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The term “algebra” up through the nineteenth century meant the “solving of equations,” that is, the determination of an unknown quantity or quantities from a relationship of equality among those quantities and various known quantities. In this talk, we will consider the history of algebra through the nineteenth century, at least in the West, in terms of three distinct stages, the geometric stage, the static equation-solving stage, and finally the dynamic function stage. Examples will be given from Mesopotamia, Greece, Islam, and early modern Europe. We will conclude with a brief look at algebra in India and China to see how they fit this model. (Received September 03, 2008)