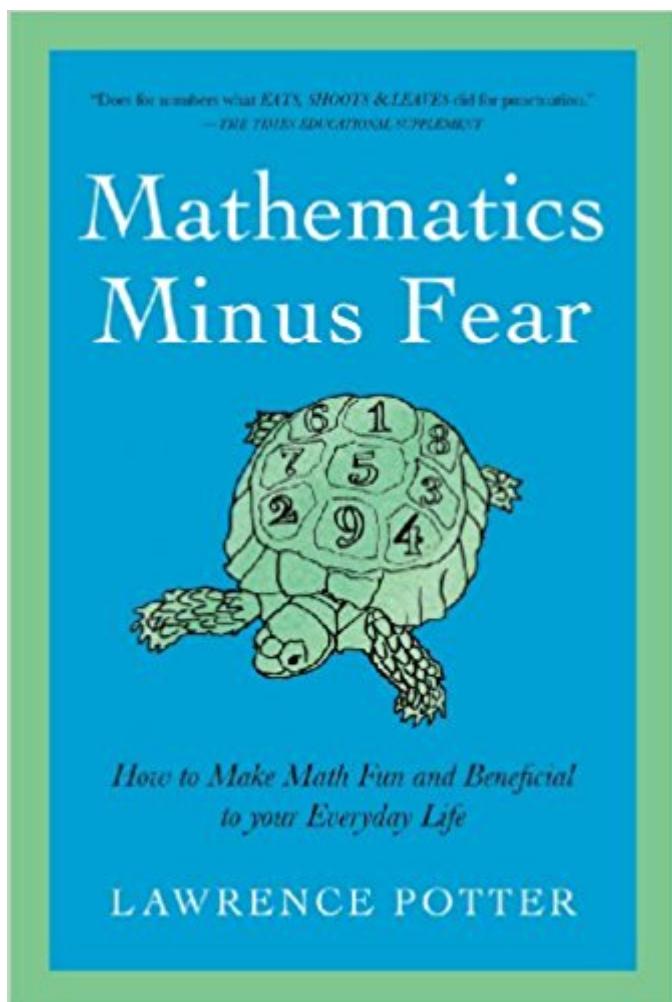


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Mathematics Minus Fear: How To Make Math Fun And Beneficial To Your Everyday Life



Synopsis

Forget your classroom nightmares and discover how numbers can enhance and illuminate your world! How can math help you bet on horses or win in Vegas? What's the foolproof way to solve Sudoku? How can probability teach you to calculate your chances of survival in Russian roulette? In this irreverent and entertaining guide to mathematics, Lawrence Potter takes the fear out of everything from long division to percentages. Using fascinating puzzles and surprising examples, from M.C. Escher to Pascal, he shows us how math is connected with the world we encounter every day, from how the VAT works to why weather forecasts are wrong, from winning at Monopoly to improving your mental arithmetic. Along the way you'll also discover who invented numbers, whether animals can count, and what nuns have to do with multiplication.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a smart shopper watches her purchases traverse the supermarket conveyor belt, how can she accurately estimate her total costs? This question provides Potter with an occasion for illustrating the usefulness of mathematics in ordinary situations. Other cases pop up in throwing dice, assessing weather forecasts, and sizing up the wardrobe possibilities within a closet. Potter tirelessly demonstrates just how enjoyable and productive math can be! Laced with puckish humor, the lucid and even entertaining narrative eases readers past the anxieties associated with decimals and fractions, probabilities and proportions, algebra and formulas. After sharpening their skills on the brainteasers sprinkled throughout the text and trying out the Sudoku tricks Potter shares,

readers are primed to tackle real-world numerical tasks. And Potter embeds such tasks in an exciting mathematical history running through Laplace, Fermat, Pascal, Viète and the nameless pioneers of early Hindu and Arabic theorizing. Except perhaps for those reckless enough to test Potter's strategy for Russian roulette, this book will turn mathematics into a long-lasting intellectual adventure. --Bryce Christensen

“Anyone whose memories of math class leave the bitterest taste will find comfort as well as insight and plenty of laughs in this informal, irreverent look at math. The first thing readers need to know is that Potter is very serious about one thing: each topic here is based on a situation one could encounter in everyday life. Wacky word problems (the answers are in the back) keep the flood of information in context. Potter provides historical anecdotes that reveal the origins of fractions (thank the Egyptians) and how religious edicts have affected interest and banking rules. He even offers sympathy for those wounded by algebra, whose etymology stems from the Arabic word for both the process of setting a broken bone and the moving of a term from one side of an equation to the other. For anyone who has ever felt defeated by the dark forces of mathematics, Potter's constructive guide offers enlightenment and hope.

- Publishers Weekly “Does for numbers what Eats, Shoots & Leaves did for punctuation.

- The Times Educational Supplement “If you follow this eloquently written book you will be equipped to cope with all manner of challenges, such as splitting a restaurant bill, filling in a tax return, or understanding the compound interest on your bank statement.

- The Daily Telegraph

excellent

This is a fairly good guide to basic math with some humor and creativity. However, it is really only useful for people not well trained in math--it covers mostly basic concepts like multiplying fractions and percentages. If you are in an advanced math class this won't help you much. I would recommend it for students in middle school/ high school/community college who are just starting beginning math

As a middle school math teacher I was looking for some ways to make math more fun and practical for my students. This book claims to be for the math-phobic or those who had bad math experiences. While this book did have a few interesting factoids and tips, you had to look long and

hard to find them. Math Minus Fear was extremely wordy, rarely relevant, and full of painstakingly detailed explanations (to prove the "why" of math) that will have even the slightest math-phobe hurling the book across the room. Even the math word problems randomly interspersed throughout the book were either way too difficult or way too easy. In addition this is a book written from a British author so the examples are full of pence, pounds, and other non-standard units of measure for the average American - not that there's anything WRONG with those measures, I'm just sayin! Two stars for a couple of interesting facts and a few interesting riddles but that's it.

I am a high school math teacher. I checked this book out of my local library and decided to purchase after two sittings. This book is not a book of flat-packed reproducibles for the classroom; but rather an excursion through paradigm shifts in the traditional thought processes of teaching mathematics. I found the book inspiring me to write lessons incorporating some of these alternate ways of thinking about numbers. Thank you, Lawrence Potter.

I got this book mainly for Appendix B, entitled "Putting Sudoku to Bed", which claims to describe techniques for solving every sudoku puzzle. But the methods he describes are very elementary, and will enable you to solve only Easy and Medium puzzles.

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