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

- Why do monopolies arise?
- Why is $MR < P$ for a monopolist?
- How do monopolies choose their $P$ and $Q$?
- How do monopolies affect society’s well-being?
- What can the government do about monopolies?
- What is price discrimination?

Introduction

A monopoly is a firm that is the sole seller of

In this chapter, we study monopoly and contrast it with perfect competition.

The key difference: A monopoly firm
Why Monopolies Arise

The main cause of monopolies is

Three sources of barriers to entry:

1. E.g., DeBeers owns most of the world’s diamond mines

2. E.g., patents, copyright laws

3. Natural monopoly:

Example: 1000 homes need electricity.

\[ \text{Electricity} \]
\[ \text{Cost} \]
\[ \text{ATC} \]
\[ \text{slopes downward due to huge FC and small MC} \]

\[ \text{ATC} \]
\[ \text{500} \]
\[ \text{1000} \]

Monopoly vs. Competition: Demand Curves

In a competitive market, the market demand curve slopes downward. but the demand curve for any individual firm’s product is

The firm can increase \( Q \) without lowering \( P \).
Monopoly vs. Competition: Demand Curves

A monopolist is the only seller, so

To sell a larger \( Q \),

\[
\text{A monopolist's demand curve}
\]

---

**ACTIVE LEARNING 1: A monopoly's revenue**

Moonbucks is the only seller of cappuccinos in town.
The table shows the market demand for cappuccinos.
Fill in the missing spaces of the table.
What is the relation between \( P \) and \( AR \)? Between \( P \) and \( MR \)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>( Q )</th>
<th>( P )</th>
<th>( TR )</th>
<th>( AR )</th>
<th>( MR )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>$4.50</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Moonbucks' \( D \) and \( MR \) Curves

\[
\text{Demand curve (P)}
\]

\[
\text{MR}
\]
Understanding the Monopolist's MR

Increasing $Q$ has two effects on revenue:

- The output effect:
- The price effect:

To sell a larger $Q$, the monopolist must

Hence,

$MR$ could even be negative if the price effect exceeds the output effect (e.g., when Moonbucks increases $Q$ from 5 to 6).

Profit-Maximization

Like a competitive firm, a monopolist maximizes profit by

Once the monopolist identifies this quantity,
**The Monopolist’s Profit**

As with a competitive firm, the monopolist’s profit equals:

- **Costs and Revenue**
- **ATC**
- **D**
- **MC**
- **MR**

**A Monopoly Does Not Have an S Curve**

A competitive firm

A monopoly firm

So there is no supply curve for monopoly.

**Case Study: Monopoly vs. Generic Drugs**

Patents on new drugs give a temporary monopoly to the seller.

The market for a typical drug
The Welfare Cost of Monopoly

Recall: In a competitive market equilibrium,

In the monopoly eq’nm, \( P > MR = MC \)

- The monopoly \( Q \) is too low –
- Thus, monopoly results in

Public Policy Toward Monopolies

- Increasing competition with antitrust laws
  - ban some anticompetitive practices, allow govt to break up monopolies
  - e.g.,

- Regulation
  - Govt agencies set the monopolist’s price
  - For natural monopolies,
    - If so, regulators might subsidize the monopolist or set \( P = ATC \) for zero economic profit.
Public Policy Toward Monopolies

Public ownership
• Example: U.S. Postal Service
• Problem:

Doing nothing
• The foregoing policies all have drawbacks, so the best policy may be no policy.

Price Discrimination

Discrimination: treating people differently based on some characteristic, e.g. race or gender.

Price discrimination:

The characteristic used in price discrimination

Perfect Price Discrimination vs. Single Price Monopoly

Here, the monopolist charges the same price ($P_M$) to all buyers.
CHAPTER 15

MONOPOLY

Perfect Price Discrimination vs. Single Price Monopoly

Here, the monopolist

This is called **perfect price discrimination**.

Price Discrimination in the Real World

In the real world, perfect price discrimination is not possible:

- buyers do not announce it to sellers

So, firms divide customers into groups based on

Examples of Price Discrimination

Movie tickets

Airline prices
Examples of Price Discrimination

Discount coupons

Need-based financial aid

Examples of Price Discrimination

Quantity discounts

CONCLUSION: The Prevalence of Monopoly

In the real world, pure monopoly is rare.

Yet, many firms have market power, due to

In many such cases, most of the results from this chapter apply, including