

KNTV: PHILOSOPHY

KARL MARX

Programme-related questions (and answers)

1. Explain what you understand by the term 'means of production'.
(This gives people a way to produce goods for themselves. If you give a person a potato, he can only eat it on that day. If you give him ground and seed – the means of production - he can grow potatoes to eat every day.)
2. What did Marx think about the bourgeoisie?
(He thought they had an easy time, living on the results of the labour done by the working classes.)
3. What did Marx think was the fairest way to distribute wealth in society?
(All wealth should be distributed communally, that is, shared out equally between people. Marx realised that it would take a workers' revolution to achieve this.)
4. What kind of life did Marx lead after his marriage?
(He and his family constantly fell out with people because of his communist views and sometimes even had to leave their home. They were very poor, their furniture was broken and their homes disorderly.)
5. Did Marx always enjoy a good night's sleep?
(No, he took no notice of the normal times for waking and sleeping and would stay awake all night and sleep on the sofa from midday until evening.)
6. What was life like in Germany when Marx was young?
(Farming and agriculture were the most important industries, and poor people had to work long, hard days on the land. People couldn't say what they thought, because they'd get into trouble with the authorities.)
7. Which well-known English author inspired Marx?
(Charles Dickens, who wrote about the hard lives of poor people in novels like Oliver Twist and A Tale of Two Cities.)
8. Name three philosophers apart from Engels who inspired Marx.
(Hegel, who believed that it takes conflict to change society; Vico, who thought ordinary people should rebel against authority; Rousseau, who was against ownership of private property.)
9. What role did Engels play in Marx's life?
(He was a close friend and drinking companion, and gave Marx and his family much-needed money. The two men worked together to write the Communist Manifesto, and when Marx died, Engels translated his unpublished works.)
10. In what way did Marx and Engels look alike?
(They both had big, bushy beards!)
11. Where did Marx live after he was deported from Brussels?
(He ended up living in poverty in England.)
12. Name two communist dictators who have headed Marxist governments in the 20th century.
(Stalin, a brutal despot who controlled the Communist Party in the Soviet Union from 1922-1953; Pol Pot, prime minister of Cambodia from 1976-1979, whose extreme communist policies led to the death of two million Cambodians.)