



• **How many Marxists** does it take to screw in a light bulb?

None. The bulb contains within it the seeds of its own revolution.

— Thanks to Jon Titus, Editorial Director, *Test & Measurement World*

• **During a revolt** in a small country, rebels kidnapped an economist and an engineer. After several months, the rebels realized no one

would ransom these people, so they decided to kill them. They went to the economist and told him they had to shoot him but would grant a final request. “Good,” he said. “I have some of my papers with me and I’d like to give a final economic forecast for the next five years.” Then the rebels went to the engineer and told him what was about to happen. “What is your final request?” they asked. “Shoot me first,” replied the engineer.

— Thanks to Andy Obermueller, *Newark Star-Ledger*

• **Two guys go up** in a balloon. Eventually a strong wind comes along and brings a thick cloud cover. They steer and steer and finally find an opening in the clouds and come down through it. They see they are over a park, and yell down “Hey, can any of you people tell us where we are?” One guy comes running over to them yelling “I can, I can. You’re up there in a balloon.” One of the riders says to the other “that guy must be an economist.” The other asks why. The first one says “Three reasons. He was sure he knew the answer. He was technically correct. And having heard his answer, we don’t know anymore than we did to begin with.” — Thanks to Bill Gale, Brookings Institution

THE HISTORY OF TEACHING MATH

• **Teaching Math in 1950:**

A logger sells a truckload of lumber for \$100. His cost of production is $\frac{4}{5}$ of the price. What is his profit?

• **Teaching Math in 1960:**

A logger sells a truckload of lumber for \$100. His cost of production is $\frac{4}{5}$ of the price, or \$80. What is his profit?

• **Teaching Math in 1970:**

A logger exchanges a set “L” of lumber for a set “M” of money. The cardinality of set “M” is 100. Each element is worth one dollar. Make 100 dots representing the elements of the set “M.” The set “C”, the cost of production contains 20 fewer points than set “M.” Represent the set “C” as a subset of set “M” and answer the following question: What is the cardinality of the set “P” of profits?

• **Teaching Math in 1980:**

A logger sells a truckload of lumber for \$100. His cost of production is \$80 and his profit is \$20. Your assignment: Underline the number 20.

• **Teaching Math in 1990:**

By cutting down beautiful forest trees, the logger makes \$20. What do you think of this way of making a living? Topic for class participation after answering the question: How did the forest birds and squirrels feel as the logger cut down the trees? There are no wrong answers.

• **Teaching Math in 2002:**

A logger sells a truckload of lumber for \$100. His cost of production is \$120. How does Arthur Andersen determine that his profit is \$60?

How can you tell that macroeconomists have a sense of humor? They use decimal points.
Thanks to Avinash Dixit, Princeton University

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