

Elements of Microeconomics

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Chapter 4

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Features of a Market

- 1 What is a market?
- 2 What are some examples of markets?
- 3 What does it mean for a market to be *competitive*?
- 4 Are all markets competitive?
- 5 What makes a market perfectly competitive?

Perfectly Competitive Markets

In a perfectly competitive market:

- 1 All goods are identical
- 2 No buyer or seller has influence over the market price
- 3 All actors are *price-takers*

Demand

What is the *quantity demanded* of a good?

What is the *law of demand*?

What is the difference between a demand schedule and a demand curve?

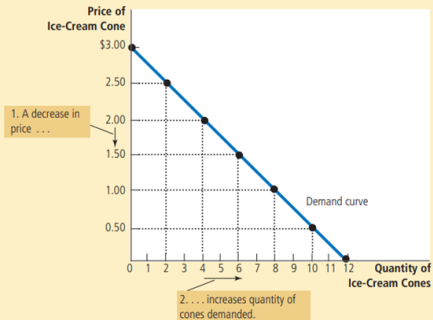
Demand Schedule and Curve

FIGURE 1

Catherine's Demand Schedule and Demand Curve

Price of Ice-Cream Cone	Quantity of Cones Demanded
\$0.00	12 cones
0.50	10
1.00	8
1.50	6
2.00	4
2.50	2
3.00	0

The demand schedule is a table that shows the quantity demanded at each price. The demand curve, which graphs the demand schedule, illustrates how the quantity demanded of the good changes as its price varies. Because a lower price increases the quantity demanded, the demand curve slopes downward.



Market Demand

The previous example showed the demand curve for one individual. The *market demand* is the summation of demand curves across all individuals in a market.

Demand curves are not fixed in time; many things might cause a demand curve to increase or decrease.

If demand increases when incomes increase, a good is a *normal good*. If demand falls when incomes decrease, a good is an *inferior good*. What are some examples of both?

Complements and Substitutes

If two goods go well together, they are *complements*.

If two goods fulfill the same purpose, or class, they are *substitutes*.

What are some examples of each?

If goods A and B are complements, what will happen to demand for good B if the price of good A falls? What if they are substitutes?

Example

Two years ago Maryland passed a gas tax holiday, temporarily lowering the price of gasoline. Some critics said that removing the tax would make people want to buy more gasoline and might end up actually *increasing* the price.

- 1 Will the tax decrease cause the demand curve for gasoline to shift?
- 2 What are some complements and what are some substitutes for gasoline?
- 3 What are some factors that might cause the demand curve for gasoline to shift?

Does it seem plausible that the tax removal could cause the price of gasoline to go up?

Supply

The other side of the market: *supply*. There are lots of similarities between the two:

- *Quantity supplied* is amount sellers are willing and able to sell
- *Law of supply* governs the relationship between price and quantity supplied
- Supply schedules and supply curves
- Market supply

Shifts in the Supply Curve

Just as with demand, we need to distinguish between movements along a supply curve and a shift in the curve itself

What are some variables that could shift the supply curve?

Shifts in the Supply Curve

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What are some variables that could shift the supply curve?

- 1 Technology
- 2 Expectations
- 3 Number of sellers

Equilibrium

Economists are generally interested in the point at which the supply and demand is balanced: *equilibrium*.

- Equilibrium price (*market-clearing*)
- Equilibrium quantity

At the equilibrium point:

$$Q_D = Q_S$$

Equilibrium

The actions of individuals in the market will naturally bring it into equilibrium: the *law of supply and demand*.

- If there is excess supply there is a *surplus*
- If there is excess demand there is a *shortage*

Think about both situations:

- 1 What is the relationship between quantity demanded and quantity supplied?
- 2 Is the price above or below equilibrium?

Market for Gasoline: Part 1

Draw supply and demand curves for the market of gasoline, and show the impact of the decrease in the gas tax.

Does this represent a change in the demand curve or the supply curve?

Market for Gasoline: Part 1

The tax cut caused the supply curve to shift to the right: for any given price, sellers will supply a larger quantity at a lower price.

Now suppose all cars experience a sudden increase in fuel efficiency: we can drive more miles with the same amount of gasoline.

Represent this as a shift in supply or demand in our market for gasoline.

Market for Gasoline: Part 1

Increased fuel efficiency shifts our demand curve to the left; at any given price people buy less gasoline than before.

Now think about the two changes together; the gasoline tax is lowered, and fuel efficiency is increased.

What is the net effect on the equilibrium quantity and price? Is it unambiguous?

Market for Gasoline: Part 1

The supply curve shifts to the right, and the demand curve shifts to the left:

- The equilibrium price is unambiguously lower
- The equilibrium quantity may increase or decrease; it depends on the magnitude of the two shifts!

Note that this follows directly from our supply and demand side analyses!

- In both cases, the price decreased
- With the tax cut quantity increased, but with the fuel efficiency increase quantity decreased

Now suppose fuel efficiency suddenly gets *worse*.

Market for Gasoline: Part 2

The effect is the opposite as before: decreased fuel efficiency shifts our demand curve to the right so that at any given price people want to buy more gasoline.

Now think about the two changes together; the gasoline tax is lowered and fuel efficiency is decreased.

What are the net effects on the equilibrium quantity and price?

Market for Gasoline: Part 2

Supply and demand curves both shift to the right:

- The equilibrium quantity is unambiguously higher
- The equilibrium price may increase or decrease; it depends on the magnitude of the two shifts!

Again, this follows directly from our supply and demand side analyses:

- In both cases, the quantity increased
- With the tax cut, price decreased, but with the fuel efficiency decrease, price increased
- Net effect on price is ambiguous

Market for Orioles Tickets

In the last few years, the Orioles have gone from one of the worst teams in MLB to one of the best.

- 1 Draw the supply and demand curves for Orioles tickets.
- 2 Does the supply curve look like it did in the gasoline market?
- 3 Will the team's improved record affect supply or demand, and why?
- 4 What will happen to equilibrium price and quantity?

Market for Orioles Tickets

- Supply curve is vertical: why?
- A better team means more fans want to attend more games, shifting the demand curve to the right
- The equilibrium quantity is the same, but the price has increased

Is this a realistic way to think about the market for tickets?

Market for Orioles Tickets

Is this a realistic way to think about the ticket market?

- In some ways: we really do see ticket prices increasing, and the number of seats really is fixed
- In reality, not all seats are the same (different markets?) and not all seats get sold (there are fixed costs and frictions)
- Don't worry about any of this for now!