

What is Math? Quotes of Mathematicians

Many who have not had an opportunity of knowing any more about mathematics confuse it with arithmetic, and consider it an arid science. In reality, however, it is a science which requires a great amount of **imagination**.

- Sofia Kovalevskaya (1850-1891)

One of the big misapprehensions about mathematics that we perpetrate in our classrooms is that the teacher always seems to know the answer to any problem that is discussed. This gives students the idea that there is a book somewhere with all the right answers to all the interesting questions, and that teachers know those answers. And if one could get hold of the book, one would have everything settled. That's so unlike the true nature of mathematics.

- Leon Henkin (1921-2006)

We often hear that mathematics consists mainly of 'proving theorems'. Is a writer's job mainly that of 'writing sentences'?

- Gian-Carlo Rota (1932-1999)

"Mathematics is not a careful march down a well-cleared highway, but a journey into a strange wilderness, where the explorers often get lost. Rigour should be a signal to the historian that the maps have been made, and the *real explorers* have gone elsewhere."

- W.S. Anglin

It is clear that the chief end of mathematical study must be to make the students think.

- John Wesley Young (1879-1932)

"Whoever wants to understand much must play much."

- Gottfried Benn German (1886-1956)

"Pure mathematics is the world's best game. It is more absorbing than chess, more of a gamble than poker, and lasts longer than Monopoly. It's free. It can be played anywhere - Archimedes did it in a bathtub."

- Richard J. Trudeau

"Pure mathematics is, in its way, the poetry of logical ideas."

- Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

Go down deep enough into anything and you will find mathematics.

- Dean Schlicter

"It is not the job of mathematicians... to do correct arithmetical operations. It is the job of bank accountants."

- Samuil Shchatunovski