

Timothy Gowers

MATHEMATICS

A Very Short Introduction

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Mathematics Very Short Introduction Introductions

Timothy Gowers



Mathematics Very Short Introduction Introductions:

Mathematics Timothy Gowers, 2002-08-22 The aim of this book is to explain carefully but not technically the differences between advanced research level mathematics and the sort of mathematics we learn at school The most fundamental differences are philosophical and readers of this book will emerge with a clearer understanding of paradoxical sounding concepts such as infinity curved space and imaginary numbers The first few chapters are about general aspects of mathematical thought These are followed by discussions of more specific topics and the book closes with a chapter answering common sociological questions about the mathematical community such as Is it true that mathematicians burn out at the age of 25 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 Algebra: A Very Short Introduction Peter M. Higgins, 2015-10-22 Algebra marked the beginning of modern mathematics moving it beyond arithmetic which involves calculations featuring given numbers to problems where some quantities are unknown Now it stands as a pillar of mathematics underpinning the quantitative sciences both social and physical This Very Short Introduction explains algebra from scratch Over the course of ten logical chapters Higgins offers a step by step approach for readers keen on developing their understanding of algebra Using theory and example he renews the reader's acquaintance with school mathematics before taking them progressively further and deeper into the subject 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

Number Theory: A Very Short Introduction Robin Wilson, 2020-05-28 Number theory is the branch of mathematics that is primarily concerned with the counting numbers Of particular importance are the prime numbers the building blocks of our number system The subject is an old one dating back over two millennia to the ancient Greeks and for many years has been studied for its intrinsic beauty and elegance not least because several of its challenges are so easy to state that everyone can understand them and yet no one has ever been able to resolve them But number theory has also recently become of great practical importance in the area of cryptography where the security of your credit card and indeed of the nation's defence depends on a result concerning prime numbers that dates back to the 18th century Recent years have witnessed other spectacular developments such as Andrew Wiles's proof of Fermat's last theorem unproved for over 250 years and some exciting work on prime numbers In this Very Short Introduction Robin Wilson introduces the main areas of classical number theory both ancient and modern Drawing on the work of many of the greatest mathematicians of the past such as Euclid Fermat Euler and Gauss he situates some of the most interesting and creative problems in the area in their

historical context 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

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

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Applied Mathematics Alain Goriely,2018-02-13 Mathematics is playing an increasing important role in society and the sciences enhancing our ability to use models and handle data While pure mathematics is mostly interested in abstract structures applied mathematics sits at the interface between this abstract world and the world in which we live This area of mathematics takes its nourishment from society and science and in turn provides a unified way to understand problems arising in diverse fields This Very Short Introduction presents a compact yet comprehensive view of the field of applied mathematics and explores its relationships with pure mathematics science and engineering Explaining the nature of applied mathematics Alain Goriely discusses its early achievements in physics and engineering and its development as a separate field after World War II Using historical examples current applications and challenges Goriely illustrates the particular role that mathematics plays in the modern sciences today and its far reaching potential

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Measurement: A Very Short Introduction David J. Hand,2016-09-29 Measurement is a fundamental concept that underpins almost every aspect of the modern world It is central to the sciences social sciences medicine and economics but it affects everyday life We measure everything from the distance of far off galaxies to the temperature of the air levels of risk political majorities taxes blood pressure IQ and weight The history of measurement goes back to the ancient world and its story has been one of gradual standardization Today there are different types of measurement levels of accuracy and systems of units applied in different contexts Measurement involves notions of variability accuracy reliability and error and

challenges such as the measurement of extreme values In this Very Short Introduction David Hand explains the common mathematical framework underlying all measurement the main approaches to measurement and the challenges involved Following a brief historical account of measurement he discusses measurement as used in the physical sciences and engineering the life sciences and medicine the social and behavioural sciences economics business and public policy 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

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 Logic: A Very Short Introduction

Graham Priest, 2000-10-12 Logic is often perceived as having little to do with the rest of philosophy and even less to do with real life In this lively and accessible introduction Graham Priest shows how wrong this conception is He explores the philosophical roots of the subject explaining how modern formal logic deals with issues ranging from the existence of God and the reality of time to paradoxes of probability and decision theory Along the way the basics of formal logic are explained in simple non technical terms showing that logic is a powerful and exciting part of modern philosophy 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 *Mathematics* Timothy Gowers,2002 Review Mathematics is a subject we are all exposed to in our daily lives but one which many of us fear In this introduction Timothy Gowers elucidates the most fundamental differences which are primarily philosophical between advanced mathematics and what we learn at school so that one emerges with a clearer understanding of such paradoxical sounding concepts as infinity curved space and imaginary numbers From basic ideas through to philosophical queries to common sociological questions about the mathematical community this book unravels some of the mysteries of space and numbers BOOK JACKET *Probability* John Haigh,2012-04-26 Making good decisions under conditions of uncertainty which is the norm requires a sound appreciation of the way random chance works As analysis and modelling of most aspects of the world and all measurement are necessarily imprecise and involve uncertainties of varying degrees the understanding and management of probabilities is central to much work in the sciences and economics In this Very Short Introduction John Haigh introduces the ideas of probability and different philosophical approaches to probability and gives a brief account of the history of development of probability theory from Galileo and Pascal to Bayes Laplace Poisson and Markov He describes the basic probability distributions and goes on to discuss a wide range of applications in science economics and a variety of other contexts such as games and betting He concludes with an intriguing discussion of coincidences and some curious paradoxes 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 **Statistics: A Very Short Introduction** David J. Hand,2008-10-23 Statistics has evolved into an exciting discipline which uses deep theory and powerful software to shed light on the world around us from clinical trials in medicine to economics sociology and countless other subjects vital to understanding modern life This Very Short Introduction explores and explains how statistics works today **Mathematics** Timothy Gowers,2002 The aim of this volume is to explain the differences between research level mathematics and the maths taught at school Most differences are philosophical and the first few chapters are about general aspects of mathematical thought **Complexity: A Very Short Introduction** John H. Holland,2014-07-24 The importance of complexity is well captured by Hawking s comment Complexity is the science of the 21st century From the movement of flocks of birds to the Internet environmental sustainability and market regulation the study and understanding of complex non linear systems has become highly influential over the last 30 years In this Very Short Introduction one of the leading figures in the field John Holland introduces the key elements and conceptual framework of complexity From complex physical systems such as fluid flow and the difficulties of predicting weather to complex adaptive systems such as the highly diverse and interdependent ecosystems of rainforests he combines simple well known examples Adam Smith s pin factory Darwin s comet orchid and Simon s watchmaker with an account of the approaches involving

agents and urn models taken by complexity theory

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Everything Philip Ball,2006 Sample sections from the Very short introductions series are presented in this encapsulation of human knowledge

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

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Combinatorics: A Very Short Introduction Robin Wilson,2016-04-28 How many possible sudoku puzzles are there In the lottery what is the chance that two winning balls have consecutive numbers Who invented Pascal s triangle it was not Pascal Combinatorics the branch of mathematics concerned with selecting arranging and listing or counting collections of objects works to answer all these questions Dating back some 3000 years and initially consisting mainly of the study of permutations and combinations its scope has broadened to include topics such as graph theory partitions of numbers block designs design of codes and latin squares In this Very Short Introduction Robin Wilson gives an overview of the field and its applications in mathematics and computer theory considering problems from the shortest routes covering certain stops to the minimum number of colours needed to colour a map with different colours for neighbouring countries

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J. L. Heilbron, 2018-01-18 How does the physics we know today a highly professionalised enterprise inextricably linked to government and industry link back to its origins as a liberal art in Ancient Greece What is the path that leads from the old philosophy of nature and its concern with humankind's place in the universe to modern massive international projects that hunt down fundamental particles and industrial laboratories that manufacture marvels This Very Short Introduction introduces us to Islamic astronomers and mathematicians calculating the size of the earth whilst their caliphs conquered much of it to medieval scholar theologians investigating light to Galileo Copernicus Kepler and Newton measuring and trying to explain the universe We visit the House of Wisdom in 9th century Baghdad Europe's first universities the courts of the Renaissance the Scientific Revolution and the academies of the 18th century and the increasingly specialised world of 20th and 21st century science Highlighting the shifting relationship between physics philosophy mathematics and technology and the implications for humankind's self understanding Heilbron explores the changing place and purpose of physics in the cultures and societies that have nurtured it over the centuries 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

Ancient Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction Julia

Annas, 2000-10-12 The tradition of ancient philosophy is a long rich and varied one in which a constant note is that of discussion and argument This book introduces readers to some ancient debates to engage with the ancient developments of some themes Getting away from the presentation of ancient philosophy as a succession of Great Thinkers the book gives readers a sense of the freshness and liveliness of ancient philosophy and of its wide variety of themes and styles 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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topics highly readable *Marx: A Very Short Introduction* Peter Singer, 2000-10-12 Peter Singer identifies the central vision that unifies Marx's thought enabling us to grasp Marx's views as a whole He sees him as a philosopher primarily concerned with human freedom rather than as an economist or a social scientist He explains alienation historical materialism the economic theory of Capital and Marx's ideas of communism in plain English and concludes with an assessment of Marx's legacy 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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