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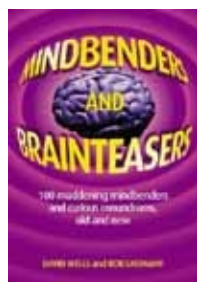
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May 2003

Reviews

'Mindbenders and Brainteasers'

reviewed by Helen Joyce



Mindbenders and Brainteasers

Many people, when they look back, can pinpoint the precise moment when their interest in mathematics was awakened – it was when they found a puzzle that intrigued them. Perhaps they now realise the puzzle was trivial or insignificant, but at the time something about it captured their imagination and started them on a path that may have led very far – perhaps even into fundamental mathematical research. The playfulness and sense of humour inherent in a good puzzle can stay with mathematicians throughout their lives, acting as an inspiration and guide in their work.

So a puzzle is not just a puzzle, and solving "mindbenders and brainteasers" is both a lot of fun and a very good way to get a feeling for what maths is all about. By no means all the puzzles in this book are overtly mathematical – and, as the authors say in the introduction, many can be solved "after only a few moments thought" – but all are fun, and many have surprising short cuts or unexpected twists.

There are 100 puzzles, all with solutions, and a few harder ones are starred to indicate that pen and paper will probably be needed. For a taster, look at this issue's puzzle [Rolling with money](#).

No mathematical training is necessary to enjoy this book – just a playful enquiring mind. It would be a great present for an enthusiastic 11 year old, but even quite sophisticated adults will find something to entertain them. And teachers needing inspiration for activities need look no further.

Book details:

Mindbenders and Brainteasers

'Mindbenders and Brainteasers'

David Wells and Rob Eastaway
paperback – 224 pages (2003)
Robson Books
ISBN: 1861055625

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