Economic Game Changers: Karl Marx | Worksheet

Matching

Match the definition in Column A with the term in Column B.

Column A
______ The system Marx said would come after socialism
______ Owners take more than they give to workers
______ The class of factory and business owners
______ Marx's claim that history is class warfare
______ A system of private ownership and free exchange
______ State control of production and land
______ The class of workers who own little

Column B
a. Capitalism
b. Bourgeoisie
c. Proletariat
d. Class Struggle
e. Surplus Value
f. Socialism
g. Communism

Multiple Choice

1. **According to Marx, what is the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat?**
   a. The bourgeoisie and the proletariat work together to grow the economy.
   b. The bourgeoisie depends on the proletariat for political leadership and social order.
   c. The bourgeoisie oppresses the proletariat by paying them less than their work is worth.
   d. The bourgeoisie and the proletariat take turns ruling each other across history.
2. **What did Marx mean by surplus value?**
   a. The taxes a business pays to the government on every product sold.
   b. The difference between what a worker is paid and the value of what the worker produces.
   c. The extra profit a business makes when demand is higher than expected.
   d. The wealth a country gains by trading with other countries.
3. **What happened in countries that adopted Marxist ideas in the 20th century?**
   a. Most countries achieved abundance, but personal freedoms remained limited.
   b. The theories failed everywhere they were tried, with millions of people losing their lives.
   c. Standards of living rose at first, then fell back to where they started.
   d. A new bourgeoisie emerged, leading to another round of class struggle.
4. **Which BEST explains why Marx's prediction of inevitable revolution did not come true in industrialized capitalist countries?**
   a. People became wealthier and saw their standard of living improve.
   b. Governments outlawed revolutionary political movements before they could grow.
   c. People were unable to organize because they were divided by language and culture.
   d. The proletariat eventually became the bourgeoisie through inheritance and marriage.

Scan to watch episode:

Application
Economies built on choice, personal preference, and freedom have produced the highest standards of living in human history. Economies built on government control have produced the opposite. Using what you have learned in this episode, explain why these two paths lead to such different outcomes for ordinary people.

Historical Context

1. How were working conditions different in Europe in the nineteenth century compared to today?

2. Define the class struggle that Marx imagined. Does a person's economic status determine their moral character?

Exit Ticket:

- Name three countries that tried Marxist ideas.

Economic Game Changers: Karl Marx | Answer Key

Matching

Match the definition in Column A with the term in Column B.

Column A	Column B
g. The system Marx said would come after socialism.	a. Capitalism
e. Owners take more than they give to workers.	b. Bourgeoisie
b. The class of factory and business owners.	c. Proletariat
d. Marx's claim that history is class warfare.	d. Class Struggle
a. A system of private ownership and free exchange.	e. Surplus Value
f. State control of production and land.	f. Socialism
c. The class of workers who own little.	g. Communism

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Application
Economies built on choice, personal preference, and freedom have produced the highest standards of living in human history. Economies built on government control have produced the opposite. Using what you have learned in this episode, explain how economic choices and human flourishing work together.

Example Student Response:
When people have the freedom to make their own economic choices, they can pursue what they value, take risks, and benefit from their own work. A factory worker can quit and find a better job. A parent can choose where to buy groceries. A young person can decide what career to pursue. Every person is different, and an economy that respects those differences produces the goods, services, and opportunities that real people want. Over time, this freedom adds up to rising standards of living, more choices, and lives that get better generation after generation. When the government takes those things away, ordinary people suffer. Marx believed the government should control the economy on behalf of the workers, but every country that tried this approach crushed the very people it claimed to help. In the Soviet Union, workers stood in long lines for bread that was never enough. In China, tens of millions of ordinary people starved to death. In North Korea today, families live in fear of being sent to prison camps for saying the wrong thing.
The two paths lead to such different outcomes because of what each system does to choice itself. Free economies treat people as individuals capable of making their own decisions. Controlled economies treat people as parts of a system that someone else manages. When you take away choice, you take away the engine that makes flourishing possible.

Guidance for Grading:
- ☐ The student demonstrates understanding of how choice, personal preference, and freedom contribute to economic flourishing
- ☐ The student articulates why government control of the economy produces poor outcomes for ordinary people
- ☐ The student uses evidence from the lesson to support the argument — either Marx's framework, the historical record of countries that adopted his ideas, or both.
- ☐ The student arrives at a clear conclusion about why the two systems produce such different results that is well-reasoned and clear.

Historical Context
1. Working conditions in nineteenth-century Europe were harsh — yet standards of living were rising. How does this complicate Marx's picture of capitalism?
   Example answer:
   The hardship was real: workers labored alongside dangerous machinery, children as young as six worked fourteen-hour shifts, and many families were crammed into filthy tenements. But at the same time, the standard of living for most people was rising

substantially. Marx focused on the hardship while ignoring the progress. The same system he called exploitation was already improving the lives of the very workers he claimed to defend — and it kept improving them, without the revolution he said was necessary.

2. Define the class struggle that Marx imagined. Does a person's economic status determine their moral character?
   Example answer:
   Marx claimed that all of history is one long struggle between economic classes — the bourgeoisie, who own the means of production, oppressing the proletariat, who provide labor and own very little. No — economic status does not determine moral character. Being poor does not automatically make someone good, and owning a business does not automatically make someone an oppressor. Marx's framework vilified one group and treated the other only as victims, when in reality owners also work, take risks, and contribute.

Exit Ticket:

- Name three countries that tried Marxist ideas.
  Example answer:
  Any three of the following: the Soviet Union (Russia), China, Cuba, North Korea, Venezuela, or Cambodia.