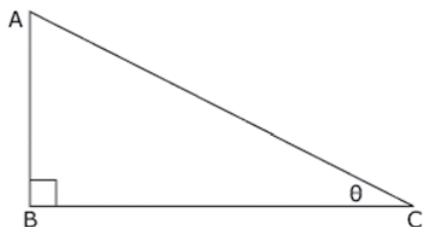


# Chinese Taking Away!

“Schools and students (in England) are reluctant to consider A-level mathematics to age 18, because the subject is regarded as difficult”, says Professor Richard Pike, and pupils are “urged to drop maths”.

## Diagnostic test set by an English university for first year students

In the diagram (not drawn to scale), angle ABC is a right angle,  $AB = 3m$   $BC = 4m$

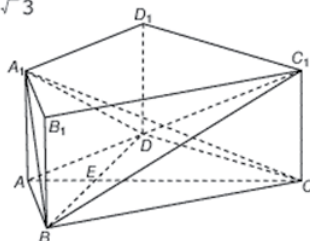


- (i) What is the length of AC
- (ii) What is the area of triangle ABC (above)?
- (iii) What is the  $\tan\theta$  of the triangle ABC (above) as a fraction?

## National test set by Chinese education authorities for pre-entry students

As shown in the figure, in square prism  $ABCD-A_1B_1C_1D_1$ ,  $AB=AD=2$ ,  $DC=2\sqrt{3}$ ,  $AA_1=\sqrt{3}$   $AD\perp DC$ ,  $AC\perp BD$ , and foot of perpendicular is E,

- (i) Prove:  $BD\perp A_1C$ :
- (ii) Determine the angle between the two planes  $A_1BD$  and  $BC_1D$ :
- (iii) Determine the angle formed by lines  $AD$  and  $BC_1$ , which are in different planes.



## WHAT CHANCE DO THE KIDS HAVE?

As someone who considered getting the question numbers right as a good result in my maths tests at school, I feel particularly qualified to comment on this!

I had no interest in maths at all until I discovered computers, but I still realise and accept that to progress we do need people who have great mathematical skills.

Just take a look at how low the teaching profession in England has dragged the math standards.

*Pictures left: These are actual examples of maths tests in England and China. Source: Royal Society of Chemistry.*

Science undergraduates in England are likely not to have studied maths beyond GCSE level at the age of 16, it says.

It has sounded a warning about Britain's future economic prospects, which it claims are threatened by competition from scientists in China.

RSC chief executive Richard Pike says mathematics is seen as integral to the sciences in China and its economy.

“There, the concept of remedial courses at university would be inconceivable.

“UK chemistry departments are often world-renowned for their creativity; however, mathematics tests set in England by many universities for undergraduate chemistry students in their first term to diagnose remedial requirements are disconcertingly simple.

“They encapsulate the challenge facing this country,” says Dr Pike.

But a maths professor in England, William Shaw, has said the emphasis in mathematics teaching varies from country to country and the RSC's attack is “nonsense”.

## While we're talking higher maths...

A husband and wife are traveling by car from Key West to Boston. After almost twenty-four hours on the road, they're too tired to continue, and they decide to stop for a rest.

They stop at a nice hotel and take a room, but they only plan to sleep for four hours and then get back on the road.

When they check out four hours later, the desk clerk hands them a bill for \$350.

The man explodes and demands to know why the charge is so high. He tells the clerk although it's a nice hotel, the rooms certainly aren't worth \$350.

When the clerk tells him \$350 is the standard rate, the man insists on speaking to the Manager.

The Manager appears, listens to the man, and then explains that the hotel has an Olympic-sized pool and a huge conference center that were available for the husband and wife to use.

“But we didn't use them,” the man complains.

“Well, they are here, and you could have,” explains the Manager. He goes on to explain they could have taken in one of the shows for which the hotel is famous. “The best entertainers from New York, Hollywood and Las Vegas perform here,” the Manager says.

“But we didn't go to any of those shows,” complains the man again.

“Well, we have them, and you could have,” the Manager replies. No matter what facility the Manager mentions, the man replies,

“But we didn't use it!” The Manager is unmoved, and eventually the man gives up and agrees to pay.

He writes a cheque and gives it to the Manager.

The Manager is surprised when he looks at the cheque. “But sir,” he says, this cheque is only made out for \$50.

“That's correct,” says the man. “I charged you \$300 for sleeping with my wife.”

“But I didn't!” exclaims the Manager.

“Well, too bad,” the man replies. “She was here and you could have.”

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