

Some Guidelines for Your Book Review

The motivation for this assignment is that there are a lot of cool, interesting books out there about mathematics, and as part of your general education, you should develop the habit of reading them. This is an opportunity to learn about a mathematician or area of mathematics that you might not be exposed to otherwise.

Some possibilities include *Fermat's Enigma*, *A Mathematician's Apology*, *Flatterland*, *The Code Book*, *The Man Who Knew Infinity* (a biography of Srinivasa Ramanujan), *The Man Who Loved Only Numbers* (an account of Paul Erdos), *Why Beauty Is Truth: The History of Symmetry*, *Mathematical Apocrypha*, *Musings of the Masters*, *The Simpsons and Their Mathematical Secrets*, etc.

The best thing to do is just browse around the QA section of the library, the MAA's bookstore online (maa.org/bookstore), or even amazon.com and see what interests you. If you're not sure whether or not a book is appropriate for this assignment, please check with me. I've had students find some really interesting books that I wasn't aware of, so I'll be interested to see what you come up with! This probably does not need to be said, but your book should be one that you have not read before this semester.

The important dates to keep in mind:

February 21	Title of book due
March 19	Progress Report due
April 3	Book Review due

You will submit the title of your book, your progress report, and upload your final Book Review to onCourse.

Your report should **not** be a summary of the book. Instead, you should give a critique of the book. Here are a few parameters:

- You will want to give a brief one or two page overview of the book that gives the big picture.
- You should address what aspects of the book were done well, which were not, and give specific suggestions that would improve the book.
- Be sure to address the mathematical content of the book. Was it explained well? Was it interesting? Did the exposition want to make you learn more about the area?
- Comment on who you think the appropriate audience for the book is. Could anyone read the book? Does it assume some mathematical background? Do you have to be an expert to enjoy the book?
- Finally, give your opinion on whether or not you would recommend this book to someone else.
- There are no hard-and-fast rules, but I imagine that the review will be a minimum of four to five typed pages.
- I will be glad to look over a rough draft of your review if you would like. I will need the draft by Wednesday March 28 in order to have time to read it and give you feedback.