

Timothy Gowers

MATHEMATICS

A Very Short Introduction

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Mathematics A Very Short Introduction

Glen Van Brummelen



Mathematics A Very Short Introduction:

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The History of Mathematics Jacqueline Stedall, 2012-02-23 Mathematics is a fundamental human activity that can be practised and understood in a multitude of ways indeed mathematical ideas themselves are far from being fixed but are adapted and changed by their passage across periods and cultures In this Very Short Introduction Jacqueline Stedall explores the rich historical and cultural diversity of mathematical endeavour from the distant past to the present day Arranged thematically to exemplify the varied contexts in which people have learned used and handed on mathematics she also includes illustrative case studies drawn from a range of times and places including early imperial China the medieval Islamic world and nineteenth century Britain ABOUT THE SERIES The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area These pocket sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly Our expert authors combine facts analysis perspective new ideas and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable

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Trigonometry Glen Van

Brummelen, 2020-01-23 Born of the desire to understand the workings of motions of the heavenly bodies trigonometry gave the ancient Greeks the ability to predict their futures Most of what we see of the subject in school comes from these heavenly origins 15th century astronomer Regiomontanus called it the foot of the ladder to the stars In this Very Short Introduction Glen Van Brummelen shows how trigonometry connects mathematics to science and has today become an indispensable tool in predicting cyclic patterns like animal populations and ocean tides Its historical journey through major cultures such as medieval India and the Islamic World has taken it through disciplines such as geography and even religious practice Trigonometry has also been a major player in the most startling mathematical developments of the modern world Its interactions with the concept of infinity led to Taylor and Fourier series some of the most practical tools of modern science The birth of complex numbers led to a shocking union of exponential and trigonometric functions creating the most beautiful formulas and powerful modelling tools in science Finally as Van Brummelen shows trigonometry allows us to explore the strange new worlds of non Euclidean geometries opening up bizarre possibilities for the shape of space itself And indeed one of those new geometries spherical takes us full circle back to ancient Greek astronomers and European navigators who first used it to chart their ways across the heavens and the earth ABOUT THE SERIES The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area These pocket sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly Our expert authors combine facts analysis perspective new ideas and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable

Infinity Ian Stewart, 2017-03-13 Infinity is an intriguing topic with connections to religion philosophy metaphysics logic and physics as well as mathematics Its history goes back to ancient times with especially important contributions from Euclid Aristotle Eudoxus and Archimedes The infinitely large infinite is intimately related to the infinitely small infinitesimal Cosmologists consider sweeping questions about whether space and time are infinite Philosophers and mathematicians ranging from Zeno to Russell have posed numerous paradoxes about infinity and infinitesimals Many vital areas of mathematics rest upon some version of infinity The most obvious and the first context in which major new techniques depended on formulating infinite processes is calculus But there are many others for example Fourier analysis and fractals In this Very Short Introduction Ian Stewart discusses infinity in mathematics while also drawing in the various other aspects of infinity and explaining some of the major problems and insights arising from this concept He argues that working with infinity is not just an abstract intellectual exercise but that it is instead a concept with important practical everyday applications and considers how mathematicians use infinity and infinitesimals to answer questions or supply techniques that do not appear to involve the infinite ABOUT THE SERIES The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area These pocket sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly Our expert authors combine facts analysis perspective new ideas and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable

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