

Our Pop Culture Gets Older, but Our Students Stay the Same Age

Teaching Economics With
Media They Don't Recognize





Abbott *Elementary*

**How familiar
are you with
the show *The
Simpsons* and
its main
characters
(e.g., Bart,
Homer, Lisa,
and Marge)?**

(A) I am incredibly familiar with the show, its characters, and major storylines.

(B) I am very familiar with the show and can recall many characters or episodes, but I haven't seen all of it.

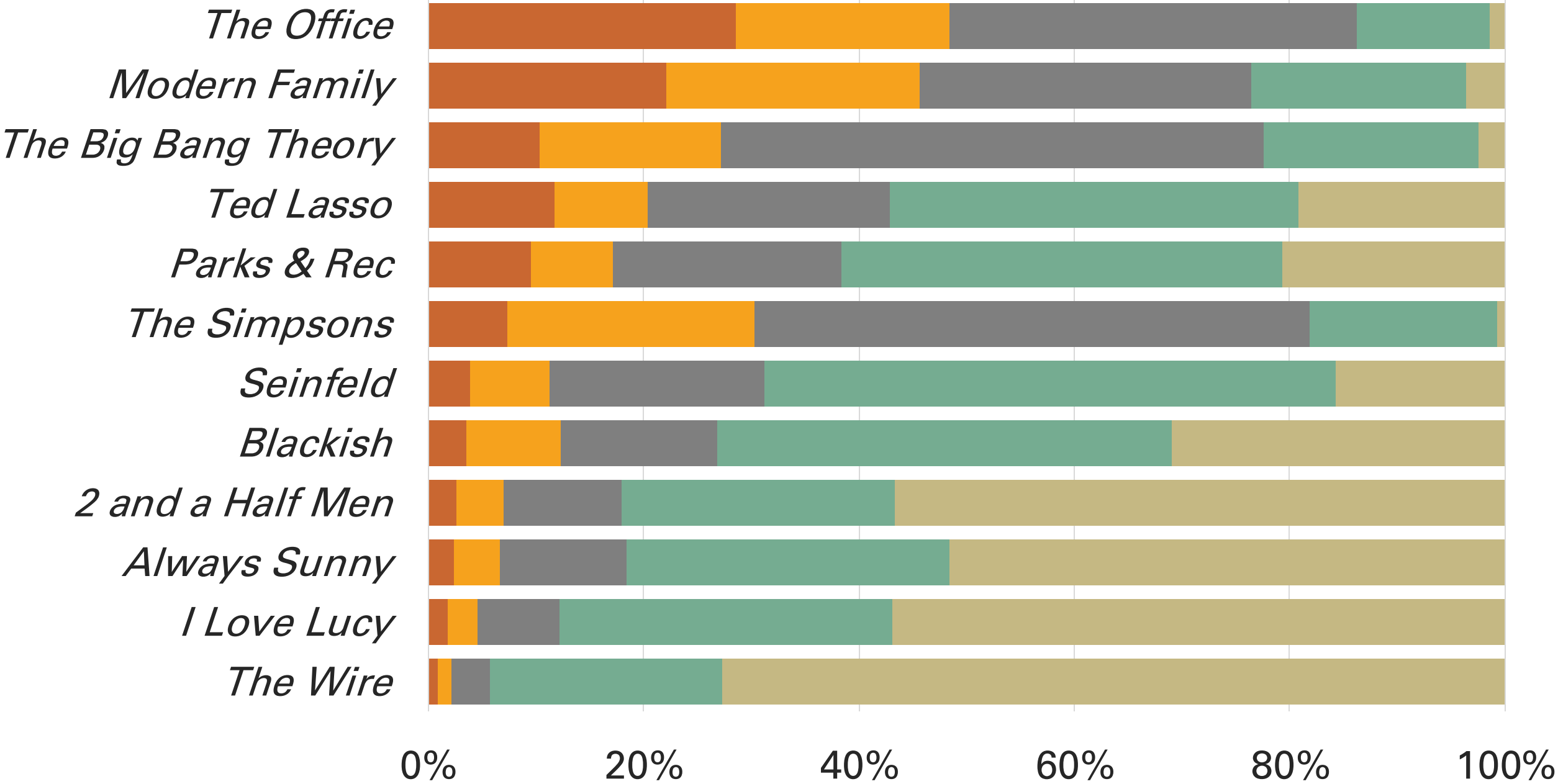
(C) I know the general premise and a few characters, but I've only seen a little.

(D) I've heard of it but don't know much about the characters or plot.

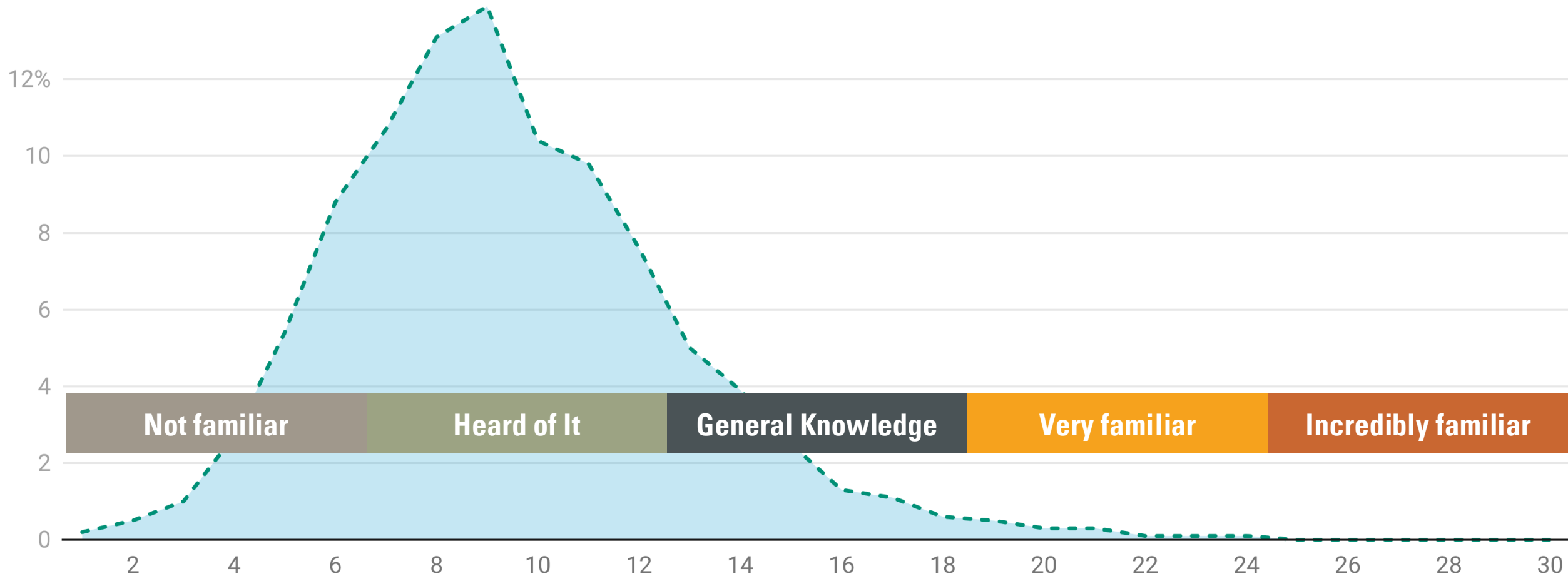
(E) I have never heard of this show or any of its characters.

A cartoon illustration of a man with yellow skin, brown hair, and a worried expression. He is wearing a dark grey suit, a purple shirt, and a red tie. He is holding his right hand to his chin in a thinking pose. The background is a blue sky with white clouds, a dark tree trunk on the left, and a cityscape with buildings at the bottom. Several jagged, stylized lightning bolts are visible in the sky. The text "Am I out of touch?" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font with a black outline across the bottom of the image.

Am I out of touch?



YOUR STUDENTS AREN'T VERY FAMILIAR WITH ECONOMICS WHEN THEY START YOUR CLASS EITHER...



Note: Data presented in Table 4 of the TUCE Examiner's Manual (Walstad, Watts, and Rebeck 2007). The distribution of test scores is based on 3,255 college and university students who took the microeconomics version of the TUCE-4 as a pretest and posttest.

Trying to make the material more relevant to students' interests doesn't work... context is seldom the decisive factor in whether or not our interest is maintained... Another problem with trying to use content to engage students is that it's sometimes very difficult to do and the whole enterprise comes off as artificial.

Daniel Willingham in *Why Don't Students Like School?*



HOW DO YOU DO, FELLOW KIDS?

So if content won't do it, how about style? Students often refer to a good teachers as those who "make stuff interesting." It's not that the teacher relates the material to students' interests-rather, the teacher has a way of interacting with students that they find engaging.

Daniel Willingham in *Why Don't Students Like School?*

SIMPLE WAYS TO USE "OLD" MEDIA IN YOUR CLASSROOM

- Introduce the basics of the show
- Use a modern homage

SIMPLE WAYS TO USE "OLD" MEDIA IN YOUR CLASSROOM

- **Introduce the basics of the show**
- Use a modern homage



NAME THAT TUNE



SIMPLE WAYS TO USE "OLD" MEDIA IN YOUR CLASSROOM

- Introduce the basics of the show
- **Use a more recent homage**







SIMPLE WAYS TO USE MEDIA IN YOUR CLASSROOM

- Introduce a concept
- Prompt for a question
- Generate discussion

**Find your
comfort zone.
Don't do more than
you're comfortable!**

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WHAT IS LIQUIDITY?



Introduce a Concept

(high-pitched voice)
HE'S GETTING AWAY!

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Average Total Cost Curve

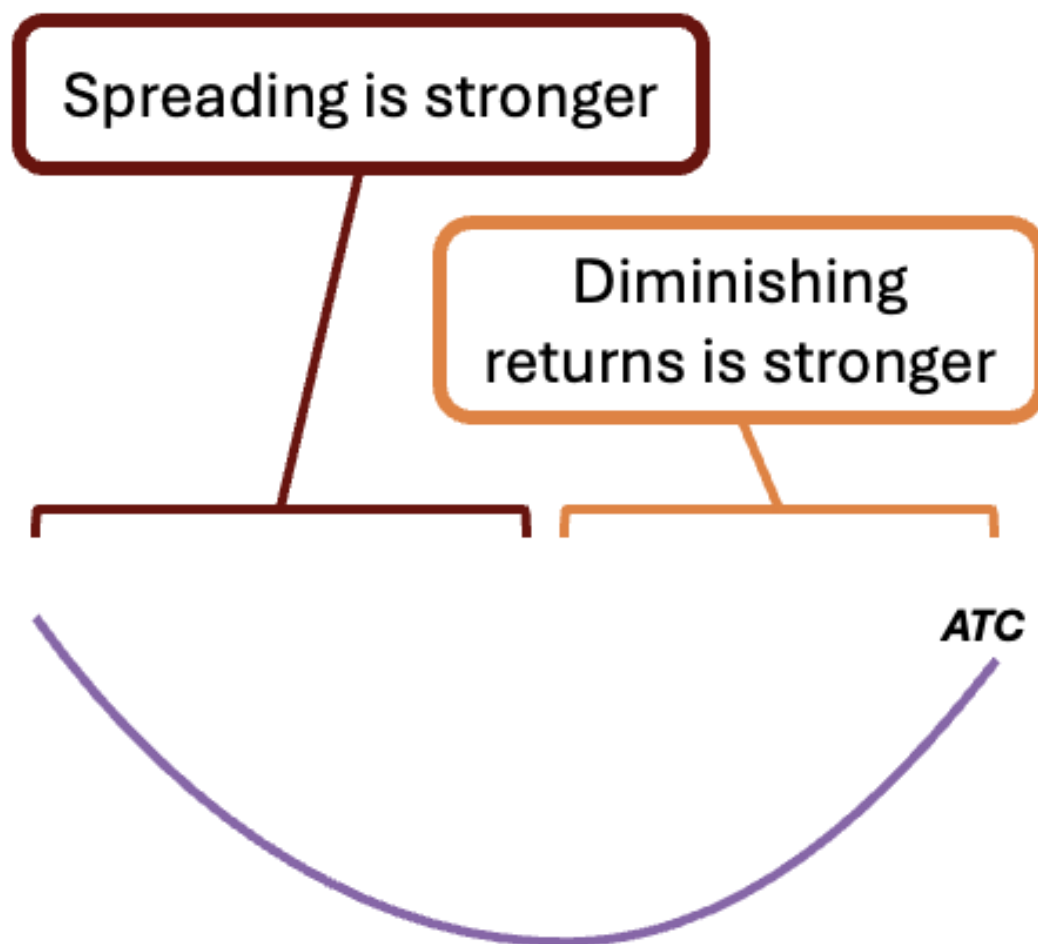
Increasing output has two opposing effects on **average total costs**:

The spreading effect:

As output increases, fixed cost is spread out and leads to **decreasing average costs**.

The diminishing returns effect:

As output increases, firms require more and more variable inputs, which leads to **higher average costs**.



Prompt for a Question

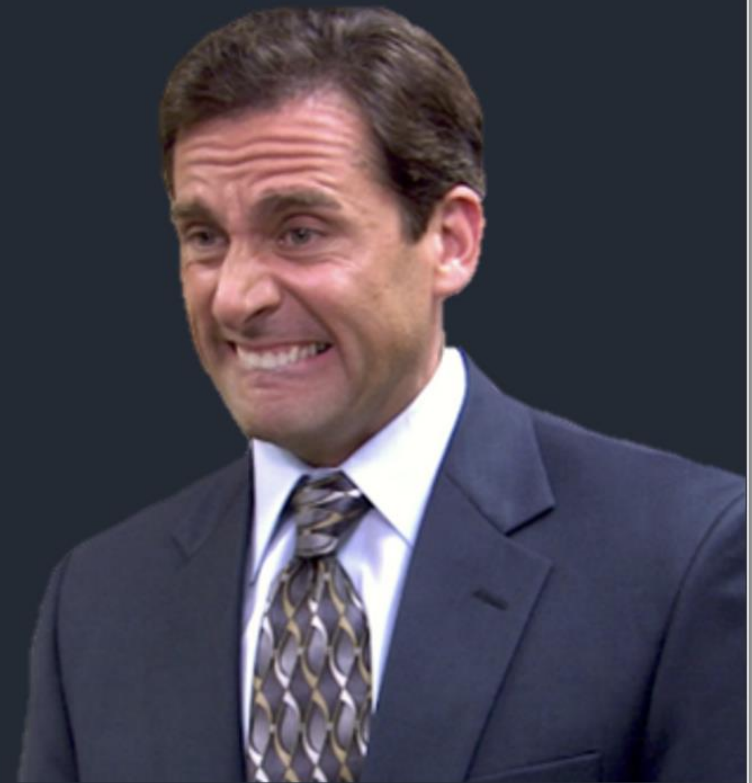


If prices are what's putting the Michael Scott Paper Company out of business, which of the following do you think is happening?

(A) Prices are below average total costs

(B) Price are above average fixed costs

(C) The MC of the last box of paper is greater than MR



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- Introduce a concept
- Prompt for a question
- **Generate discussion**

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Generate a Discussion



- [sighs]

Generate a Discussion

Besides the beautiful sunsets, what other benefits come from the factory pollution?

Can you think of any other costs, besides asthma, that might come from the pollution?

Why might the socially optimal level of pollution not be zero?

**STAR
WARS**

**Parks and
Recreation**

the office

Seinfeld

Su erstore

SEVERAL WEBSITES
EXIST FOR (BROADLY)
POPULAR TV SERIES

Br³⁵eaking
Bad⁵⁶

**SHARK
TANK**

**the Big
BANG**

**SQUID
GAME**

modern
family

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