

HIGHLIGHTS OF  
MARKET ECONOMY

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刘赛力 著



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HIGHLIGHTS OF MARKET ECONOMY

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刘赛力 著

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## 序

随着我国四化建设的迅猛发展和改革开放的更加深入，我国经济已日益与世界接轨，中外经济联系越加广泛。经济交往与合作已深入到我国对外工作的各个方面。我国迫切需要培养大批既能熟练运用外语又掌握包括市场经济知识在内的各种专业知识的外交、外事人才。用外语讲授专业课无疑是培养这种人才的好方法。改革开放以来，我国已陆续出版了一批与经济有关的教科书，而由我国学者自己用英文编写的系统地讲授一门经济学知识的书籍尚未见到。本书的出版无疑将填补国内学者根据中国国情的需要，用英语比较系统地讲解市场经济知识的空白。

这是一本很有特色的用英语讲授市场经济的好书。

第一、本书在介绍西方市场经济理论时观点准确，评价适当。本书客观地讲解了市场经济学的基本内容，并能实事求是地指出其积极意义，弱点或局限性。如在第六单元《怎样使收入和财富的分配更均衡？》中，既阐述了在市场经济中，政府对收入分配的干预及目的，同时也用无可辩驳的事实指出了西方社会事实上所存在的贫富两极分化现象；第十单元《世界银行如何划分国家的类别？》中，清楚地阐述了世界银行按人均国民生产总值划分国家类别的依据，又指出了国民生产总值如何作为衡量经济福利的尺度以及国民生产总值统计中存在的缺陷及问题。同时作者还加进

了世界银行最新公布的衡量国民财富的新方法这一新内容。

第二、本书在选题和章、节内容的安排上有独到之处。结合我国国内培养外事人才的需要，做到了既有专业性、科学性又具实用性、知识性、趣味性。本书从经济学的细胞——生产要素——讲起，直到国民经济核算理论、人口、就业、世界经济增长等世界性的经济问题，从微观讲到宏观，材料丰富，通过实例和数据，深入浅出地讲解了市场经济的理论和政策。如：第一单元中对决策的成本和收益的论述，第二单元市场机制中干预的作用的论述，第七单元中对国民生产总值和国内生产总值的区别的论述，第八单元中对名义国民生产总值和实际国民生产总值的区别及计算方法的论述及其它一些章节的讲解都很有特色，且论述透彻。

第三、把市场经济的讲授同中国经济的发展、经济问题作了适当地结合。如在第五单元《工业应该如何布局？》中，加进了关于中国经济特区情况的介绍和练习；在第十单元《什么是适度人口？》中，除了较详细地阐述了有关的专业知识外，还介绍了中国的人口状况并阐述了中国推行计划生育这一国策的原因和政策等。使学生在学经济知识的同时了解自己的国情和政策。

第四、作者用简洁、明快、流畅的英语讲解了市场经济的基本知识和热门经济专题。读者可在学习经济知识的同时学习英语，掌握必要的经济英语词汇和术语，提高英语阅读和写作以及对外交往的能力，这是本书的一个突出特点。

本书作者曾是我国文革后恢复研究生招生制度考取的第一批研究生。自1981年毕业后，始终从事世界经济和国际关系方面的教学和研究工作，并且在我国驻外使馆从事过经济调研工作。本书既是她结合自己多年讲授世界经济和西方经济学等课程的体会，又是根据培养外交、外事人才的需要，编写出来的一个重要

成果，也体现了中青年经济学者在理论研究上和教学上的开拓性和进取性。

当然本书限于篇幅，国际贸易、国际金融方面的内容没有能包括进去，不能不说是一个缺憾，不过这是可以另写一本专著的大题目，也许可以成为作者下一本著作的内容。但总的说来，这无疑是一本好书。

我曾长期从事世界经济方面的教学和研究，看到我的学生在教学和著述方面的优秀成果，使我感到格外欣慰。我相信，本书定将受到读者的欢迎和好评，并希望看到有更多的中青年经济学者的教学和科研成果问世。

彭清源

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# *Unit 1*

## **What Is Economics?**

### **1. Basic Economic Problem**

#### **1) Unlimited Wants in the Face of Limited Resources and Limited Capacity to Produce**

Humans have many different types of wants and needs. For example, Julia is 20 and has just started working in a company. She is paid monthly and after she has paid the tax and other allowances, Julia is left with about \$400 per month. She is very fond of fashionable clothes and likes to go out at weekends with her friends. She also wishes to save up for a tour in China on holidays, and she is interested in further study. Unfortunately, the \$400 left per month is not sufficient for all these things. Julia has to make a choice. If she wants to buy more fashionable clothes, she may not be able to save up for her holiday. If she wants to enter a local commercial college for further training, she may not be able to go out each weekend with her friends.

Julia's problem is like so many other people's problem. She has a limited amount of money, but her wants are unlimited. Julia, therefore, has to make a choice about how to spend her money, i.e. she needs to allocate her limited resources to provide for her various wants.

The above example provides us with a definition of the subject of economics. Economics is a logical and analytical approach to economic problems and issues. More specifically, economics is a social science which studies human behaviour as a relation between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses. We can apply this definition to all sorts of activities. Take, for example, a company making furniture. It will have limited resources and will need to make choices. Should it employ more workers or buy more machines to make furniture? Should it buy a lorry to deliver the goods or should it use the services of other companies? Should it spend money providing a canteen for its employees or should the manager have a new office? Just like an individual, a businessman will need to make a choice because his resources are limited but his demands are many.

Humans have many different types of wants and needs. Economics looks only at man's material wants and needs. These are satisfied by consuming commodities—either goods (physical items such as food) or services (non-physical items such as heating).

There are two types of commodities: free goods and economic goods. A free good, such as air and water in the Pacific Ocean, is available to everyone at price of zero. Goods of this kind are not scarce because they are plentiful in relation to demands and are not brought about through the use of scarce resources (factors of production). They are, therefore, outside of the concern of the economists. Most goods and services are brought forth via scarce resources in



order to meet a demand, and they are economic goods. An economic good is a commodity in limited supply. Free goods can become economic goods if scarce resources are used to move them or to alter their condition so that they can be more useful. The air in an air-conditioned office, the water from the Pacific Ocean that has been desalted, and the sand in a sand box are all economic goods. Goods can be free in one geographic location but scarce in another. For example, water to grow crops is free along big rivers but scarce in deserts.

Human wants and needs are virtually unlimited, because goods eventually wear out and need to be replaced, new or improved products become available, and people get fed up with what they already own.

Unfortunately, on the other side, people find themselves in a situation of scarcity. Commodities (goods and services) are produced by using resources. There is only a limited amount of resources available to produce the goods and services we want. In all societies, people want more than they are capable of producing. Technical and scientific progress has led to enormous increases in output per head, but people's appetites for material satisfactions have also increased and more than kept pace with the growth in productivity. Thus people are forced to make choices.

Society has to decide which commodities to make. For example, do we build hospitals or make automobiles? And we have to decide how to make these commodities. Do we employ workers or use robots? Who is going to use the goods