, same industry



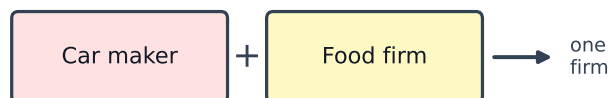
Vertical

different stages, same industry



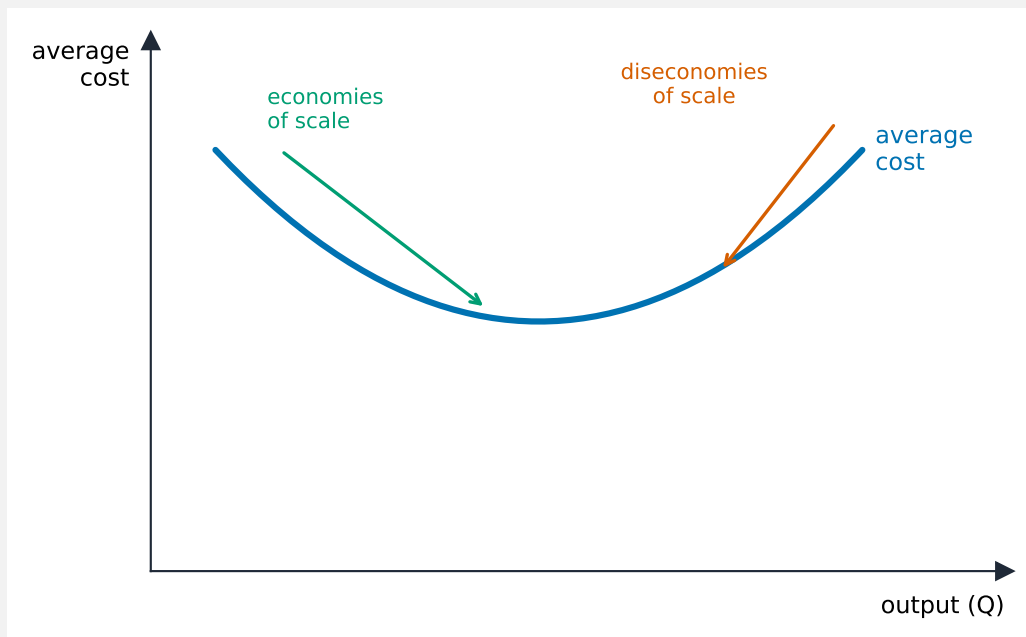
Conglomerate

different industries



Firms grow by selling more, or by joining other firms

- **Measure size by:** number of workers, capital used, or output.
- **Stay small** because: a small market, a personal product, the owner wants control, little finance.
- **Mergers:** **horizontal** 横向 (same stage), **vertical** 纵向 (different stages of one industry), **conglomerate** 混合 (different industries).
- **Business failure** 企业倒闭: high costs, too few sales, poor management, too little cash.



Firms grow to win economies of scale —lower average cost as output rises

Answer shapes: K + App + An + Ev (a justified judgement, for discuss questions).

2 Practice

2.1 State two ways to measure the size of a firm.

[2]

2.2 Define the term *horizontal merger*.

[2]

2.3 State one reason why a firm might stay small.

[1]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 A car maker joining with a tyre maker is an example of a:

[1]

- A horizontal merger
- B vertical merger
- C conglomerate merger
- D social enterprise

3.2 Explain two reasons why a firm might fail and close down.

[4]

3.3 Analyse why some firms stay small while others grow large.

[6]

4 Go further

You are now ready for the real exam questions on this subtopic. Open the **3.4 Firms** past-paper sheet in the Library, or try these in **Practice mode**:

- 0455/12 N25 —Q13 (firms / size)
- 0455/12 N25 —Q14 (mergers)
- 0455/11 J25 —Q27 (growth of firms)

Solutions

IGCSE Economics answers are marked by **level of response**: award **K** knowledge, **App** application, **An** analysis and **Ev** a justified judgement.

2.1 any two of: number of workers; amount of capital used; output (1 + 1).

2.2 when two firms at the same stage of the same industry join (e.g. two car makers) (2 for a clear definition; 1 for a partial idea).

2.3 any one of: a small market; a personal product; the owner wants control; little finance to grow (1).

3.1 B. A car maker and a tyre maker are at different stages of one industry —a vertical merger.

3.2 [4] For **each** of two reasons: K 1 + An 1 —*too few sales / falling demand*: revenue does not cover costs → the firm makes losses and closes; *not enough cash*: even a profitable firm can run out of cash to pay bills → it is forced to stop trading.

3.3 [6] K/App/An —firms stay small when the market is small or local, the product is personal (a hairdresser), the owner wants control, or finance is scarce → firms grow large when there is high demand and they want economies of scale, more market power and higher profit → so size depends on the market, the owner's aims, and the gains from being bigger.