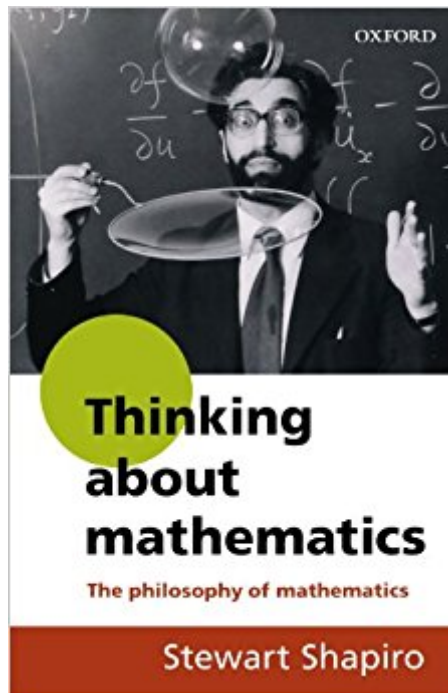




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# Thinking About Mathematics: The Philosophy Of Mathematics



## Synopsis

This unique book by Stewart Shapiro looks at a range of philosophical issues and positions concerning mathematics in four comprehensive sections. Part I describes questions and issues about mathematics that have motivated philosophers since the beginning of intellectual history. Part II is an historical survey, discussing the role of mathematics in the thought of such philosophers as Plato, Aristotle, Kant, and Mill. Part III covers the three major positions held throughout the twentieth century: the idea that mathematics is logic (logicism), the view that the essence of mathematics is the rule-governed manipulation of characters (formalism), and a revisionist philosophy that focuses on the mental activity of mathematics (intuitionism). Finally, Part IV brings the reader up-to-date with a look at contemporary developments within the discipline. This sweeping introductory guide to the philosophy of mathematics makes these fascinating concepts accessible to those with little background in either mathematics or philosophy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Stewart Shapiro admirably provides an accessible introduction to contemporary thinking in mathematics, while avoiding caricature of the technicalities. His ease with the subject and lucid style makes this book a succinct introduction to a fascinating intellectual discipline." Times Literary Supplement

Stewart Shapiro is Professor of Philosophy at Ohio State University at Newark and Professorial Fellow in the Department of Logic and Metaphysics at the University of St Andrews, Scotland.

This is a great book. It gives a comprehensive view of what math is really about, not about how to do math. It covers the fundamental issues as to the nature of mathematical entities and related problems all the way from ancient times to the present. It also engages some thorny problems concerning the discipline, all in fluent unobtrusive language that makes understanding easier than usual, without sacrificing depth or breath. I recommend it to anyone who, like myself, has struggled for a long time to grasp the significance, importance and limitations of math. As far as my needs are concerned, this is the best book on the subject that I have come across.

A good overview of the history of ideas and current positions within the philosophy of mathematics. Interesting to see what a struggle it has been to explain what something so seemingly intuitive as math actually is and the great efforts philosophers have made to answer these questions. Gets very dense and complicated as it goes on. The numerous Bill Clinton jokes have not aged well.

Shapiro did not make the topic easy to understand. That's impossible. It's philosophy of math. But he made it as understandable to me, a reader with very little previous exposure to the subject, and did so concisely while presenting the fascinating arguments in all major veins of thought on the subject.

Language is confusing and convoluted. Students did not find the textbook helpful in explaining major concepts

I am a reader with some basic background in logic and philosophy of language. Despite this background, I find Shapiro terribly difficult to read. For example, I read the section on Kant three times and am still not sure whether I understood anything. There must be simpler ways of explaining the material he presents. So this might be a great book for someone with a solid background in both philosophy and mathematics who wants to know more about questions at the crossroads of both fields. However, I absolutely do not recommend it as an introduction to these ideas.

This is the best introduction to the philosophy of mathematics I've come across. The concepts presented are clear, up to date, and presented with a minimum of formulas and symbols. The author has an easy going style that will just pull you into this fascinating topic.

Arrived very quickly! Completely satisfied!

This item was sent out quickly and received by my son in college quickly. Was in great shape.  
Thanks you.

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