



Secrets of Mental Math: The Mathemagician's Guide to Lightning Calculation and Amazing Math Tricks

Arthur T. Benjamin, Michael Shermer

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These simple math secrets and tricks will forever change how you look at the world of numbers.

Secrets of Mental Math will have you thinking like a math genius in no time. Get ready to amaze your friends—and yourself—with incredible calculations you never thought you could master, as renowned “mathemagician” Arthur Benjamin shares his techniques for lightning-quick calculations and amazing number tricks. This book will teach you to do math in your head faster than you ever thought possible, dramatically improve your memory for numbers, and—maybe for the first time—make mathematics fun.

Yes, even you can learn to do seemingly complex equations in your head; all you need to learn are a few tricks. You’ll be able to quickly multiply and divide triple digits, compute with fractions, and determine squares, cubes, and roots without blinking an eye. No matter what your age or current math ability, *Secrets of Mental Math* will allow you to perform fantastic feats of the mind effortlessly. This is the math they never taught you in school.

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Secrets of Mental Math: The Mathemagician's Guide to Lightning Calculation and Amazing Math Tricks Details

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Jessica says

I already knew/used a few of these tricks, but some were new and pretty smart. And there's nothing nerdier than doing math in you head on the train, so that was fun.

Samantha says

Helped me so much to make math easier. I shocked my friends into thinking I was a super genius and with this books helps I won't stop. I put it down because after a while it was starting to bore me but after a few months you can pick back up again.

Jeff Yoak says

I tremendously enjoyed both the book and the video course. I was familiar with Benjamin both from other courses and from his mental math tricks. Not only did I improve a lot just from watching, but I picked up some really neat new tricks that I know I can get with practice. Lots of fun.

Jeremy says

As a nerd who is desperate for attention but also very lazy, this book was a godsend! Arthur Benjamin's mental math tips are very easy to learn, yet still appear impressive to the casual observer. Towards the end of the book, there are some real showstoppers, but even if one only gets halfway through the tricks, you could still impress people at a party (a very lame party).

Mike Shultz says

I slowed down about half way through this book and was ready to give it 3 stars. In some cases I had discovered a fair number of the tricks on my own, or had learned them elsewhere. The processes described were sometimes just brute mathematics, requiring you compute, then hold numbers in your head and compute again.

However, the second half had some cool techniques that I didn't know, and while 4 or 5-digit multiplication problems are just plain difficult (as the author admits), 3 and 4 digit squares are more doable than I would've thought, and (perfect) cube roots of numbers with up to 6 digits are so easy it's fun. With the neat

mathematical "magic tricks" at the end to cap it off, this book was back up to 4 stars for me.

Onna says

I LOVE this book! It's a nerd's dream come true for me. I checked it out from the library and had it for at least two months. It pained me to give it back. I'm going to buy it soon as I get money. These tricks are so wonderful, it's a wonder they didn't use these in school.

I loved the Pi part. I can recite Pi to a hundred digits now! Always been a goal of mine too. I was content with knowing it for 20 digits, but this made it super easy to know it to a hundred. Then the figuring out the weekday when you have a date. Awesome!

The multiplying is really neat too. As you can tell I just LOVE this book! I'm cheesing writing this. lol! Go read it. If you only read one part, I suggest the Pi bit. :)

Nick says

This book helped me to re-build a fresh perspective on doing math in my head. He builds on a central idea of breaking down seemingly complex computations into simple, manageable ones. He then gives you new ways of seeing numbers such that, once these various patterns become familiar, you are able to employ tricks to getting the math done quickly. One of his first examples is how to square a two-digit number that ends in 5.

"... you need to remember only two things. 1. The answer begins by multiplying the first digit by the next higher digit. 2. The answer ends in 25. For example, to square the number 35, we simply multiply the first digit (3) by the next higher digit (4), then attach 25. Since $3 \times 4 = 12$, the answer is 1225. Therefore, $35 \times 35 = 1225$."

Lance Greenfield says

I really liked this book, and its accompanying video CD. The author is full of enthusiasm and the mathematical tricks are really worth learning, and so simple.

I enjoyed teaching some of the tricks to my grandson, who, in turn, enjoyed showing them off to his friends and teachers at school.

I'd recommend this book to everyone. A lot of fun!

Deborah says

An entertaining math book! Seriously. Easy to read and easy to understand strategies for improving number sense. I think my kids might also like how the author frames the equations as tricks or illusions. Of course, with my short memory, I had to buy a copy so I can refer back to it. Sorry library.

Natalya says

"Special thanks to NATALYA ST. CLAIR for typesetting the initial draft, which was partly supported by a grant from the Mellon Foundation." :D

Tom says

Two stars really isn't a fair rating. Had some fun adding and subtracting and then multiplying 3 digit numbers in my head.

But as the problems get more complex, my limitations became apparent. Couldn't read through the entire book. When I couldn't do what the book was suggesting, just gave up.

So no - reading this book wont suddenly make you a math genius.

There are some interesting stories with interesting perspectives, but not enough to inspire the me to practice the "tricks" and yes I expect the average person will need to practice.

So in fairness the 2 stars represents the bitterness I felt upon failing to become an overnight mathemagician...but who knows, maybe you can do it!

Phil Sykora says

Foreword by Bill Nye?

BILL NYE?!?

Watching him was definitely the greatest time I had in science class. Knowing that he advocates this book (or was bought out to support it) is pretty much worthy of my attention.

No question there is definitely useful (to the point of being necessary) information in this book. In the first chapter (ironically Chapter 0), I was introduced to a smorgasbord of various tricks that became immediately useful: the rule of multiplying 11s, squaring numbers that end in 5, multiplying two digit numbers with the same first digit and second digits that sum to 10 (which, I admit was a little bit harder to have explained but as soon as I got it, it became ridiculously valuable). Beyond that, I learned how to do pretty much all math in my head. Squaring any two digit number above 30 was something I thought was reserved for savants (like the guy from *Pi*).

I feel nerdy as hell for praising the book this much but it really is that good. You might not want to be bogged down with explanations of how to square three digit numbers in your head but I would recommend anyone to read Chapter 0, then see how they like it, or evaluate if it's going to be useful to them.

Kevin M says

Fantastic book! If you love math, or would just like to be able to struggle less with it, this book is a great tool. One caveat however: don't expect magically easy math abilities. Benjamin shows you the tools to make mental math problems exponentially easier, but at the end of the day you still need to calculate!

Now with that out of the way, can you calculate squares and square roots in your head? For two, three-no-five digit numbers? This book will show you the ways of these and many other fantastic mathematical prestidigitation techniques. Calculate the day of the week of any calendar date? Check. Estimate square roots to many decimal places? Check. Memorize Pi to hundreds of digits? Check. Use mod sums to check your answers? Check (digit)!

Bottom line: get this book if you want to nerd out and work your math muscles.

Anas Re says

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good book

Mars says

The author is enthusiastic, but somehow this enthusiasm doesn't transmit to the reader. The tricks work, but I am incredibly bored by this book regardless. (might have worked better with real-life examples, but I for one am hard-pressed to think of a good real-life reason to multiply a pair of two-digit numbers in your head)
