I'm back to school season. In a few weeks, classes will start. During the year, many of our students in middle school and high school will declare: “I hate math.” Remarkably, many of their parents will agree with them. One of the reasons is that there's a lot of math, and I never used it after I graduated. I don’t think that many people use math. However, that is not true. Most of us are using math every day. I think that the problem is that too many people think that they don’t need math. I believe that learning math is important for everyone. Let me give you an example from the current news.

Chevrolet recently announced it has developed a car named the Volt, which will be marketed as a lithium-ion battery electric vehicle. The Volt will have a gasoline-powered engine, so it will be able to run on gasoline. The Volt can achieve 200 miles on a charge, and 40 miles on gasoline. The Volt will seem to be an important step towards reducing emissions and the dependency upon foreign oil. I wondered if the country would be ready to try getting drivers into ultra-clean electric vehicles.

Mary drives a 20-year-old Ford truck which gets 15 mpg. Joe drives a Prius, and the car averages 40 mpg. Mary was somewhat surprised by the answer. She thought the purchase of the 200 mpg car would save her money. Instead, Joe’s purchase would still save more gas than Mary’s. Joe saves more gas because his old car has a smaller carbon footprint than Mary. Joe and Mary could both double their annual purchases. By doing so, they will leave a much smaller carbon footprint than Mary. Joe’s purchase would still save more gas than Mary’s.