Money Growth and Inflation

PRINCIPLES OF
Economics
N. Gregory Mankiw

Lecture 8

In this chapter, look for the answers to these questions:

- How does the money supply affect inflation and nominal interest rates?
- Does the money supply affect real variables like real GDP or the real interest rate?
- (In this chapter, we look at these questions from a long-run perspective.)
- How is inflation like a tax?
- What are the costs of inflation? How serious are they?

Introduction

- This chapter introduces the **quantity theory of money** to explain one of the Ten Principles of Economics from Chapter 1:

  Prices rise when the government prints too much money.

- Most economists believe the quantity theory is a good explanation of the long run behavior of inflation.

The Value of Money

- ***P*** = the price level
  (*e.g.*, the CPI or GDP deflator)

  P is the price of a basket of goods, measured in money.
- 1/***P*** is the value of $1, measured in goods.
- Example: basket contains one candy bar.
  - If ***P*** = $2, value of $1 is 1/2 candy bar
  - If ***P*** = $3, value of $1 is 1/3 candy bar
- Inflation drives up prices and drives down the value of money.

Money Supply (MS)

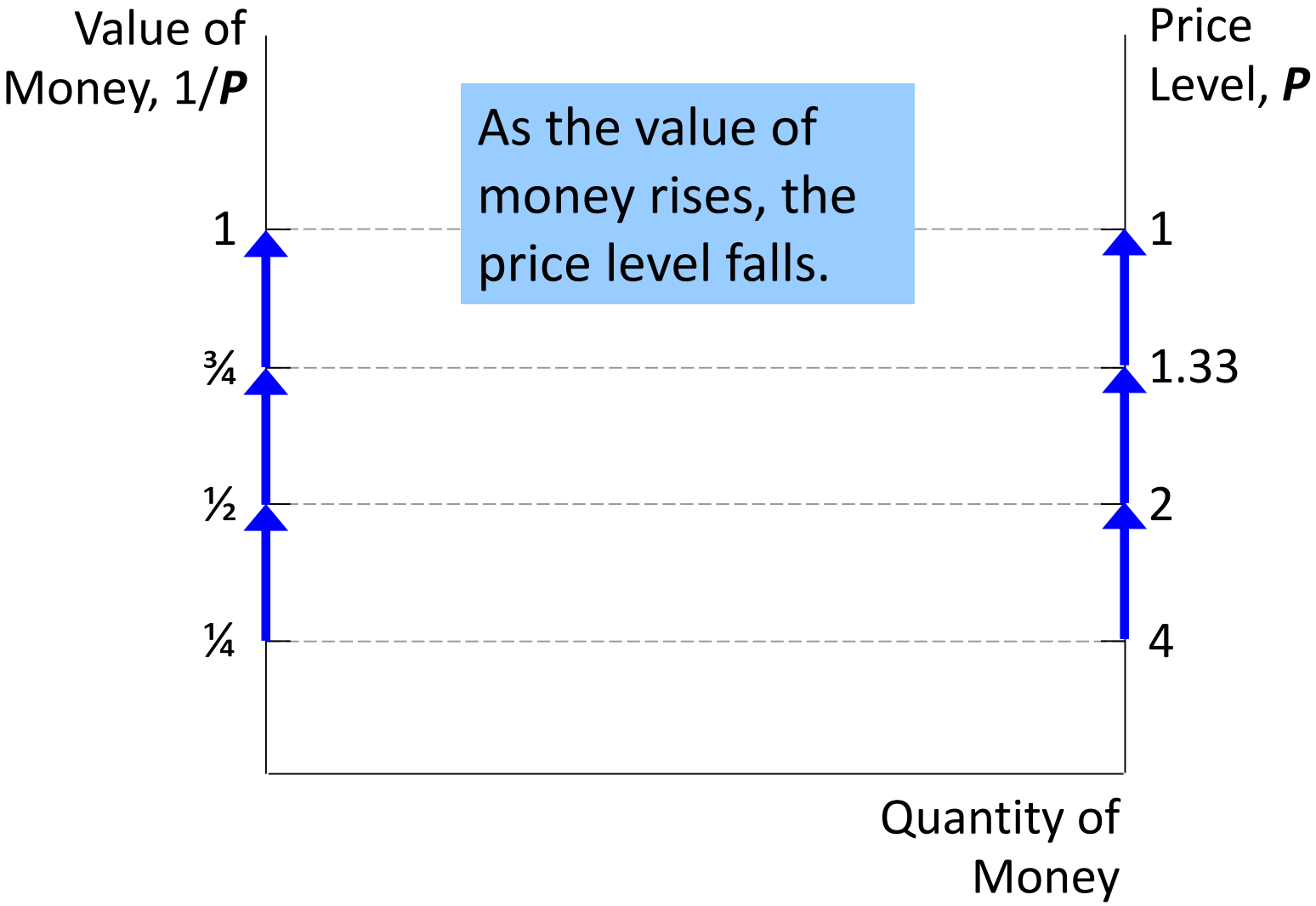
- In real world, determined by the Central Bank (e.g., the Fed), the banking system, consumers.
- In this model, we assume the Fed precisely controls MS and sets it at some fixed amount.

Money Demand (MD)

- Refers to how much wealth people want to hold in liquid form.
- Depends on ***P***:
  An increase in ***P*** reduces the value of money, so more money is required to buy g&s.
- Thus, quantity of money demanded is negatively related to the value of money and positively related to ***P***, other things equal.

  (These "other things" include real income, interest rates, availability of ATMs.)

The Money Supply-Demand Diagram



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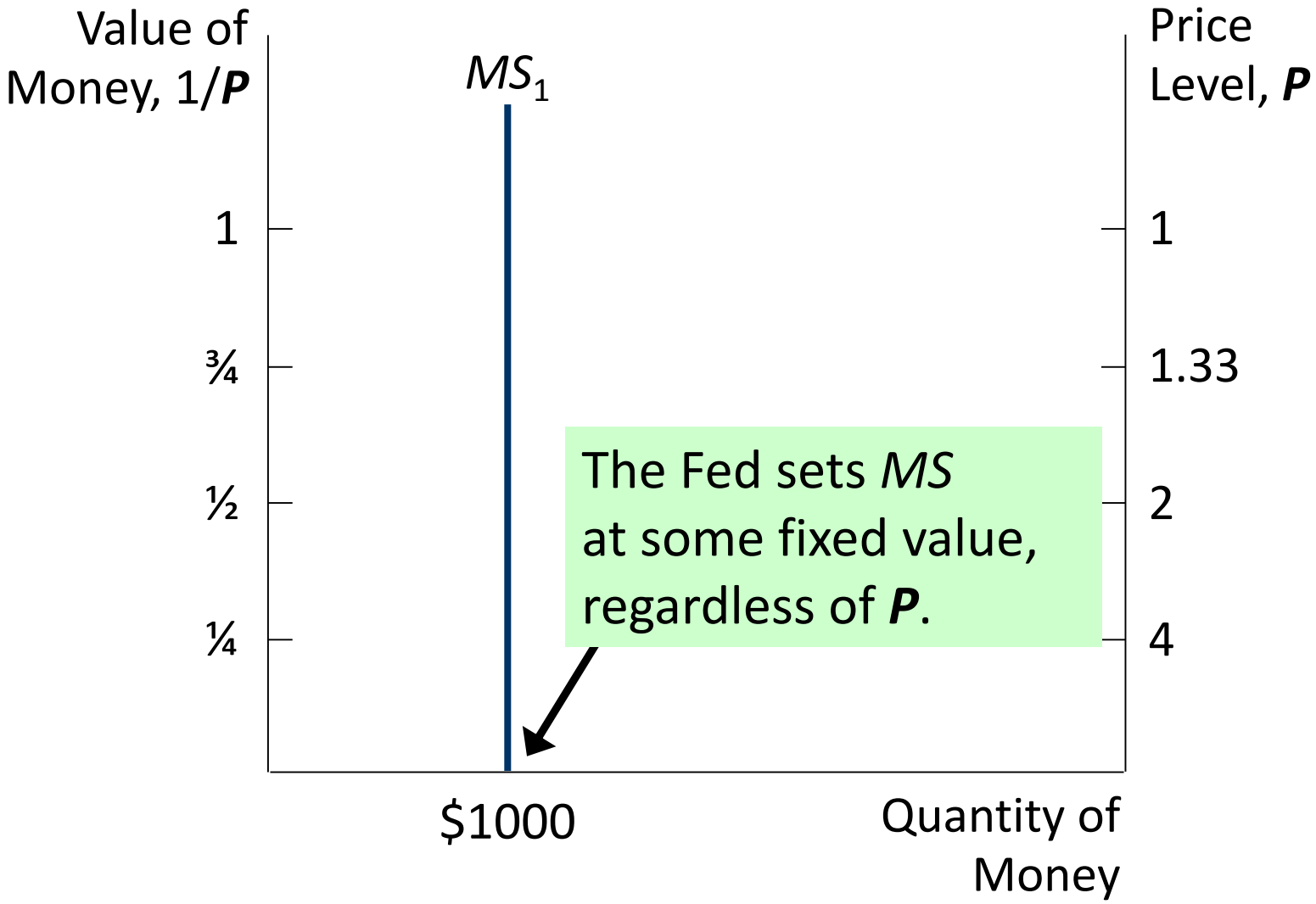

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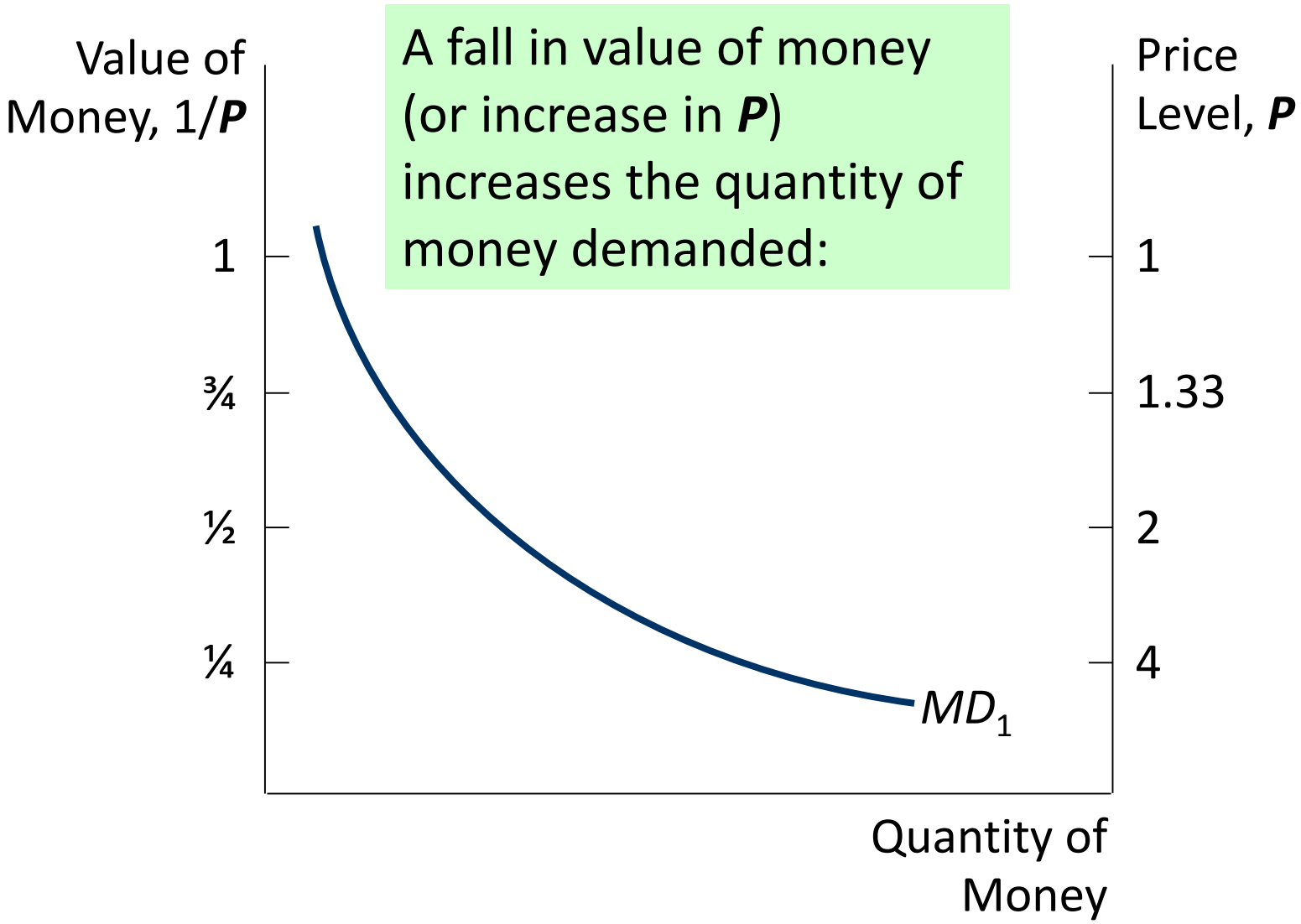

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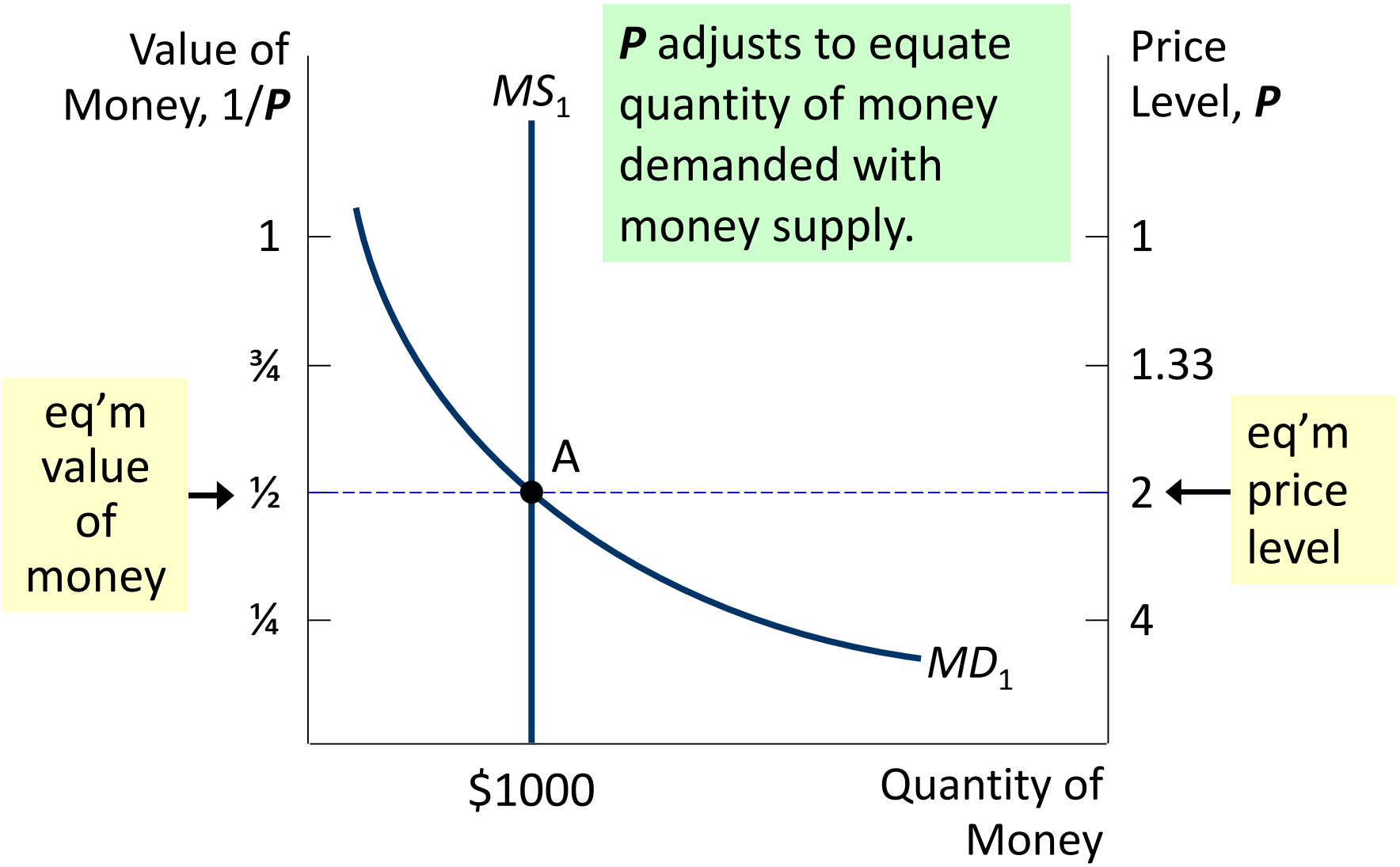
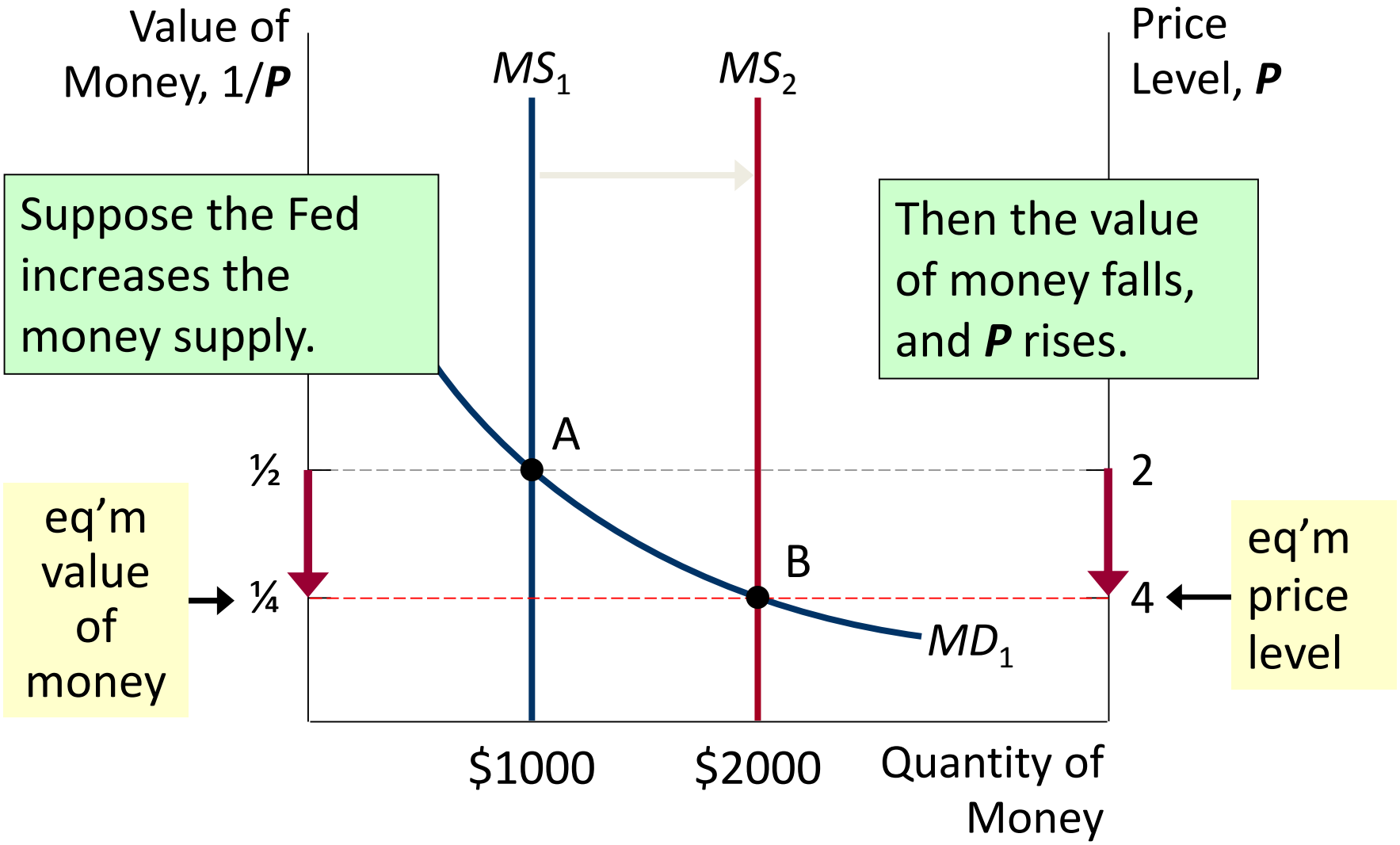


The Effects of a Monetary Injection



A Brief Look at the Adjustment Process

Result from graph: Increasing MS causes ***P*** to rise.

How does this work?

- At the initial ***P***, an increase in MS causes excess supply of money.
- People get rid of their excess money by spending it on g&s or by loaning it to others, who spend it. Result: increased demand for goods.
- But (**long-run**) supply of goods does not increase, so prices must rise.

(Other things happen in the short run, which we will study in later chapters.)

The Velocity of Money

- **Velocity of money**: the rate at which money changes hands

- Notation:

  $P \times Y$ = nominal GDP

  = (price level) x (real GDP)

  M = money supply

  V = velocity

- Velocity formula: $V = \dfrac{P \times Y}{M}$

The Velocity of Money

Velocity formula: $V = \frac{P \times Y}{M}$

Example with one good: pizza.
In 2008,

Y = real GDP = 3000 pizzas

P = price level = price of pizza = \$10

$P \times Y$ = nominal GDP = value of pizzas = \$30,000

M = money supply = \$10,000

V = velocity = \$30,000/\$10,000 = 3

The average dollar was used in 3 transactions.

ACTIVE LEARNING *1*
Exercise

One good: corn.

The economy has enough labor, capital, and land to produce ***Y*** = 800 bushels of corn.

V is constant.

In 2008, MS = \$2000, ***P*** = \$5/bushel.

Compute nominal GDP and velocity in 2008.

ACTIVE LEARNING *1*
Answers

Given: $Y = 800$, V is constant,
MS = \$2000 and P = \$5 in 2005.

Compute nominal GDP and velocity in 2008.

Nominal GDP = $P \times Y$ = \$5 x 800 = \$4000

$$V = \frac{P \times Y}{M} = \frac{\$4000}{\$2000} = 2$$

The Quantity Equation

Velocity formula: $V = \frac{P \times Y}{M}$

- Multiply both sides of formula by ***M***:

$$M \times V = P \times Y$$

- Called the **quantity equation**

The Quantity Theory in 5 Steps

Start with quantity equation: $M \times V = P \times Y$

1. V is stable.
2. So, a change in M causes nominal GDP ($P \times Y$) to change by the same percentage.
3. A change in M does not affect Y:
   money is neutral,
   Y is determined by technology & resources
4. So, P changes by same percentage as $P \times Y$ and M.
5. Rapid money supply growth causes rapid inflation.

ACTIVE LEARNING 2
Exercise

One good: corn. The economy has enough labor, capital, and land to produce ***Y*** = 800 bushels of corn. ***V*** is constant. In 2008, MS = \$2000, ***P*** = \$5/bushel.

For 2009, the CB increases MS by 5%, to \$2100.

a. Compute the 2009 values of nominal GDP and ***P***. Compute the inflation rate for 2008-2009.

b. Suppose tech. progress causes ***Y*** to increase to 824 in 2009. Compute 2008-2009 inflation rate.

ACTIVE LEARNING 2
Answers

Given: $Y = 800$, V is constant,
MS = \$2000 and $P = \$5$ in 2008.

For 2009, the CB increases MS by 5%, to \$2100.

a. Compute the 2009 values of nominal GDP and P.
Compute the inflation rate for 2008-2009.

Nominal GDP $= P \times Y = M \times V$ (Quantity Eq'n)

$= \$2100 \times 2 = \boxed{\$4200}$

$$P = \frac{P \times Y}{Y} = \frac{\$4200}{800} = \boxed{\$5.25}$$

$$\text{Inflation rate} = \frac{\$5.25 - 5.00}{5.00} = \boxed{5\%} \text{ (same as MS!)}$$

ACTIVE LEARNING 2
Answers

Given: $Y = 800$, V is constant,
MS = \$2000 and P = \$5 in 2005.

For 2009, the CB increases MS by 5%, to \$2100.

b. Suppose tech. progress causes Y to increase 3% in 2009, to 824. Compute 2008-2009 inflation rate.

First, use Quantity Eq'n to compute P:

$$P = \frac{M \times V}{Y} = \frac{\$4200}{824} = \$5.10$$

$$\text{Inflation rate} = \frac{\$5.10 - 5.00}{5.00} = 2\%$$

ACTIVE LEARNING 2

Summary and Lessons about the Quantity Theory of Money

- If real GDP is constant, then inflation rate = money growth rate.
- If real GDP is growing, then inflation rate < money growth rate.
- The bottom line:
  - Economic growth increases # of transactions.
  - Some money growth is needed for these extra transactions.
  - Excessive money growth causes inflation.

The Neutrality of Money

- **Monetary neutrality**: the proposition that changes in the money supply do not affect real variables
- Doubling money supply causes all nominal prices to double; what happens to relative prices?
- Initially, relative price of cd in terms of pizza is

$$\frac{\text{price of cd}}{\text{price of pizza}} = \frac{\$15/\text{cd}}{\$10/\text{pizza}} = 1.5 \text{ pizzas per cd}$$

- After nominal prices double,

$$\frac{\text{price of cd}}{\text{price of pizza}} = \frac{\$30/\text{cd}}{\$20/\text{pizza}} = 1.5 \text{ pizzas per cd}$$

The relative price is unchanged.

The Neutrality of Money

- **Monetary neutrality**: the proposition that changes in the money supply do not affect real variables
- Similarly, the real wage ***W***/***P*** remains unchanged, so
  - quantity of labor supplied does not change
  - quantity of labor demanded does not change
  - total employment of labor does not change
- The same applies to employment of capital and other resources.
- Since employment of all resources is unchanged, total output is also unchanged by the money supply.

The Fisher Effect

- Rearrange the definition of the real interest rate:

Nominal interest rate	=	Inflation rate	+	Real interest rate

- The real interest rate is determined by saving & investment in the loanable funds market.
- Money supply growth determines inflation rate.
- So, this equation shows how the nominal interest rate is determined.

The Fisher Effect

Nominal interest rate	=	Inflation rate	+	Real interest rate

- In the long run, money is neutral,
  so a change in the money growth rate affects
  the inflation rate but not the real interest rate.
- So, the nominal interest rate adjusts one-for-one with changes in the inflation rate. (Long-run perspective)
- This relationship is called the **Fisher effect**
  after Irving Fisher, who studied it.

(2) The Costs of Inflation

The Costs of Inflation

- The **inflation fallacy**: most people think inflation erodes real incomes.
- But inflation is a general increase in prices of the things people buy and the things they sell (*e.g.,* their labor).
- In the long run, real incomes are determined by real variables, not the inflation rate.

The Costs of Inflation

- **(a) Shoeleather costs**: the resources wasted when inflation encourages people to reduce their money holdings
  - Includes the time and transactions costs of more frequent bank withdrawals
- **(b) Menu costs**: the costs of changing prices
  - Printing new menus, mailing new catalogs, *etc*.

The Costs of Inflation

- **(c) Misallocation of resources from relative-price variability**: Firms don't raise prices frequently and don't all raise prices at the same time, so relative prices can vary…

  which distorts the allocation of resources.

- **(d) Confusion & inconvenience**: Inflation changes the yardstick we use to measure transactions.

  Complicates long-range planning and the comparison of dollar amounts over time.

The Costs of Inflation

- **(e) Tax distortions**:

  Inflation makes nominal income grow faster than real income.

  Taxes are based on nominal income,
  and some are not adjusted for inflation.

  So, inflation causes people to pay more taxes even when their real incomes don't increase.

ACTIVE LEARNING *3*
Tax distortions

You deposit $1000 in the bank for one year.

CASE 1: inflation = 0%, nom. interest rate = 10%

CASE 2: inflation = 10%, nom. interest rate = 20%

a. In which case does the real value of your deposit grow the most?

Assume the tax rate is 25%.

b. In which case do you pay the most taxes?

c. Compute the after-tax nominal interest rate, then subtract off inflation to get the after-tax real interest rate for both cases.

ACTIVE LEARNING *3*
Answers

Deposit = $1000.

CASE 1: inflation = 0%, nom. interest rate = 10%

CASE 2: inflation = 10%, nom. interest rate = 20%

a. In which case does the real value of your deposit grow the most?

In both cases, the real interest rate is 10%,
so the real value of the deposit grows 10% (before taxes).

ACTIVE LEARNING *3*
Answers

Deposit = $1000. Tax rate = 25%.

CASE 1: inflation = 0%, nom. interest rate = 10%

CASE 2: inflation = 10%, nom. interest rate = 20%

b. In which case do you pay the most taxes?

CASE 1: interest income = $100,
so you pay $25 in taxes.

CASE 2: interest income = $200,
so you pay $50 in taxes.

ACTIVE LEARNING *3*
Answers

Deposit = $1000. Tax rate = 25%.

CASE 1: inflation = 0%, nom. interest rate = 10%

CASE 2: inflation = 10%, nom. interest rate = 20%

c. Compute the after-tax nominal interest rate, then subtract off inflation to get the after-tax real interest rate for both cases.

CASE 1:	nominal	=	0.75 x 10%	= 7.5%
	real	=	7.5% – 0%	= 7.5%
CASE 2:	nominal	=	0.75 x 20%	= 15%
	real	=	15% – 10%	= 5%

ACTIVE LEARNING *3*
Summary and lessons

Deposit = $1000. Tax rate = 25%.

CASE 1: inflation = 0%, nom. interest rate = 10%

CASE 2: inflation = 10%, nom. interest rate = 20%

Inflation…

- raises nominal interest rates (Fisher effect) but not real interest rates
- increases savers' tax burdens
- lowers the after-tax real interest rate

A Special Cost of Unexpected Inflation

- **(f) Arbitrary redistributions of wealth**
  Higher-than-expected inflation *transfers purchasing power* from creditors to debtors: Debtors get to repay their debt with dollars that aren't worth as much.

  Lower-than-expected inflation transfers purchasing power from debtors to creditors.

  High inflation is more variable and less predictable than low inflation.

  So, these *arbitrary redistributions* are frequent when inflation is high.

The Costs of Inflation

- All these costs are quite high for economies experiencing hyperinflation (>50% per year) .
- For economies with low inflation (< 10% per year), these costs are probably much smaller, though their exact size is open to debate.

CONCLUSION

- This chapter explains one of the Ten Principles of economics:

  Prices rise when the government prints too much money.

- We saw that money is neutral in the long run, affecting only nominal variables.
- In later chapters, we will see that money has important effects in the short run on real variables like output and employment.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- To explain inflation in the long run, economists use the *quantity theory of money*. According to this theory, the price level depends on the quantity of money, and the inflation rate depends on the money growth rate.
- The *classical dichotomy* is the division of variables into real & nominal. The *neutrality of money* is the idea that changes in the money supply affect nominal variables but not real ones. Most economists believe these ideas describe the economy in the long run.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- The *costs of inflation* include menu costs, shoeleather costs, confusion and inconvenience, distortions in relative prices and the allocation of resources, tax distortions, and arbitrary redistributions of wealth.