

Some Guidelines for Your Book Review
Due Wednesday, May 4, 2011

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), or *A Beautiful Mind* (the book, not the movie!).

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 are having difficulty finding a book that really piques your interest, I'll be glad to help you look.

The important dates to keep in mind:

April 8	Title of book due
April 20	Progress Report due
May 4	Book Review due

You will use onCourse to submit the Title of your book, your Progress Report, and upload your final Book Review.

This probably does not need to be said, but your book should be one that you have not read before.

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

- 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 before April 27 in order to have time to read it and give you feedback.

Please follow the *MLA Formatting and Style Guide* for your paper. The guide is available online at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>