

# Math Diversion Problem 405

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February 13, 2025

[Noether] taught us to think in terms of simple and general algebraic concepts—homomorphic mappings, groups and rings with operators, ideals—and not in cumbersome algebraic computations; and she thereby opened up the path to finding algebraic principles in places where such principles had been obscured by some complicated special situation.  
— Pavel Alexandrov

The YouTube video is found at:

Source: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IpU9Ly\\_6lw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IpU9Ly_6lw)

Title: An Interesting Homemade Equation

Presenter: SyberMath

## 1 The Problem

Given the relation

$$e^{1-x} = 1 - \frac{\ln x}{x}, \quad (1)$$

find the values of  $x$ .

## 2 The Preparation

I intend to use the Lambert  $W$  function, which goes as follows: If

$$ze^z = B, \quad (2)$$

then

$$z = W(B), \quad (3)$$

where there are domain constraints on  $B$  that we won't go into here. Warning: This can be a complicated (multi-valued) function to deal with.

A result we'll need:

$$W_0(-e^{-1}) = -1.$$

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### 3 The Solution

The Given (1) can be rewritten as

$$ee^{-x} = 1 - \frac{\ln x}{x}, \quad (4)$$

which can be further rewritten to

$$exe^{-x} = x - \ln x = \ln e^x - \ln x = \ln(e^x/x). \quad (5)$$

Next, let  $y = xe^{-1}$ , then we get

$$ey = \ln y^{-1} = -\ln y. \quad (6)$$

So that

$$y^{-1} \ln y^{-1} = e. \quad (7)$$

On taking the Lambert  $W$  function across this equation, we get

$$\ln y^{-1} = W(e) = 1, \quad (8)$$

So, we can conclude that

$$y = \frac{1}{e}. \quad (9)$$

Backtracking to  $x$ :

$$xe^{-x} = \frac{1}{e}. \quad (10)$$

Then

$$-xe^{-x} = -\frac{1}{e}. \quad (11)$$

On taking the Lambert  $W$  function across this equation, we get

$$-x = W\left(-\frac{1}{e}\right) = -1. \quad (12)$$

And finally

$$x = 1. \quad (13)$$