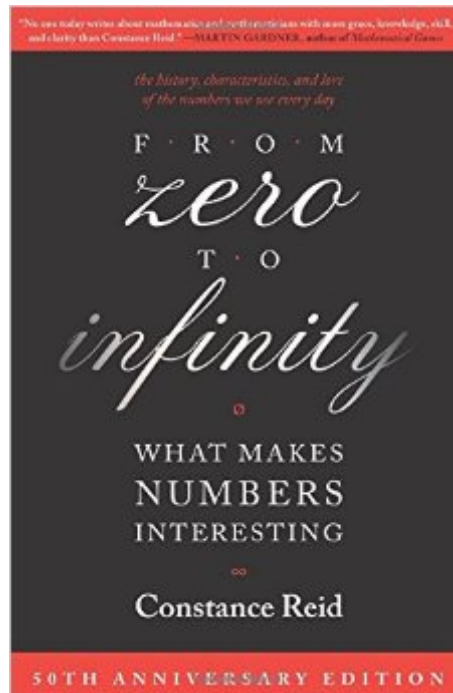


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# From Zero To Infinity: What Makes Numbers Interesting



## Synopsis

From Zero to Infinity is a combination of number lore, number history, and sparkling descriptions of the simply stated but exceedingly difficult problems posed by the most ordinary numbers that first appeared in 1955 and has been kept in print continuously ever since. With the fifth edition this classic has been updated to report on advances in number theory over the last 50 years, including the proof of Fermat's Last Theorem. Deceptively simple in style and structure, it is a book to which the reader will return again and again, gaining greater understanding and satisfaction with each reading.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

For those of us who have passed out of our secondary schools & liked Mathematics - though our yearly transcripts told a different story - this book is a wonderful walk down the memory lane. Without the fear of our scores in Mathematics being a reflection of our worth, number theory is not just interesting - as in an intellectual domain - but also awe inspiring - as in the philosophical domain around what these numbers are telling us by exhibiting all these relationships. We have gotten more & more efficient at telling if a number is prime, & yet we have no method of generating one. We know each number can be squared, & both the count of numbers & the corresponding count of their squares are infinite, yet the constructs of equality, congruence & basic mathematical operations are baffling when applied to infinity. In chapters dwelling from 0 to 9 & then going onto 'e' & 'aleph zero' - or infinity of first order cardinality - Reid brings alive the 'easiest to understand

intuitively but very difficult to prove Mathematically' relationships, theorems & properties of the entire number system. To be fair, some of it was a little terse & made my head spin & imagination boggle, in Bertie Wooster's words, - but that could just be me - & some of it, was plain riveting. Most of the chapters, contrary to my initial expectation, were actually about wider concepts than just the numbers themselves. For example, 2 was about the binary number system, 3 about the primes, 4 about squares, 6 about perfect numbers & 8 about cubes. With 7, I was plainly baffled, & I have no recall of what that was about - perhaps primes of a different type or something. The chapter on 'aleph-zero' would take me a few rebirths, per the Hindu system, to comprehend.

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