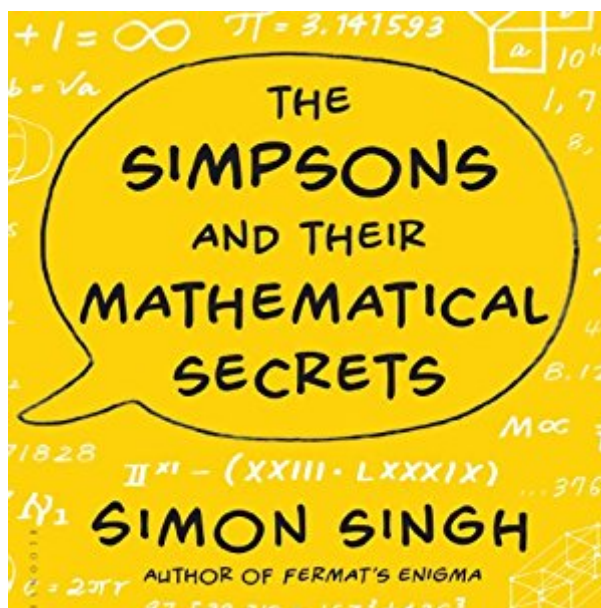


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The Simpsons And Their Mathematical Secrets



Synopsis

The brainy new book by the best-selling author of Fermat's Enigma a must for anyone interested in numbers and mathematics as well as for the millions of Simpsons fans worldwide. Simon Singh offers fascinating new insights into the celebrated television series The Simpsons: That the show drip-feeds morsels of number theory into the minds of its viewers - indeed, that there are so many mathematical references in the show, and in its sister program, Futurama, that they could form the basis of an entire university course. Recounting memorable episodes from "Bart the Genius" to "Homer3," Singh brings alive intriguing and meaningful mathematical concepts - ranging from the mathematics of pi and the paradox of infinity to the origins of numbers and the most profound outstanding problems that haunt today's generation of mathematicians. In the process, he illuminates key moments in the history of mathematics, and introduces us to The Simpsons' brilliant writing team - the likes of David X. Cohen, Al Jean, Jeff Westbrook, and Stewart Burns, all of whom have various advanced degrees in mathematics, physics, and other sciences. Based on interviews with the writers of The Simpsons and replete with images from the shows, facsimiles of scripts, paintings and drawings, and other imagery, The Simpsons and Their Mathematical Secrets will give anyone who reads it an entirely new mathematical insight into the most successful show in television history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Until I read this book, I had no idea that "The Simpsons" had serious mathematical equations, theories, and secrets in the show. I knew that the show has all kind of movie and cultural

references, but not mathematical. So the book astonished me. It also fascinated my daughter, who is a computer science major, and she was very grateful to receive this as a birthday present. It shows that cartoons and pop culture shows can contain more than just gags and obvious messages -- if you look carefully, you can learn all kinds of unusual, interesting, and entertaining information.

This book is a bit of a dichotomy. It is written for those at least somewhat interested in mathematics, but it assumes the reader doesn't know that much about math. And those that know mathematics will be bored by much of the book, as it explains mathematical principles with which they would already be well acquainted. The book devotes quite a lot of its pages to explaining mathematical concepts. And not nearly enough citing examples from the show. So what you end up with is a book that is only really interesting to those that have at least a basic understanding of mathematics, but aren't interested enough to have pursued math at a high level. Overall the book doesn't really cite that many examples of math from the TV series. Much more time is spent explaining the concepts behind it. And it also spends a considerable amount of time talking about Futurama rather than the Simpsons, so its name is a little bit deceptive. Based on the name you'd almost assume that there are countless examples of math showing up in the show, but there really aren't that many. For every 5 pages of explanation, you get maybe a paragraph or two citing an example. So if you get this book, go into it knowing that you probably won't see as many references to the show as you'd like, and be prepared to wade through long descriptions of the principles cited.

My math education is in the distant past. Sometimes I was pretty good at it; sometimes I was not. I don't know why, but my comprehension sort of came and went at odd intervals. Thus, as I read this book, sometimes I felt really smart; then, not so much. Also, I should say that although I really like The Simpsons, I almost never watch them. I have a hard time committing to any half-hour sitcom because the ratio of content to commercials is a little too low for my tolerance. Wait--that was math! I think this book made me smarter.

An enjoyable but quick read. Part biography of some of the writers, part Simpsons/Futurama trivia, with just enough of the real mathematics to be interesting. A few times the explanation of the mathematical principles started to get overly technical, but you don't need to understand the math to appreciate the book. For someone who is interested in complex mathematical problems, this book provides a nice introduction with references in the back to allow them to learn all the details. Of course, the reader must be a Simpsons fan or else there is really no point to the book.

I would like to think I am not a nerd, but I KNOW I am not a math whiz. In fact, I would label myself as "challenged" in this area. Neither am I a particular fan of the show, although when I have watched it I've found it funny and enjoy the targeted humor. So I'm not sure what attracted me to buy this book, but having it, I am reading it with enormous delight! Singh uses the tv show The Simpsons as the hook to investigate and explain all sorts of mathematical concepts -- both complicated and relatively simple -- in ways that even I can understand and see the humor, logic, importance and at times, application of. (I know, don't end a sentence with a preposition. Maybe I am a nerd, after all!) Although, I must amend that last sentence, I still don't see the practical application of prime numbers, but maybe by the end of the book I will? There are explanations and anecdotes which prompt laugh-out-loud reactions, and Singh's writing has a dry humor and is clear. For fans of the Simpsons it will expand their appreciation of just how intelligent and clever the writing is, but even if you are not a fan of the show, the book really is mostly focused on the delights of mathematics. Get the book and read it!

Very fun read. Didn't realize how much math was in the Simpsons. Makes me love the Simpsons and their writers even more. My personal book of the month.

This book is great fun, revealing the behind-the-scenes back stories of several Simpsons writers and their mathematical training. Mathematics seems to exist in its own universe, despite touching nearly every aspect of our lives. Even those who work in mathematical sciences (like myself) do not necessarily know or follow the history of research and thought on prime numbers, or understand Hilbert spaces on a deep level. That is why I want to keep a copy of this book on my shelf, because there are extremely accessible introductions to some of these deep ideas (Fermat's theorem, for example). I recommend this book to any Simpsons fans who like to think about science and math, and I emphasize that no background in science or math is needed to fully enjoy this book. For the extra curious, the author includes some extra material in the back to explain some of the math.

An absolute delight for those mathematically inclined. This book packages a selection of the great theorems of mathematics in a "Simpson's" wrapping to appeal to some that would otherwise be uninterested. Scattered through the book is a series of mathematical jokes of which my favourite is: Q: What is the volume of a pizza of radius 'z' and thickness 'a'? A: $\pi \cdot z \cdot z \cdot a$ There are many more! This is the ideal book for a student to encourage and foster the general interest in mathematics. But

it does more than this - it also catalogues a series of mathematical references (some of them jokes) in the Simpsons show! Some of these involve number theory and some involve rather abstruse theorems, all patiently explained with their background history by a masterful mathematical author, Simon Singh.

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