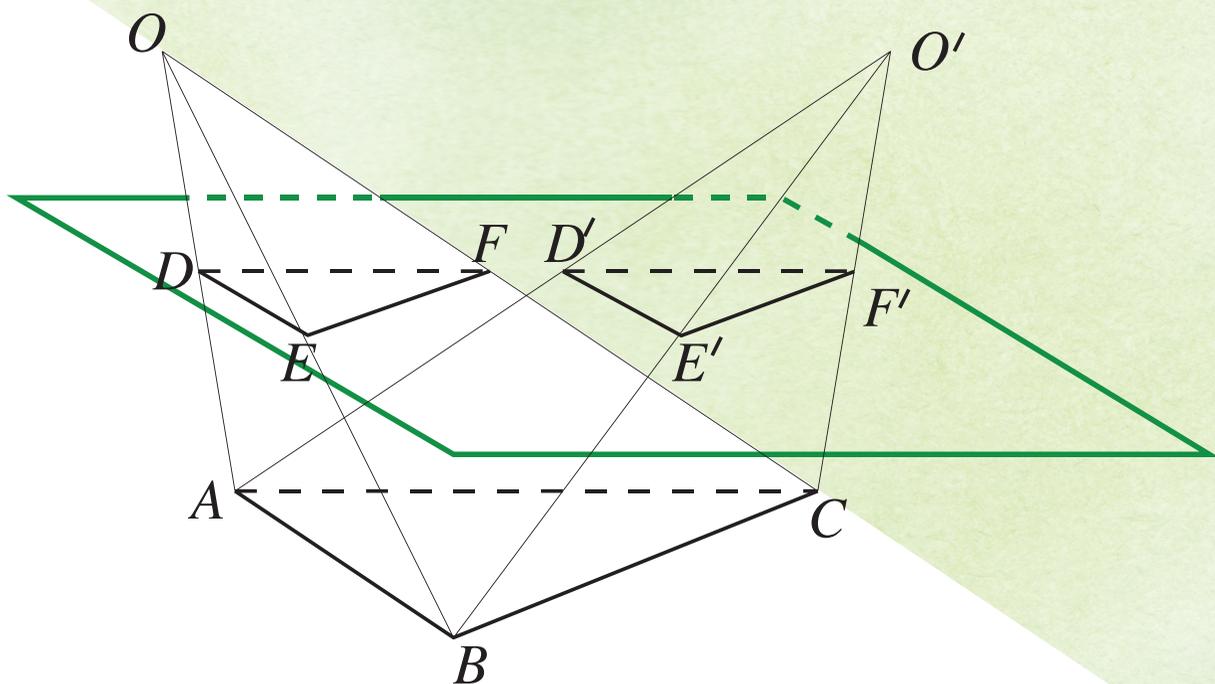


Pre-Calculus, Calculus, and Beyond

Hung-Hsi Wu



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To Sebastian

Contents

Contents of the Companion Volumes and Structure of the Chapters	ix
Preface	xi
To the Instructor	xix
To the Pre-Service Teacher	xxxiii
Prerequisites	xxxvii
Some Conventions	xxxix
Chapter 1. Trigonometry	1
1.1. Sine and cosine	2
1.2. The unit circle	7
1.3. Basic facts	32
1.4. The addition formulas	41
1.5. Radians	53
1.6. Multiplication of complex numbers	70
1.7. Graphs of equations of degree 2, revisited	79
1.8. Inverse trigonometric functions	88
1.9. Epilogue	98
Chapter 2. The Concept of Limit	103
2.1. The real numbers and FASM	103
2.2. The meaning of convergence	118
2.3. Basic properties of convergent sequences	134
2.4. First consequences of the least upper bound axiom	146
2.5. The existence of positive n -th roots	155
2.6. Fundamental theorem of similarity	163
Chapter 3. The Decimal Expansion of a Number	167
3.1. Decimals and infinite series	167
3.2. Repeating decimals	173
3.3. The decimal expansion of a real number	182
3.4. The decimal expansion of a fraction	190
3.5. More on infinite series	200
Chapter 4. Length and Area	209
Overview of Chapters 4 and 5	209
4.1. Fundamental principles of geometric measurements	211
4.2. Length	216

4.3. Rectifiable curves	224
4.4. Area of rectangles and the Pythagorean theorem	229
4.5. Areas of triangles and polygons	237
4.6. Areas of disks and circumferences of circles	248
4.7. The general concept of area	253
Chapter 5. 3-Dimensional Geometry and Volume	265
5.1. Comments about three dimensions	265
5.2. Cavalieri's principle	270
5.3. General remarks on volume	272
5.4. Volume of a sphere	278
5.5. Pedagogical comments	282
Chapter 6. Derivatives and Integrals	285
6.1. Continuity	285
6.2. Basic theorems on continuous functions	296
6.3. The derivative	308
6.4. The mean value theorem	314
6.5. Integrals of continuous functions	328
6.6. The fundamental theorem of calculus	340
6.7. Appendix. The trigonometric functions	345
Chapter 7. Exponents and Logarithms, Revisited	363
7.1. Logarithm as an integral	364
7.2. The exponential function	368
7.3. The laws of exponents	372
7.4. Other exponential and logarithmic functions	378
Appendix: Facts from the Companion Volumes	383
Glossary of Symbols	397
Bibliography	401
Index	405

Contents of the Companion Volumes and Structure of the Chapters

Rational Numbers to Linear Equations [Wu2020a]

Chapter 1: Fractions

Chapter 2: Rational Numbers

Chapter 3: The Euclidean Algorithm

Chapter 4: Basic Isometries and Congruence

Chapter 5: Dilation and Similarity

Chapter 6: Symbolic Notation and Linear Equations

Algebra and Geometry [Wu2020b]

Chapter 1: Linear Functions

Chapter 2: Quadratic Functions and Equations

Chapter 3: Polynomial and Rational Functions

Chapter 4: Exponential and Logarithmic Functions

Chapter 5: Polynomial Forms and Complex Numbers

Chapter 6: Basic Theorems of Plane Geometry

Chapter 7: Ruler and Compass Constructions

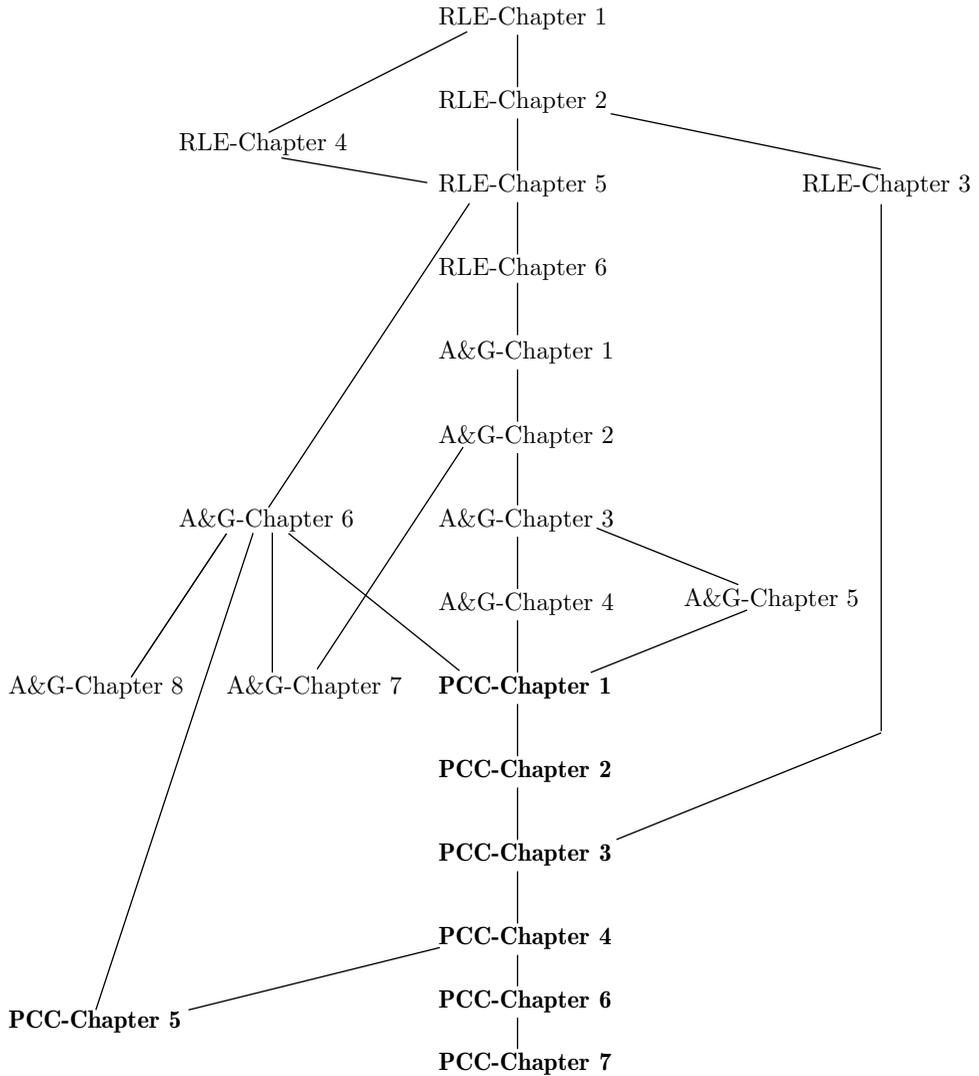
Chapter 8: Axiomatic Systems

Structure of the chapters in this volume and its two companion volumes

(RLE=Rational Numbers to Linear Equations,

A&G = Algebra and Geometry,

PCC = Pre-Calculus, Calculus, and Beyond)



Preface

Most people have (with the help of conventions) turned their solutions toward what is the easy and toward the easiest side of the easy; but it is clear that we must trust in what is difficult; everything alive trusts in it, everything in Nature grows and defends itself any way it can and is spontaneously itself, tries to be itself at all costs and against all opposition. We know little, but that we must trust in what is difficult is a certainty that will never abandon us . . .

Rainer Maria Rilke ([Rilke])

This volume concludes a three-volume set on the mathematics of the secondary school curriculum, the first two volumes being [Wu2020a] and [Wu2020b]. This set is intended primarily for high school mathematics teachers and mathematics educators,¹ but it may also be of interest to college math students, curious parents, and others. The present volume—the third volume of the set—gives an exposition of trigonometry and calculus that respects mathematical integrity and is also aligned with the standard high school curriculum. Its leisurely discussion of the basic concepts related to the least upper bound axiom also bridges the transition from calculus to upper division college mathematics courses where proofs become the main focus of all discussions. For this reason, this volume should benefit beginning math majors as well. Because it is the third volume of a three-volume set, there are inevitably copious references throughout to the first two volumes, [Wu2020a] and [Wu2020b]. However, to make this volume as self-contained as possible, I have collected the relevant definitions and theorems from [Wu2020a] and [Wu2020b] in an appendix (page 383ff.).

These three volumes conclude a six-volume² exposition of the mathematics curriculum of K–12 that is, for a change, respectful of *mathematical integrity* as well as the standard school curriculum. In slightly greater detail, *mathematical integrity* means that each and every concept in these volumes is clearly defined, all statements are precise and unambiguous to prevent misunderstanding, every claim is supported by reasoning, the mathematical topics to be discussed are not stand-alone items to be studiously memorized but are an integral part of a coherent story, and finally, this story is propelled forward with a (mathematical) purpose.³ A more expansive discussion of the urgent need as of 2020 for such an exposition can be

¹We are using the term “mathematics educators” to distinguish university faculty in schools of education from school mathematics teachers.

²The volume [Wu2011] treats the mathematics curriculum of K–6 and the two volumes [Wu2016a] and [Wu2016b] are about the mathematics curriculum of grades 6–8.

³The precise meaning of *mathematical integrity* is given on page xxv.

found at the end of this preface, but also see the preface of [Wu2020a] that puts this need in a broader context.

Although these six volumes are primarily intended to be used for the professional development of mathematics teachers and the mathematical education of mathematics educators, they could equally well serve as the blueprint for a textbook series in K–12. The short essay, **To the Instructor** on pp. xix ff., gives a fuller discussion of this as well as some related issues.

The first chapter of this volume is about trigonometry. Although the topics discussed are fairly standard, its emphases differ from those found in *TSM* (*Textbook School Mathematics*), i.e., the mathematics in standard school textbooks⁴ and in most other professional development materials. To begin with, we make explicit the fact that the trigonometric functions can be defined *only* because we know that two right triangles with a pair of equal acute angles are similar to each other. As is well known, it is not uncommon in TSM to treat these functions as if similar triangles play no role in the definitions (see Exercises 15 and 16 starting on page 31 for two examples of this phenomenon). This chapter also pays careful attention to the extension of the domain of definition of sine and cosine from $(0, 90)$ (think “acute angles”) to the number line \mathbf{R} . This extension is usually glossed over with hand-waving, but since the reasoning behind the extension is actually quite delicate, we feel compelled to bring this issue to the attention of teachers as well as educators for their considerations of *sense making* and *reasoning* in school mathematics.

Among other notable deviations in this chapter from TSM, we can point to its emphasis on the importance of the addition formulas of sine and cosine. To further underscore their importance, we prove later in Section 6.7—once calculus becomes available—the theorem that the sine and cosine functions are characterized essentially by these very formulas. Another deviation from TSM is the careful explanation of the need to transition from degree measurements of angles to radian measurements; in the process, it gives a detailed proof of the conversion formula between degrees and radians in Section 1.5. Again, this explanation exemplifies *sense making* and *reasoning*. (Needless to say, it has *nothing* to do with “proportional reasoning”, as TSM would have you believe.) Finally, Section 1.9 gives an elementary explanation of why, in the year 2020 when we are far removed from ancient astronomers’ preoccupation with “solving triangles”,⁵ the sine and cosine functions still deserve our serious attention.

For both teachers and educators, the content focus of this chapter is clearly an essential component of what they need to know about trigonometry in order to discharge their basic professional obligations. In addition, the precise explanation given in the appendix of Section 1.4 (pp. 46ff.) of what a trigonometric identity is and what it means to prove such an identity should be of special interest because neither topic is treated adequately in TSM and both suffer from misconceptions that are perpetuated in the education literature.

Beyond Chapter 1, the rest of this volume revolves around the concept of *limit* and its applications. Because these three volumes claim to give a grade-appropriate exposition of the mathematics curriculum of grades 9–12 and because it is well

⁴For more information about TSM, see pp. xx–xxv.

⁵Ancient astronomy created trigonometry in order to “solve triangles”; see page 6.

known that “limit” never makes an overt appearance in the K–12 curriculum, this apparent contradiction demands an explanation. In fact, we will offer not one but two such explanations.

The first is that, for the purpose of improving calculus teaching in schools and for the purpose of bringing some mathematical clarity to the discussion of proofs and reasoning in education research, we have to help teachers and educators improve their own mastery of calculus. Because calculus is, *by design*, a procedure-oriented discipline, some basic familiarity with the formulas and their basic applications has to be taken for granted. However, a narrow emphasis on procedures can easily degrade a calculus class into ritualistic incantations of unproven formulas and mindless promotions of rote memorization over reasoning. Not surprisingly, calculus classes often become nothing more than that. There can be little hope of averting such an unappealing spectacle unless teachers have some idea of the reasoning behind the formulas and educators have the knowledge about *limits* and the proper perspective to discuss the relevant mathematical issues sensibly. Given the space limitations, this volume cannot possibly give a comprehensive discussion of all the standard procedures and applications as well as the requisite reasoning. For this reason, we have chosen to concentrate on the reasoning and leave most of the procedural aspects of calculus to other textbooks. (There are a few that give sensible presentations of the procedures, e.g., [Bers], [Simmons], and [Stewart].)

What stands in the way of a sensible presentation of the reasoning in calculus is the fact that *analysis*—as the theory of calculus is called—is mathematically sophisticated. Such being the case, the usual solution to this instructional dilemma is to either fake the reasoning by waving at it using only analogies, metaphors, and heuristic arguments, or revel in the analytic reasoning in all its austere glory by presenting it unvarnished, thereby making it inaccessible except to future STEM majors. The latter path is, in fact, what one normally encounters in most textbooks on introductory analysis. This volume tries to steer a middle course by presenting—no surprise—an *engineered* version⁶ of analysis for teachers. There is no escaping the fact that we must confront the concept of limit, but here we restrict this discussion to the number line, i.e., one-variable calculus. For this reason, standard concepts about the plane, such as the definition of a planar region or convergence in the plane, are treated on a semi-intuitive level as otherwise the associated esoterica about *open sets* and *closed sets* needed for such definitions become overwhelming. In addition, we have managed to pare the technicalities down to an absolute minimum and keep our sights unflinchingly on topics that are directly relevant to K–12. Thus we will not mention compactness or cluster points of a sequence. In particular, no *subsequences*, *lim sup*, or *lim inf* will be found in this volume. This simplification has been achieved at the cost of losing a bit of generality in considerations of convergence, but in exchange, the exposition gains in accessibility. Like the learning of mathematics in general, it takes effort to learn about limits and convergence,⁷ but we hope this volume will at least succeed in making the introductory part of analysis more accessible to teachers and educators.

The other explanation for taking up limit extensively in this volume has to do with the nature of the mathematics of K–12. Shocking as it may seem, the fact

⁶See [Wu2006] for the concept of *mathematical engineering*.

⁷See Rilke’s advice to a young poet on page xi.

remains that *limit* lurks almost everywhere in the grades 6–12 mathematics curriculum. It is only through artful (or not so artful) suppression that *limit* manages to be well hidden in TSM. More precisely, the middle school curriculum includes the conversion of fractions to *repeating decimals* which are infinite decimals most of the time, the *circumference formula for a circle*, the *area formula for (the inside of) a circle*, and the concept of the *square root* or *cube root* of a positive number. In fact, even the area of a rectangle with side lengths 5 and $\sqrt{2}$ can only be explained by using limits! While these topics are usually taught in middle school with at most a casual reference to limits, teachers cannot teach these topics—and educators cannot hope to discuss these topics—sensibly if they themselves do not have a firm grounding in limits. Furthermore, the high school curriculum includes *exponential functions* such as 2^x , the *logarithm function*, extensive computations with numbers such as $\sqrt{3}$ and π , and the *radian* measure of an angle. Again, limit is deeply embedded in every one of these concepts and skills. None of these topics will make much sense in a school classroom unless teachers are able to draw on their (solid) knowledge of limits to make the lesson both understandable *as well as* mathematically honest. Not surprisingly, these topics tend not to make much sense in school classrooms as of 2020, thanks to TSM. Sometimes no great harm is done when this happens (e.g., most students seem to have no trouble memorizing the circumference of a circle as $2\pi r$), but at other times it can be devastating.

A striking example of the latter phenomenon is the perennial debate over whether the repeating decimal $0.\overline{9}$ is equal to 1. A teacher who knows nothing about limits is likely to regard each of the 9’s in $0.9999\dots$ as a “decimal digit” and therefore conclude that this number cannot be equal to $1.0000\dots$ because, uh, you know, two *finite* decimals are equal if and only if they agree digit by digit and, therefore, the same must be true of infinite decimals. With such a mindset, it would be difficult for teachers to convince their students—or even themselves—that $0.\overline{9} = 1$. The resulting confusion in school classrooms has spilled into the internet,⁸ with the result that we get to witness the spectacle of shouting matches about mathematics in cyberspace! Now imagine an alternate scenario. Suppose all our teachers were to know that, notwithstanding one’s *intuitive* feelings, $0.\overline{9}$ is not “a decimal with an infinite number of decimal digits” because this phrase has no meaning. Rather, it is a symbol that calls for *taking the limit of a sequence of numbers* $0.9, 0.99, 0.999, 0.9999$, etc. Therefore, $0.\overline{9} = 1$ is the statement that *the limit of the sequence* $0.9, 0.99, 0.999, 0.9999$, etc., *is equal to* 1. With this understood, there should be no difficulty in accepting that $0.\overline{9} = 1$. Wouldn’t it be more pleasant, educationally as well as mathematically, if all our teachers were to possess this kind of content knowledge? This is but one small example of how we hope to move school mathematics education toward a more desirable outcome by initiating a reasonable discussion of limits in the professional development of mathematics teachers.

The preceding discussion lays bare the fact that if a mathematics educator wants to engage in any sensible discussion of the mathematics of middle school and high school, a firm mastery of limits and convergence is a sine qua non. After all, any *conceptual understanding* of infinite decimals, laws of exponents, area of a circle, etc., ultimately resides in an understanding of limits and convergence, and it would be futile to try to make recommendations on the teaching and learning

⁸Try googling “Is 0.9 repeating equal to 1?”.

of these topics without a complete understanding of the key issues that lie behind them. One can only speculate whether the travesty that is TSM in the teaching of infinite decimals (described above) or the laws of exponents (as briefly described, for example, in the introduction to Chapter 4 of [Wu2020b]) in grades 6–12 would have materialized had there been mathematically knowledgeable educators to keep a tight rein on the curriculum and textbooks.

This volume pays meticulous attention to all the aforementioned issues related to limits that are important in K–12. These include: why every infinite decimal is always a number (Section 3.1), why the “division of the numerator by the denominator of a fraction” yields a repeating decimal *equal to the fraction itself* (Section 3.4), why $0.\overline{9} = 1$ (Section 3.2), why a positive number always has a unique positive square root, and even a unique positive n -th root (Section 2.5), why one can compute with real numbers as if they were rational numbers (Section 2.1), what the number π is (Section 4.6), the meaning of the length of a curve and why the circumference of a circle is $2\pi r$ (Sections 4.3 and 4.6), the meaning of the area of an arbitrary region (Section 4.7), why the area of a rectangle is length times width (Section 4.4, *really!*), and why the area of a disk is πr^2 (Sections 4.7 and 4.6). Above all, a main goal of this foray into limits is to make sense of arbitrary exponents of a positive number α , i.e., α^x for any *real number* x , in order to be able to *prove* the laws of exponents in full generality (see the penultimate section of this volume, Section 7.3).

On the concept of area, Chapter 4 of this volume does more than make explicit the fundamental role of limit in its definition. It also takes seriously the invariance of area under congruence—something TSM does not—and demonstrates its importance by proving three area formulas for a triangle that are generally missing in TSM. To explain these formulas, consider the ASA congruence criterion for triangles: it says that all the triangles satisfying a given set of **ASA data** (the length of a side and the degrees of the two angles at the endpoints) are congruent and therefore have the same area. Thus a set of ASA data determines *uniquely* the area of any triangle satisfying the data. It follows that if we are given a set of ASA data for a triangle, there must be an area formula for the triangle directly in terms of the ASA data. The same is true for SAS and SSS. Therefore, as soon as the trigonometric functions are available, such formulas should be routinely proved in the standard curriculum if for no other reason than that of coherence (see page xxiv) and purposefulness (see page xxiv). But in TSM they are not. In Section 4.5 on pp. 237ff., we make up for the absence of these formulas in TSM by presenting them together with their proofs *in the context of the invariance of area under congruence*. Needless to say, the formula corresponding to SSS is the classical *Heron’s formula* (see page 242). At the risk of belaboring the point, we call attention to the fact that, when Heron’s formula is presented in the context of the area formula in terms of a set of SSS data, it ceases to be a curiosity item and becomes something entirely natural and inevitable. Now, it clearly serves a well-defined purpose and fills a mathematical niche.

As the last volume of this series that begins with [Wu2020a] and continues with [Wu2020b], this volume ties up the major loose ends left open from the earlier volumes. Precisely, it explicitly addresses the following five topics: why any positive number has a unique square root, cube root, and, in general, n -th root (Sections 2.1 and 4.2 of [Wu2020b]), why the division of one finite decimal by

another yields a repeating decimal (Section 1.5 in [Wu2020a]), why FASM (the Fundamental Assumption of School Mathematics in Section 2.7 of [Wu2020a])—a cornerstone of most of these three volumes and a cornerstone of the mathematics of K–12—is correct, why FTS (the Fundamental Theorem of Similarity in Section 5.1 of [Wu2020a]) is correct, and why *rational* exponents have to be defined the way they are (see Section 4.2 of [Wu2020b]). The relevant explanations are given in Sections 2.5, 3.4, 2.1, 2.6, and 7.3, respectively.

These considerations bring us back to the beginning: why we have to devote something like 2,500 pages to a complete mathematical exposition of the school curriculum that respects mathematical integrity. First of all, these five topics are among the major topics of school mathematics, yet they have been consistently presented to students entirely by rote. One can take the pulse of the state of mathematics education in K–12, for example, by noting that we ask students to believe the *division of two finite decimals* to be (generally) equal to an *infinite decimal* without explaining to them what a finite decimal is,⁹ what it means to divide a finite decimal by another, and what an infinite decimal is. In other words, we have a scandalous situation in which students have to believe that two things are equal even if they have absolutely no idea what either “thing” is. The least we can do here is present a *correct and grade-appropriate mathematical explanation* for all these topics and then wait for the pedagogical debate on how to modify these mathematical presentations to create more reasonable textbooks in K–12. These six volumes are a first attempt at accomplishing the former objective. Let us hope that the latter objective will materialize soon.

On a deeper level, however, there is probably no more compelling evidence than a consideration of these five topics to expose the urgent need for a *complete and systematic* mathematical overhaul—one that respects mathematical integrity—of the standard K–12 curriculum. A prime example is the case of FASM. In a span of six grades, roughly grades 3 to 8, students have to learn to compute, first with whole numbers, then fractions, then rational numbers, and finally real numbers. All known curricula—TSM, the reform curriculum of NCTM, or the CCSSM curriculum—specify that at least two years be spent on the transition from whole numbers to fractions and about one year for the transition from fractions to rational numbers. And yet there is no mention of any need to ease students’ transition from rational numbers to real numbers (i.e., how to confront irrational numbers). This transition is so abrupt that one is at a loss to explain how such a glaring defect could have stayed under the radar of curricular discussions thus far if not for the total absence of any attempt to look at the mathematics of all thirteen grades of K–12 *longitudinally*. It would appear that the basic facts about the arithmetic of *real* numbers are considered to be so routine (or so shrouded in impenetrable mystery) that there is no need for any serious explanation. This is a curricular travesty of the first order.

Had any thought been given to providing guidance to students on how to add two quotients of irrational numbers at all, e.g.,

$$\frac{x}{2x^2 + 3} + \frac{5}{x^3 - \sqrt{2}}$$

⁹In the 1990s, a third-grade textbook from a major publisher said that a finite decimal is “a whole number with a decimal point”.

where x is an *irrational* number, and on *how* the addition algorithm for ordinary fractions remains correct in this context, it would have undoubtedly raised the following question to educators and textbook authors alike: whatever has happened to their former instruction on the use of the *least common denominators* for adding fractions? Could it be that the use of the least common denominator for adding fractions is a *mistake*? (See the discussion at the end of Section 1.3 in [Wu2020a].) If any attempt had been made to address this and related questions about multiplication and division of quotients of real numbers, the teaching of fractions in elementary school would have been in a far better place, school mathematics education would have been in a far better place, and the concept of FASM would have emerged decades ago without waiting for these six volumes to be written. Instead, students have been forced to “make believe” that real numbers can be handled “like” whole numbers so that, for example, they can “make believe” that x , $2x^2 + 3$, and $x^3 - \sqrt{2}$ above are “like” whole numbers. Therefore, to them, school mathematics education is little more than a collection of “make-believes” rather than the training ground for reasoning and critical thinking.

Analogous comments can be made about the other four topics above: the existence of n -th roots, the division of finite decimals, a complete proof of FTS, and the rationale behind the definitions of rational and irrational exponents. One can only surmise that such horrendous oversight has been due to the lack of any attempt to look at the whole school curriculum longitudinally from a mathematical perspective. These six volumes have made a first attempt at addressing and correcting this gross curricular oversight, but we fervently hope that this first attempt will not be the last.

Acknowledgements

The drafts of this volume and its companion volumes, [Wu2020a] and [Wu2020b], have been used since 2006 in the mathematics department at the University of California at Berkeley as textbooks for a three-semester sequence of courses, Math 151–153, that was created for pre-service high school teachers.¹⁰ The two people who were most responsible for making these courses a reality were the two chairs of the mathematics department in those early years: Calvin Moore and Ted Slaman. I am immensely indebted to them for their support. I should not fail to mention that, at one point, Ted volunteered to teach an extra course for me in order to free me up for the writing of an early draft of these volumes. Would that all of us had chairs like him! Mark Richards, then Dean of Physical Sciences, was also behind these courses from the beginning. His support not only meant a lot to me personally, but I suspect that it also had something to do with the survival of these courses in a research-oriented department.

It is manifestly impossible to write three volumes of teaching materials without generous help from students and friends in the form of corrections and suggestions for improvement. I have been fortunate in this regard, and I want to thank them all for their critical contributions: Richard Askey,¹¹ David Ebin, Emiliano Gómez,

¹⁰Since the fall of 2018, this three-semester sequence has been pared down to a two-semester sequence. A partial study of the effects of these courses on pre-service teachers can be found in [Newton-Poon].

¹¹Sadly, Dick passed away on October 9, 2019.

Larry Francis, Ole Hald, Sunil Koswatta, Bob LeBoeuf, Gowri Meda, Clinton Rempel, Ken Ribet, Shari Lind Scott, Angelo Segalla, and Kelli Talaska. Dick Askey's name will be mentioned in several places in these volumes, but I have benefitted from his judgment much more than what those explicit citations would seem to indicate. I especially appreciate the fact that he shared my belief early on in the corrosive effect of TSM on school mathematics education. David Ebin and Angelo Segalla taught from these volumes at SUNY Stony Brook and CSU Long Beach, respectively, and I am grateful to them for their invaluable input from the trenches. I must also thank Emiliano Gómez, who has taught these courses more times than anybody else with the exception of Ole Hald. Some of his deceptively simple comments have led to much soul-searching and extensive corrections. Bob LeBoeuf put up with my last-minute requests for help, and he showed what real dedication to a cause is all about.

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Hung-Hsi Wu
Berkeley, California
September 5, 2020

To the Instructor

These three volumes (the other two being [Wu2020a] and [Wu2020b]) have been written expressly for high school mathematics teachers and mathematics educators.¹ Their goal is to revisit the high school mathematics curriculum, together with relevant topics from middle school, to help teachers better understand the mathematics they are or will be teaching and to help educators establish a sound mathematical platform on which to base their research. In terms of mathematical sophistication, these three volumes are designed for use in upper division courses for math majors in college. Since their content consists of topics in the upper end of school mathematics (including one-variable calculus), these volumes are in the unenviable position of straddling two disciplines: mathematics and education. Such being the case, these volumes will inevitably inspire misconceptions on both sides. We must therefore address their possible misuse in the hands of both mathematicians and educators. To this end, let us briefly review the state of school mathematics education as of 2020.

The phenomenon of TSM

For roughly the last five decades, the nation has had a de facto national school mathematics curriculum, one that has been defined by the standard school mathematics textbooks. The mathematics encoded in these textbooks is extremely flawed.² We call the body of knowledge encoded in these textbooks **TSM** (**Text-book School Mathematics**; see page xix). We will presently give a superficial survey of some of these flaws,³ but what matters to us here is the fact that institutions of higher learning appear to be oblivious to the rampant mathematical mis-education of students in K–12 and have done very little to address the insidious presence of TSM in the mathematics taught to K–12 students over the last 50 years. As a result, mathematics teachers are forced to carry out their teaching duties with all the misconceptions they acquired from TSM intact, and educators likewise continue to base their research on what they learned from TSM. So TSM lives on unchallenged.

These three volumes are the conclusion of a six-volume series⁴ whose goal is to correct the universities' curricular oversight in the *mathematical education of*

¹We use the term “mathematics educators” to refer to university faculty in schools of education.

²These statements about curriculum and textbooks do not take into account how much the quality of school textbooks and teachers' content knowledge *may* have evolved recently with the advent of **CCSSM** (Common Core State Standards for Mathematics) ([**CCSSM**]) in 2010.

³Detailed criticisms and explicit corrections of these flaws are scattered throughout these volumes.

⁴The earlier volumes in the series are [Wu2011], [Wu2016a], and [Wu2016b].

teachers and educators by providing the needed mathematical knowledge to break the vicious cycle of TSM. For this reason, these volumes pay special attention to *mathematical integrity*⁵ and transparency, so that every concept is precisely defined and every assertion is completely explained,⁶ and so that the exposition here is as close as possible to what is taught in a high school classroom.

TSM has appeared in different guises; after all, the NCTM reform (see [NCTM1989]) was largely ushered in around 1989. But beneath the surface its essential substance has stayed remarkably constant (compare [Wu2014]). TSM is characterized by a lack of clear definitions, faulty or nonexistent reasoning, pervasive imprecision, general incoherence, and a consistent failure to make the case about why each standard topic in the school curriculum is worthy of study. Let us go through each of these issues in some detail.

(1) Definitions. In TSM, *correct* definitions of even the most basic concepts are usually not available. Here is a partial list:

fraction, multiplication of fractions, division of fractions, one fraction being bigger or smaller than another, finite decimal, infinite decimal, mixed number, ratio, percent, rate, constant rate, negative number, the four arithmetic operations on rational numbers, congruence, similarity, length of a curve, area of a planar region, volume of a solid, expression, equation, graph of a function, graph of an inequality, half-plane, polygon, interior angle of a polygon, regular polygon, slope of a line, parabola, inverse function, etc.

Consequently, students are forced to work with concepts whose mathematical meaning is at best only partially revealed to them. Consider, for example, the concept of division. TSM offers no precise definition of division for whole numbers, fractions, rational numbers, real numbers, or complex numbers. If it did, the division concept would become much more learnable because it is in fact the same for all these number systems (thus we also witness the incoherence of TSM). The lack of a definition for division leads inevitably to the impossibility of reasoning about the division of fractions, which then leads to “ours is not to reason why, just invert-and-multiply”. We have here a prime example of the convergence of the lack of definitions, the lack of reasoning, and the lack of coherence.

The reason we need precise *definitions* is that they create a level playing field for all learners, in the sense that each person—including the teacher—has *all the needed information* about a given concept from the very beginning and this information is the same for everyone. This eliminates any need to spend time looking for “tricks”, “insider knowledge”, or hidden agendas. The level playing field makes every concept accessible to all learners, and this fact is what the discussion of *equity* in school mathematics education seems to have overlooked thus far. To put this statement in context, think of TSM’s definition of a fraction as a piece of pizza: even elementary students can immediately see that there is more to a fraction than just being a piece of pizza. For example, “ $\frac{5}{8}$ miles of dirt road” has nothing to do with pieces of a pizza. The credibility gap between what students are made to learn and what they subconsciously recognize to be false disrupts the learning process, often fatally.

⁵We will provide a definition of this term on page xxv.

⁶In other words, every theorem is completely proved. Of course there are a few theorems that cannot be proved in context, such as the fundamental theorem of algebra.

In mathematics, there can be no valid reasoning without precise definitions. Consider, for example, TSM's proof of $(-2)(-3) = 2 \times 3$. Such a proof requires that we know what -2 is, what -3 is, what properties these negative integers are assumed to possess, and what it means to multiply (-2) by (-3) so that we can use them to justify this claim. Since TSM does not offer any information of this kind, it argues instead as follows: $3 \cdot (-3)$, being 3 copies of -3 , is equal to -9 , and likewise, $2 \cdot (-3) = -6$, $1 \cdot (-3) = -3$, and of course $0 \cdot (-3) = 0$. Now look at the pattern formed by these consecutive products:

$$3 \cdot (-3) = -9, \quad 2 \cdot (-3) = -6, \quad 1 \cdot (-3) = -3, \quad 0 \cdot (-3) = 0.$$

Clearly when the first factor decreases by 1, the product *increases* by 3. Now, when the 0 in the product $0 \cdot (-3)$ decreases by 1 (so that 0 becomes -1), the product $(-1)(-3)$ ceases to make sense. Nevertheless, TSM urges students to believe that *the pattern must persist no matter what* so that this product will once more increase by 3 and therefore $(-1)(-3) = 3$. By the same token, when the -1 in $(-1)(-3)$ decreases by 1 again (so that -1 becomes -2), the product must again increase by 3 for the same reason and $(-2)(-3) = 6 = 2 \times 3$, as desired. This is what TSM considers to be "reasoning".

TSM goes further. Using a similar argument for $(-2)(-3) = 2 \times 3$, one can show that $(-a)(-b) = ab$ for all *whole numbers* a and b . Now, TSM asks students to take another big leap of faith: if $(-a)(-b) = ab$ is true for whole numbers a and b , then it must also be true when a and b are *arbitrary numbers*. This is how TSM "proves" that *negative times negative is positive*.

Slighting definitions in TSM can also take a different form: the graph of a linear inequality $ax + by \leq c$ is claimed to be a half-plane of the line $ax + by = c$, and the "proof" usually consists of checking a few examples. Thus the points $(0, 0)$, $(-2, 0)$, and $(1, -1)$ are found to lie below the line defined by $x + 3y = 2$ and, since they all satisfy $x + 3y \leq 2$, it is believable that the "lower half-plane" of the line $x + 3y = 2$ is the graph of $x + 3y \leq 2$. Further experimentation with other points below the line defined by $x + 3y = 2$ adds to this conviction. Again, no reasoning is involved and, more importantly, neither "graph of an inequality" nor "half-plane" is defined in such a discussion because these terms sound so familiar that TSM apparently believes no definition is necessary. At other times, reasoning is simply suppressed, such as when the coordinates of the vertex of the graph of $ax^2 + bx + c$ are peremptorily declared to be

$$\left(\frac{-b}{2a}, \frac{4ac - b^2}{4a} \right).$$

End of discussion.

Our emphasis on the importance of definitions in school mathematics compels us to address a misconception about the role of definitions in school mathematics education. To many teachers and educators, the word "definition" connotes something tedious and nonessential that students must memorize for standardized tests. It may also conjure an image of cut-and-dried, top-down instruction that begins with a rigid and unmotivated definition and continues with the definition's formal and equally unmotivated appearance in a chain of logical arguments. Understandably, most educators find this scenario unappetizing. Their response is that, at least in school mathematics, the definition of a concept should emerge at the end—but not at the beginning—of an extended *intuitive discussion* of the hows and whys of

the concept.⁷ In addition, the so-called conceptual understanding of the concept is believed to lie in the intuitive discussion but not in the *formal definition* itself, the latter being nothing more than an afterthought.

These two opposite conceptions of definition ignore the possibility of a middle ground: one can state the precise definition of a concept at the beginning of a lesson to set the tone of the subsequent mathematical discussion and exploration, which is to show students that *this is all they will ever need to know about the concept as far as doing mathematics is concerned*. Such transparency—demanded by the mathematical culture of the past century (cf. [Quinn])—is what is most sorely missing in TSM, which consistently leaves students in doubt about what a *fraction* is or might be, what a *negative number* is, what *congruence* means, etc. In this middle ground, a definition can be explored and explained in intuitive terms in the ensuing discussion on the one hand and, on the other, *put to use in proofs—in its precise formulation—to show how and why the definition is absolutely indispensable to any kind of reasoning concerning the concept*. With the consistent use of precise definitions, the line between what is correct and what is intuitive but maybe incorrect (such as the TSM-proof of *negative times negative is positive*) becomes clearly drawn. It is the frequent blurring of this line in TSM that contributes massively to the general misapprehension in mathematics education about what a proof is (part of this misapprehension is described in, e.g., [NCTM2009], [Ellis-Bieda-Knuth], and [Arbaugh et al.]).

These three volumes (this volume, [Wu2020a], and [Wu2020b]) will always take a position in the aforementioned middle ground. Consider the definition of a fraction, for example: it is one of a special collection of points on the number line (see Section 1.1 of [Wu2020a]). This is the only meaning of a fraction that is needed to drive the fairly intricate *mathematical development* of fractions, and, for this reason, the definition of a fraction as a certain point on the number line is the one that will be unapologetically used all through these three volumes. To help teachers and students feel comfortable with this definition, we give an extensive intuitive discussion of why such a definition for a fraction is necessary at the beginning of Section 1.1 in [Wu2020a] before giving the formal definition. This intuitive discussion, naturally, opens the door to whatever pedagogical strategy a teacher wants to invest in it. Unlike in TSM, however, this definition is not given to be forgotten. On the contrary, *all* subsequent discussions about fractions will refer to this *precise definition* (but not to the intuitive discussion that preceded it) and, of course, all the proofs about fractions will also depend on this formal definition because mathematics demands no less. Students need to learn what a proof is and how it works; the exposition here tries to meet this need by (gently) laying bare the fact that reasoning in proofs requires precise definitions. As a second example, we give the definition of the slope of a line only after an extensive intuitive discussion in Section 6.4 of [Wu2020a] about *what* slope is supposed to measure and *how* we may hope to measure it. Again, the emphasis is on the fact that this definition of slope is not the conclusion, but the *beginning* of a long logical development that occupies the second half of Chapter 6 in [Wu2020a], reappears in trigonometry (relation

⁷Proponents of this approach to definitions often seem to forget that, after the emergence of a precise definition, students are still owed a *systematic exposition of mathematics using the definition* so that they can learn about how the definition fits into the overall logical structure of mathematics.

with the tangent function; see page 39), calculus (definition of the derivative; see pp. 310ff.), and beyond.

(2) Reasoning. Reasoning is the lifeblood of mathematics, and the main reason for learning mathematics is to learn how to reason. In the context of school mathematics, *reasoning* is important to students because it is the tool that empowers them to explore on their own and verify for themselves what is true and what is false without having to take other people's words on faith. *Reasoning* gives them confidence and independence. But when students have to accustom themselves to performing one unexplained rote skill after another, year after year, their ability to reason will naturally atrophy. Many students find it more expedient to stop asking *why* and simply take any order that comes their way sight unseen just to get by.⁸ One can only speculate on the cumulative effect this kind of mathematics "learning" has on those students who go on to become teachers and mathematics educators.

(3) Precision. The purpose of *precision* is to eliminate errors and minimize misconceptions, but in TSM students learn at every turn that they should not believe exactly what they are told but must learn to be creative in interpreting it. For example, TSM preaches the virtue of using *the theorem on equivalent fractions* to simplify fractions and does not hesitate to simplify a rational expression in x as follows:

$$\frac{(x-1)(x^2+3)}{x(x-1)} = \frac{x^2+3}{x}.$$

This looks familiar because "canceling the same number from top and bottom" is exactly what the theorem on equivalent fractions is supposed to do. Unfortunately, this theorem only guarantees

$$\frac{ca}{bc} = \frac{a}{b}$$

when a , b , and c are *whole numbers* (b and c understood to be nonzero). In the previous rational expression, however, none of $(x-1)$, (x^2+3) , and x is necessarily a whole number because x could be, for example, $\sqrt{5}$. Therefore, according to TSM, students in algebra should look back at equivalent fractions and realize that the theorem on equivalent fractions—in *spite of what it says*—can actually be applied to "fractions" whose "numerators" and "denominators" are not whole numbers. Thus TSM encourages students to believe that "nothing needs to be taken precisely and one must be flexible in interpreting what one learns". This extrapolation-happy mindset is the opposite of what it takes to learn a precise subject like mathematics or any of the exact sciences. For example, we cannot allow students to believe that the domain of definition of $\log x$ is $[0, \infty)$ since $[0, \infty)$ is more or less the same as $(0, \infty)$. Indeed, the presence or absence of the single point "0" is the difference between true and false.

Another example of how a lack of precision leads to misconceptions is the statement that " $\beta^0 = 1$ ", where β is a nonzero number. Because TSM does not use precise language, it does not—or cannot—draw a sharp distinction between a *heuristic argument*, a *definition*, and a *proof*. Consequently, it has misled numerous students and teachers into believing that the heuristic argument for defining β^0 to be 1 is in fact a "proof" that $\beta^0 = 1$. The same misconception persists for negative exponents (e.g., $\beta^{-n} = 1/\beta^n$). The lack of precision is so pervasive in TSM that there is no end to such examples.

⁸There is consistent anecdotal evidence from teachers in the trenches that such is the case.

(4) **Coherence.** Another reason why TSM is less than learnable is its incoherence. Skills in TSM are framed as part of a long laundry list, and the lack of definitions for concepts ensures that skills and their underlying concepts remain forever disconnected. Mathematics, on the other hand, unfolds from a few central ideas, and concepts and skills are developed along the way to meet the needs that emerge in the process of unfolding. An acceptable exposition of mathematics therefore tells a coherent story that makes mathematics memorable. For example, consider the fact that TSM makes the four standard algorithms for whole numbers four separate rote-learning skills. Thus TSM hides from students the overriding theme that the Hindu-Arabic numeral system is universally adopted because it makes possible a simple, algorithmic procedure for computations; namely, if we can carry out an operation ($+$, $-$, \times , or \div) for *single-digit numbers*, then we can carry out this operation for all whole numbers no matter how many digits they have (see Chapter 3 of [Wu2011]). The standard algorithms are the vehicles that bridge operations with *single-digit* numbers and operations on *all* whole numbers. Moreover, the standard algorithms can be simply explained by a straightforward application of the associative, commutative, and distributive laws. From this perspective, a teacher can explain to students, convincingly, why the multiplication table is very much worth learning; this would ease one of the main pedagogical bottlenecks in elementary school. Moreover, a teacher can also make sense of the associative, commutative, and distributive laws to elementary students and help them see that these are vital tools for doing mathematics rather than dinosaurs in an outdated school curriculum. If these facts had been widely known during the 1990s, the senseless debate on whether the standard algorithms should be taught might not have arisen and the Math Wars might not have taken place at all.

TSM also treats whole numbers, fractions, (finite) decimals, and rational numbers as four different kinds of numbers. The reality is that, first of all, decimals are a special class of fractions (see Section 1.1 of [Wu2020a]), whole numbers are part of fractions, and fractions are part of rational numbers. Moreover, the four arithmetic operations ($+$, $-$, \times , and \div) in each of these number systems do not essentially change from system to system. There is a smooth conceptual transition at each step of the passage from whole numbers to fractions and from fractions to rational numbers; see Parts 2 and 3 of [Wu2011] or Sections 2.2, 2.4, and 2.5 of [Wu2020a]. This coherence facilitates learning: instead of having to learn about four different kinds of numbers, students basically only need to learn about one number system (the rational numbers). Yet another example is the conceptual unity between linear functions and quadratic functions: in each case, the leading term— ax for linear functions and ax^2 for quadratic functions—determines the shape of the graph of the function completely, and the studies of the two kinds of functions become similar as each revolves around the shape of the graph (see Section 2.1 in [Wu2020b]). Mathematical coherence gives us many such storylines, and a few more will be detailed below.

(5) **Purposefulness.** In addition to the preceding four shortcomings—a lack of clear definitions, faulty or nonexistent reasoning, pervasive imprecision, and general incoherence—TSM has a fifth fatal flaw: it lacks *purposefulness*. Purposefulness is what gives mathematics its vitality and focus: the fact is that a mathematical investigation, at any level, is always carried out with a specific goal in mind. When a mathematics textbook reflects this goal-oriented character of mathematics, it

propels the mathematical narrative forward and facilitates its learning by making students aware of where the discussion is headed, and *why*. Too often, TSM lurches from topic to topic with no apparent purpose, leading students to wonder why they should bother to tag along. One example is the introduction of the absolute value of a number. Many teachers and students are mystified by being saddled with such a “frivolous” skill: “just kill the negative sign”, as one teacher put it. Yet TSM never tries to demystify his concept. (For an explanation of the need to introduce *absolute value*, see, e.g., the Pedagogical Comments in Section 2.6 of [Wu2020a]). Another is the seemingly inexplicable replacement of the square root and cube root symbols of a positive number b , i.e., \sqrt{b} and $\sqrt[3]{b}$, by rational exponents, $b^{1/2}$ and $b^{1/3}$, respectively (see, e.g., Section 4.2 in [Wu2020b]). Because TSM teaches the laws of exponents as merely “number facts”, it is inevitable that it would fail to point out the *purpose* of this change of notation, which is to shift focus from the operation of taking roots to the properties of the *exponential function* b^x for a fixed positive b . A final example is the way TSM teaches estimation completely by rote, without ever telling students why and when estimation is important and therefore worth learning. Indeed, we often *have to* make estimates, either because precision is unattainable or unnecessary, or because we purposely use estimation as a tool to help achieve precision (see [Wu2011, Section 10.3]).

To summarize, if we want students to be taught mathematics that is learnable, then we must discard TSM and replace it with the kind of mathematics that possesses these five qualities:

- Every concept has a clear definition.
- Every statement is precise.
- Every assertion is supported by reasoning.
- Its development is coherent.
- Its development is purposeful.

We call these the **Fundamental Principles of Mathematics** (also see Section 2.1 in [Wu2018]). We say a mathematical exposition has **mathematical integrity** if it embodies these fundamental principles. As we have just seen, we find in TSM a consistent pattern of violating all five fundamental principles. We believe that the dominance of TSM in school mathematics in the past five decades is a principal cause of the ongoing crisis in school mathematics education.

One consequence of the dominance of TSM is that most students come out of K–12 knowing only TSM, not mathematics that respects these fundamental principles. To them, learning mathematics is not about learning how to reason or distinguish true from false but about memorizing facts and tricks to get correct answers. Faced with this crisis, what should be the responsibility of institutions of higher learning? Should it be to create courses for future teachers and educators to help them *systematically* replace their knowledge of TSM with mathematics that is consistent with the five fundamental principles? Or should it be, rather, to leave TSM alone but make it more palatable by helping teachers infuse their classrooms with activities that *suggest* visions of reasoning, problem solving, and sense making? As of this writing, an overwhelming majority of the institutions of higher learning are choosing the latter alternative.

At this point, we return to the earlier question about some of the ways both university mathematicians and educators might misunderstand and misuse these three volumes.

Potential misuse by mathematicians

First, consider the case of mathematicians. They are likely to scoff at what they perceive to be the triviality of the content in these volumes: no groups, no homomorphisms, no compact sets, no holomorphic functions, and no Gaussian curvature. They may therefore be tempted to elevate the level of the presentation, for example, by introducing the concept of a *field* and show that, when two fraction symbols m/n and k/ℓ (with whole numbers m, n, k, ℓ , and $n \neq 0, \ell \neq 0$) satisfying $m\ell = nk$ are identified, and when $+$ and \times are defined by the usual formulas, the fraction symbols form a field. In this elegant manner, they can efficiently cover all the standard facts in the arithmetic of fractions in the school curriculum.⁹ This is certainly a better way than *defining fractions as points on the number line* to teach teachers and educators about fractions, is it not? Likewise, mathematicians may find finite geometry to be a more exciting introduction to axiomatic systems than any proposed improvements on the high school geometry course in TSM. The list goes on. Consequently, pre-service teachers and educators may end up learning from mathematicians some interesting mathematics, but not mathematics that would help them overcome the handicap of knowing only TSM.

Mathematicians may also engage in another popular approach to the professional development of teachers and educators: teaching the solution of hard problems. Because mathematicians tend to take their own mastery of fundamental skills and concepts for granted, many do not realize that it is nearly impossible for teachers who have been immersed in thirteen years or more of TSM to acquire, *on their own*, a mastery of a *mathematically correct* version of the basic skills and concepts. Mathematicians are therefore likely to consider their major goal in the professional development of teachers and educators to be teaching them how to solve *hard problems*. Surely, so the belief goes, if teachers can handle the “hard stuff”, they will be able to handle the “easy stuff” in K–12. Since this belief is entirely in line with one of the current slogans in school mathematics education about the critical importance of *problem solving*, many teachers may be all too eager to teach their students the extracurricular skills of solving challenging problems *in addition to* teaching them TSM day in and day out. In any case, the relatively unglamorous content of these three volumes (this volume, [Wu2020a], and [Wu2020b])—designed to replace TSM—will get shunted aside into supplementary reading assignments.

At the risk of belaboring the point, the focus of these three volumes is on showing how to *replace teachers’ and educators’ knowledge of TSM in grades 9–12* with mathematics that respects the fundamental principles of mathematics. Therefore, reformulating the mathematics of grades 9–12 from an advanced mathematical standpoint to obtain a more elegant presentation is not the point. Introducing novel elementary topics (such as Pick’s theorem or the 4-point affine plane) into the mathematics education of teachers and educators is also not the point. Rather, the point in year 2020 is to do the essential spadework of revisiting the standard 9–12 curriculum—topic by topic, along the lines laid out in these three volumes—showing teachers and educators how the TSM in each case can be supplanted by mathematics that makes sense to them and to their students. For example, since most pre-service teachers and educators have not been exposed to the use of precise

⁹This is my paraphrase of a mathematician’s account of his professional development institute around year 2000.

definitions in mathematics, they are unlikely to know that definitions are supposed to be used, *exactly as written, no more and no less*, in logical arguments. One of the most formidable tasks confronting mathematicians is, in fact, how to change educators' and teachers' perception of the role of definitions in reasoning.

As illustration, consider how TSM handles slope. There are two ways, but we will mention only one of them.¹⁰ TSM pretends that, by defining the slope of a line L using the difference quotient with respect to two *pre-chosen* points P and Q on L ,¹¹ such a difference quotient is a property *of the line itself* (rather than a property of the two points P and Q). In addition, TSM pretends that it can use “reasoning” based on this defective definition to derive the equation of a line when (for example) its slope and a given point on it are prescribed. Here is the inherent danger of thirteen years of continuous exposure to this kind of pseudo-reasoning: teachers cease to recognize that (a) such a definition of slope is defective and (b) such a defective definition of slope cannot possibly support the purported derivation (= proof) of the equation of a line. It therefore comes to pass that—as a result of the flaws in our education system—many teachers and educators end up being confused about even the meaning of the simplest kind of reasoning: “ A implies B ”. They need—and deserve—all the help we can give so that they can finally experience *genuine mathematics*, i.e., mathematics that is based on the fundamental principles of mathematics.

Of course, the ultimate goal is for teachers to *use* this new knowledge to teach their own students so that those students can achieve a true understanding of what “ A implies B ” means and what real *reasoning* is all about. With this in mind, we introduce in Section 6.4 of [Wu2020a] the concept of slope by discussing what slope is supposed to measure (an example of *purposefulness*) and how to measure it, which then leads to the formulation of a precise definition. With the availability of the AA-criterion for triangle similarity (Theorem G22 in Section 5.3 of [Wu2020a]), we then show how this definition leads to the formula for the slope of a line as the difference quotient of the coordinates of *any* two points on the line (the “rise-over-run”). Having this critical flexibility to compute the slope—plus an earlier elucidation of what an *equation* is (see Section 6.2 in [Wu2020a])—we easily obtain the equation of a line passing through a given point with a given slope, *with correct reasoning* this time around (see Section 6.5 in [Wu2020a]). Of course the same kind of reasoning can be applied to similar problems when other reasonable geometric data are prescribed for the line.

By guiding teachers and educators systematically through the *correction of TSM errors on a case-by-case basis*, we believe they will gain a new and deeper understanding of school mathematics. Ultimately, we hope that if institutions of higher learning and the education establishment can persevere in committing themselves to this painstaking work, the students of these teachers and educators will be spared the ravages of TSM. If there is an easier way to undo thirteen years and more of mis-education in mathematics, we are not aware of it.

A main emphasis in using these three volumes should therefore be on providing patient guidance to teachers and educators to help them overcome the many

¹⁰A second way is to *define* a line to be the graph of a linear equation $y = mx + b$ and then *define* the slope of this line to be m . This is the definition of a line in advanced mathematics, but it is *so profoundly inappropriate* for use in K–12 that we will just ignore it.

¹¹This is the “rise-over-run”.

handicaps inflicted on them by TSM. In this light, we can say with confidence that, for now, the best way for mathematicians to help educate teachers and educators is to firm up the mathematical foundations of the latter. Let us repair the damage TSM has done to their mathematics content knowledge by helping them to acquire a knowledge of school mathematics that is consistent with the fundamental principles of mathematics.

Potential misuse by educators

Next, we address the issue of how educators may misuse these three volumes. Educators may very well frown on the volumes' insistence on precise definitions and precise reasoning and their unremitting emphasis on proofs while, apparently, neglecting *problem solving*, *conceptual understanding*, and *sense making*. To them, good professional development concentrates on all of these issues plus contextual learning, student thinking, and communication with students. Because these three volumes never explicitly mention problem solving, conceptual understanding, or sense making per se (or, for that matter, contextual learning or student thinking), their content may be dismissed by educators as merely skills-oriented or *technical knowledge for its own sake* and, as such, get relegated to reading assignments outside of class. They may believe that precious class time can be put to better use by calling on students to share their solutions to difficult problems or by holding small group discussions about problem-solving strategies.

We believe this attitude is also misguided because the critical missing piece in the contemporary mathematical education of teachers and educators is an exposure to a systematic exposition of the standard topics of the school curriculum that respects the fundamental principles of mathematics. Teachers' lack of access to such a mathematical exposition is what lies at the heart of much of the current education crisis. Let us explain.

Consider *problem solving*. At the moment, the goal of getting all students to be proficient in solving problems is being pursued with missionary zeal, but what seems to be missing in this single-minded pursuit is the recognition that the body of knowledge we call mathematics consists of nothing more than a sequence of problems posed, and then solved, by making logical deductions on the basis of precise definitions, clearly stated hypotheses, and known results.¹² This is after all the whole point of the classic two-volume work [Pólya-Szegő], which introduces students to mathematical research through the solutions to a long list of problems. For example, the Pythagorean theorem and its many proofs are nothing more than solutions to the problem posed by people from diverse cultures long ago: "Is there any relationship among the three sides of a right triangle?" *There is no essential difference between problem solving and theorem proving in mathematics*. Each time we solve a problem, we in effect prove a theorem (trivial as that theorem may sometimes be).

¹²It is in this light that the previous remark about the purposefulness of mathematics can be better understood: before solving a problem, one should know *why* the problem was posed in the first place. Note that, for beginners (i.e., school students), the overwhelming emphasis has to be on *solving* problems rather than the more elusive issue of posing problems.

The main point of this observation is that if we want students to be proficient in problem solving, then we must give them plenty of examples of grade-appropriate proofs all through (at least) grades 4–12 and engage them regularly in grade-appropriate theorem-proving activities. If we can get students to see, day in and day out, that problem solving is a way of life in mathematics and if we also *routinely get them involved in problem solving* (i.e., *theorem proving*), students will learn problem solving naturally through such a long-term immersion. In the process, they will get to experience that, to solve problems, they need to have precise definitions and precise hypotheses as a starting point, know the direction they are headed before they make a move (sense making), and be able to make deductions from precise definitions and known facts. Definitions, sense making, and reasoning will therefore come together *naturally* for students if they learn mathematics that is consistent with the five fundamental principles.

We make the effort to put problem solving in the context of the fundamental principles of mathematics because there is a danger in pursuing problem solving per se in the midst of the TSM-induced corruption of school mathematics. In a generic situation, teachers teach TSM and only pay lip service to “problem solving”, while in the best case scenario, teachers *keep TSM intact* while teaching students how to solve problems on a separate, parallel track *outside of TSM*. Lest we forget, TSM considers “out of a hundred” to be a correct definition of *percent*, expands the product of two linear polynomials by “FOILING”, and assumes that in any problem about *rate*, one can automatically assume that the rate is constant (“Lynnette can wash 95 cars in 5 days. How many cars can Lynnette wash in 11 days?”), etc. In this environment, it is futile to talk about (*correct*) problem solving. Until we can rid school classrooms of TSM, the most we can hope for is having teachers teach, on the one hand, definition-free concepts with a bag of tricks-sans-reasoning to get correct answers and, on the other hand, reasoning skills for solving a separate collection of problems for special occasions. In other words, two parallel universes will co-exist in school mathematics classrooms. So long as TSM continues to reign in school classrooms, most students will only be comfortable doing one-step problems and any problem-solving ability they possess will only be something that is artificially grafted onto the TSM they know.

If we want to avert this kind of **bipolar mathematics education** in schools, we must begin by providing teachers with a better mathematical education. Then we can hope that teachers will teach mathematics consistent with the fundamental principles of mathematics¹³ so that students’ problem-solving abilities can evolve naturally from the mathematics they learn. It is partly for this reason that the six volumes under discussion¹⁴ choose to present the mathematics of K–12 with explanations (= proofs) for all the skills. In particular, these three volumes on the mathematics of grades 9–12 provide proofs for every theorem. (At the same time, they also caution against certain proofs that are simply too long or too tedious to be presented in a high school classroom.) The hope is that when teachers and educators get to experience firsthand that every part of school mathematics is

¹³And, of course, to also get school textbooks that are unsullied by TSM. However, it seems likely as of 2020 that major publishers will hold onto TSM until there are sufficiently large numbers of knowledgeable teachers who demand better textbooks. See the end of [Wu2015].

¹⁴These three volumes, together with [Wu2011], [Wu2016a], and [Wu2016b].

suffused with reasoning, they will not fail to teach reasoning to their own students as a matter of routine. Only then will it make sense to consider problem solving to be an integral part of school mathematics.

The importance of correct content knowledge

In general, the idea is that if we give teachers and educators an exposition of mathematics that *makes sense* and has built-in *conceptual understanding* and *reasoning*, then we can hope to create classrooms with an intellectual climate that enables students to absorb these qualities as if by osmosis. Perhaps an analogy can further clarify this issue: if we want to teach writing, it would be more effective to let students read good writing and learn from it directly rather than to let them read bad writing and simultaneously attend special sessions on the fine points of effective written communication.

If we want school mathematics to be suffused with reasoning, conceptual understanding, and sense making, then we must recognize that these are not qualities that can stand apart from mathematical details. Rather, they are firmly anchored to hard-and-fast mathematical facts. Take proofs (= reasoning), for example. If we only talk about proofs in the context of TSM, then our conception of what a proof is will be extremely flawed because there are essentially no correct proofs in TSM. For starters, since TSM has no precise definitions, there can be no hope of finding a completely correct proof in TSM. Therefore, when teaching from these three volumes,¹⁵ it is imperative to first concentrate on getting across to teachers and educators the *details* of the mathematical reformulation of the school curriculum. Specifically, we stress the importance of offering educators a *valid* alternative to TSM for their future research. Only then can we hope to witness a reconceptualization—in *mathematics education*—of reasoning, conceptual understanding, problem solving, etc., on the basis of a solid mathematical foundation.

Reasoning, *conceptual understanding*, and *sense making* are qualities intrinsic to school mathematics that respects the fundamental principles of mathematics. We see in these three volumes a continuous narrative from topic to topic and from chapter to chapter to guide the reader through this long journey. The sense making will be self-evident to the reader. Moreover, when every assertion is backed up by an explanation (= proof), reasoning will rise to the surface for all to see. In their presentation of the natural unfolding of mathematical ideas, these volumes also routinely point out connections between definitions, concepts, theorems, and proofs. Some connections may not be immediately apparent. For example, in Section 6.1 of [Wu2020a], we explicitly point out the connection between Mersenne primes and the summation of finite geometric series. Other connections span several grades: there is a striking similarity between the *proofs* of the area formula for rectangles whose sides are fractions (Theorem 1.7 in Section 1.4 of [Wu2020a]), the ASA congruence criterion (Theorem G9 in Section 4.6 of [Wu2020a]), the SSS congruence criterion (Theorem G28 in Section 6.2 of [Wu2020b]), the fundamental theorem of similarity (Theorem G10 in Section 6.4 of [Wu2020b]), and the theorem about the equality of angles on a circle subtending the same arc (Theorem G52 in Section 6.8 of [Wu2020b]). All these proofs are achieved by breaking up a complicated argument into two or more clear-cut steps, each involving simpler arguments. In

¹⁵As well as from the other three volumes, [Wu2011], [Wu2016a], and [Wu2016b]).

other words, they demonstrate how to reduce the complex to the simple so that prospective teachers and educators can learn from such instructive examples about the fine art of problem solving.

The foregoing unrelenting emphasis on mathematical content should not lead readers to believe that these three volumes deal with mathematics at the expense of pedagogy. To the extent that these volumes are designed to promote better teaching in the schools, they do not sidestep pedagogical issues. Extensive pedagogical comments are offered whenever they are called for, and they are clearly displayed as such; see, for example, pp. 29, 40, 46, 65, 80, 91, 162, 179, 235, 359, etc., in the present volume. Nevertheless, our most urgent task—*the* fundamental task—in the mathematical education of teachers and educators as of 2020 has to be the *reconstruction of their mathematical knowledge base*. This is not about judiciously *tinkering* with what teachers and educators already know or *tweaking* their existing knowledge here and there. Rather, it is about the hard work of *replacing* their knowledge of TSM with mathematics that is consistent with the fundamental principles of mathematics *from the ground up*. The primary goal of these three volumes is to give a detailed exposition of school mathematics in grades 9–12 to help educators and teachers achieve this reconstruction.

To the Pre-Service Teacher

In one sense, these three volumes are just textbooks, and you may feel you have gone through too many textbooks in your life to need any fresh advice. Nevertheless, we are going to suggest that you approach these volumes with a different mindset than what you may have used with other textbooks, because you will soon be using the knowledge you gain from these volumes to teach your students. Reading other textbooks, you would likely congratulate yourself if you could achieve mastery over 90% of the material. That would normally guarantee an A. More is at stake with these volumes, however, because they directly address what you will need to know in order to write your lessons. Ask yourself whether a *mathematics* teacher whose lessons are correct only 90% of the time should be considered a good teacher. To be blunt, such a teacher would be a near disaster. So your mission in reading these volumes should be to achieve nothing short of total mastery. **You are expected to know this material 100%.** To the extent that the content of these three volumes is just K–12 mathematics, this is an achievable goal. This is the standard you have to set for yourself. Having said that, we also note explicitly that many *Mathematical Asides* are sprinkled all through the text, sometimes in the form of footnotes. These are comments—usually from an advanced mathematical perspective—that try to shed light on the mathematics under discussion. *The above reference to “total mastery” does not include these comments.*

You should approach these volumes differently in yet another respect. Students’ typical attitude towards a math course is that if they can do all the homework problems, then most of their work is done. Think back on your calculus courses or any of the math courses when you were in school, and you will understand how true this is. But since these volumes are designed specifically for teachers, your emphasis cannot be limited to merely doing the homework assignments because your job will be more than just helping students to do homework problems. When you stand in front of a class, what you will be talking about, *most of the time*, will not be the exercises at the end of each section but the concepts and skills in the exposition proper.¹ For example, very likely you will soon have to convince a class on geometry why the Pythagorean theorem is correct. There are two proofs of this theorem in these volumes, one in Section 5.3 of [Wu2020a] and the other on pp. 233ff. Yet on neither occasion is it possible to assign a problem that asks for a proof of this theorem. There are problems that can assess whether you know enough about the Pythagorean theorem to apply it, but how do you assess whether

¹I will be realistic and acknowledge that there *are* teachers who use class time only to drill students on how to get the right answers to exercises, often without reasoning. But one of the missions of these three volumes is to steer you away from that kind of teaching. See **To the Instructor** on page xix.

you know *how to prove the theorem* when the proofs have already been given in the text? It is therefore entirely up to you to achieve mastery of everything in the text itself. One way to check is to pick a theorem at random and ask yourself: Can I prove it without looking at the book? Can I explain its significance? Can I convince someone else why it is worth knowing? Can I give an intuitive summary of the proof? These are questions that you will have to answer as a teacher. To the extent possible, these volumes try to provide information that will help you answer questions of this kind. I may add that the most taxing part of writing these volumes was in fact to do it in a way that would allow you, as much as possible, to adapt them for use in a school classroom with minimal changes. (Compare, for example, **To the Instructor** on pp. xix ff.)

There is another special feature of these volumes that I would like to bring to your attention: these volumes are essentially *school textbooks written for teachers*, and as such, you should read them with the eyes of a school student. When you read Chapter 1 of [Wu2020a] on fractions, for instance, picture yourself in a sixth-grade classroom and therefore, no matter how much abstract algebra you may know or how well you can explain the construction of the quotient field of an integral domain, you have to be able to give explanations in the language of sixth-grade mathematics (i.e., to sixth graders). Similarly, when you come to Chapter 6 of [Wu2020a], you are developing algebra from the beginning, so even the use of symbols will be an issue (it is in fact the *key* issue; see Section 6.1 of [Wu2020a]). Therefore, be very deliberate and explicit when you introduce a symbol, at least for a while.

The major conclusions in these volumes, as in all mathematics books, are summarized into **theorems**. Depending on the author's (and other mathematicians') whims, theorems are sometimes called **propositions**, **lemmas**, or **corollaries** as a way of indicating which theorems are deemed more important than others. Roughly speaking, a proposition is not regarded to be as important as a theorem, a lemma is conceptually less important than a proposition, and a corollary is supposed to follow immediately from the theorem or proposition to which it is attached. (Incidentally, a formula or an algorithm is just a theorem.) This idiosyncratic classification of theorems started with Euclid around 300 BC, and it is too late to do anything about it now. The main concepts of mathematics are codified into **definitions**. Definitions are set in **boldface** in these volumes when they appear for the first time; a few truly basic ones are even individually displayed in a separate paragraph, but most of the definitions are embedded in the text itself, so you should watch out for them.

The statements of the theorems, and especially their proofs, depend on the definitions, and proofs are the guts of mathematics.

Please note that when I said above that I expect you to know everything in these volumes, I was using the word "*know*" in the way mathematicians normally use the word. They do not use it to mean simply "know the statement by heart". Rather, *to know* a theorem, for instance, means *know the statement by heart, know its proof, know why it is worth knowing, know what its potential implications are, and finally, know how to apply it in new situations*. If you know anything short of this, how can you expect to be able to answer your students' questions? At the very least, you should know by heart all the theorems and definitions as well as the main ideas of each proof because, if you do not, it will be futile to talk about the other aspects of knowing. Therefore, a preliminary suggestion to help you master

the content of these volumes is for you to

copy out the statements of every definition, theorem, proposition, lemma, and corollary, along with page references so that they can be examined in detail when necessary,

and also to

form the habit of summarizing the main idea(s) of each proof.

These are good study habits. When it is your turn to teach your students, be sure to pass along these suggestions to them.

You should also be aware that reading a mathematics book is not the same as reading a gossip magazine. You can probably flip through one of the latter in an hour or less. But in these volumes, there will be many passages that require slow reading and re-reading, perhaps many times. I cannot single out those passages for you because they will be different for different people. We do not all learn the same way. What you can take for granted, however, is that mathematics books make for exceedingly slow reading. (Nothing good comes easy.) Therefore if you get stuck, time and time again, on a sentence or two in these volumes, take heart, because this is the norm in mathematics learning.

Prerequisites

In terms of the *mathematical development* of this volume, only a knowledge of **whole numbers**, $0, 1, 2, 3, \dots$, is assumed. Thus along with place value, you are assumed to know the four arithmetic operations, their standard algorithms, and the concept of **division-with-remainder** and how it is related to the long division algorithm.¹ Division-with-remainder assigns to each pair of whole numbers b (the dividend) and d (the divisor), where $d \neq 0$, another *pair* of whole numbers q (the quotient) and r (the remainder), so that

$$b = qd + r \quad \text{where } 0 \leq r < d.$$

Some subtle points about the concept of *division* among whole numbers will be briefly recalled at the beginning of Section 1.5 of [Wu2020a]. A detailed exposition of the concept of “division” among whole numbers is given in Chapter 7 of [Wu2011].

Note that 0 is included among the whole numbers.

A knowledge of negative numbers, particularly integers, is not assumed. Negative numbers will be developed ab initio in Chapter 2 of [Wu2020a].

Because every assertion in these three volumes (this volume, together with [Wu2020a] and [Wu2020b]) will be proved, students should be comfortable with mathematical reasoning. It is hoped that as they progress through the volumes, all students will become increasingly at ease with proofs. In terms of the *undergraduate curriculum*, readers of this volume—as a rule of thumb—should have already taken the usual two years of college calculus or their equivalents.

¹Unfortunately, a correct exposition of this topic is difficult to come by. Try Chapter 7 of [Wu2011].

Some Conventions

- Each chapter is divided into sections. Titles of the sections are given at the beginning of each section as well as in the table of contents. Each section (with few exceptions) is divided into subsections; a list of the subsections in each section—together with a summary of the section *in italics*—is given at the beginning of each section.
- When a new concept is first defined, it appears in **boldface** but is not often accorded a separate paragraph of its own. For example:

These n -th roots of 1 are called the **n -th roots of unity** (page 72).

You will have to look for many definitions in the text proper. (However, not all boldfaced words or phrases signify new concepts to be defined, because boldface fonts are sometimes used for emphasis.)
- When a new notation is first introduced, it also appears in boldface. For example:

A common alternate notation for $s_n \rightarrow s$ is $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} s_n = s$, or more briefly, **$\lim s_n = s$** , if there is no danger of confusion (page 119).
- Equations are labeled with (decimal) numbers inside parentheses, and the first digit of the label indicates the chapter in which the equation can be found. For example, the “(1.17)” in the sentence “Thus (1.17) implies that . . .” means the 17th labeled equation in Chapter 1.
- Exercises are located at the end of each section.
- Bibliographic citations are labeled with the name of the author(s) inside square brackets, e.g., [Ginsburg]. The bibliography begins on page 401.
- In the index, if a term is defined on a certain page, that page will be in *italics*. For example, the item
law of cosines, *26*, 31, 243
means that the term “law of cosines” appears in a significant way on all three pages, but the definition of the term is on page 26.

Glossary of Symbols

Those symbols that are standard in the mathematics literature or were introduced in [Wu2020a] and [Wu2020b] usually will be listed without a page reference; those that are introduced in this volume are given a page reference.

N : the whole numbers

Q : the rational numbers

R : the real numbers

R* : the nonzero real numbers, 286

\iff : is equivalent to

\implies : implies

a^n : the product $\underbrace{aaa \cdots a}_n$ for a number a and a positive integer n

$n!$: n factorial for a whole number n

$\binom{n}{k}$: binomial coefficient defined by $\frac{n!}{k!(n-k)!}$

$x \cdot y$: product of the numbers x and y

$|x|$: absolute value of a number x

$\sqrt{\alpha}$: if α is a positive (real) number, $\sqrt{\alpha}$ denotes the unique positive square root of α , but if α is a complex number, then $\sqrt{\alpha}$ is a complex number that satisfies $(\sqrt{\alpha})^2 = \alpha$

$[a, b]$: the segment from a to b on the number line or the closed interval from a to b for numbers $a < b$

(a, b) : the open interval from a to b on the number line for numbers $a < b$ (it could also mean the point (a, b) in the coordinate plane)

$<$: less than

\leq : less than or equal to

$>$: greater than

\geq : greater than or equal to

e : the base of natural logarithm, 205

e^x : the exponential function, 205

$\exp x$: the exponential function, 205

C : the complex numbers

\in : belongs to (as in $a \in A$)

$A \subset B$: A is contained in B

\cup : union (of sets)

\cap : intersection (of sets)

R² : the coordinate plane

(x, y) : coordinates of a point in the plane (it could also mean the open interval from the number x to the number y)

AB : the segment joining the two points A and B in the plane

$|AB|$: the length of segment AB for two points A and B in the plane

- $\text{dist}(A, B)$: the distance between two point A and B in the plane
 \overrightarrow{AB} : the vector from the point A to the point B in the plane
 L_{PQ} : the line joining P to Q for two points P and Q in the plane
 R_{OP} : the ray on L_{OP} from O to P
 \parallel : is parallel to, 165
 \perp : is perpendicular to, 90
 $\angle AOB$: the angle with vertex O and sides R_{OA} and R_{OB}
 $|\angle AOB|$: the degree of $\angle AOB$ until page 66 and the radian measure of $\angle AOB$ after page 66
 $||\angle AOB||$: the radian measure of $\angle AOB$, 56 (this symbol is not used after page 66, being replaced by $|\angle AOB|$)
 $\triangle ABC$: the triangle with vertices A , B , and C
 $\angle A$: the angle of a triangle or a polygon at a vertex A
 \cong : is congruent to
 \sim : is similar to
 \widehat{AB} : one of two arcs joining the point A to the point B on a circle, 56
 $|\widehat{AB}|$: the length of arc \widehat{AB} , 60
 $\cos x$: the cosine function $\mathbf{R} \rightarrow [-1, 1]$, 20
 $\cot x$: the cotangent function, 40
 $\csc x$: the cosecant function, 40
 $\sec x$: the secant function, 40
 $\sin x$: the sine function $\mathbf{R} \rightarrow [-1, 1]$, 20
 $\tan x$: the tangent function, 37
 $\arccos x$: the inverse function of cosine on $[0, \pi]$, 93
 $\arcsin x$: the inverse function of sine on $[-\frac{\pi}{2}, \frac{\pi}{2}]$, 93
 $\arctan x$: the inverse function of $\tan x$ on $(-\frac{\pi}{2}, \frac{\pi}{2})$, 95
 $\text{arccot } x$: the inverse function of $\cot x$ on $(0, \pi)$, 95
 \cos^{-1} : the inverse function of cosine on $[0, \pi]$, 93
 \sin^{-1} : the inverse function of sine on $[-\frac{\pi}{2}, \frac{\pi}{2}]$, 93
 $\tan^{-1} x$: the inverse function of $\tan x$ on $(-\frac{\pi}{2}, \frac{\pi}{2})$, 95
 (s_n) : a sequence of numbers s_1, s_2, s_3, \dots , 118
 $(s_n) \uparrow$: the sequence (s_n) is nondecreasing, 146
 $(s_n) \downarrow$: the sequence (s_n) is nonincreasing, 147
 $s_n \rightarrow s$: the sequence (s_n) converges to s , 119
 $s_n \uparrow s$: the nondecreasing sequence (s_n) converges to s , 146
 $s_n \downarrow s$: the nonincreasing sequence (s_n) converges to s , 147
 $\lim_{n \rightarrow \infty} s_n = s$: the sequence (s_n) converges to s , 119
LUB \mathcal{S} : the least upper bound of a subset \mathcal{S} of \mathbf{R} , 115
 $\sup \mathcal{S}$: the least upper bound of a subset \mathcal{S} of \mathbf{R} , 115
GLB \mathcal{S} : the greatest lower bound of a subset \mathcal{S} of \mathbf{R} , 116
 $\inf \mathcal{S}$: the greatest lower bound of a subset \mathcal{S} of \mathbf{R} , 116
 $w.d_1d_2d_3\dots$: the infinite decimal where w is a whole number and each d_j is a single-digit number, 169
 $\sum_{j=1}^n s_j$: $s_1 + s_2 + \dots + s_n$, 170
 $\sum_n s_n$: the limit of $\sum_{j=1}^n s_j$ as $n \rightarrow \infty$, 171
 \mathfrak{G} : a collection of geometric figures for which geometric measurements can be defined, 212

- $|\mathcal{S}|$: the geometric measurement of \mathcal{S} in \mathfrak{G} , 212
 $P \prec Q$: P and Q are two points on a curve with a direction, and P precedes Q , 219
 $m(P)$: the mesh of a polygonal segment P , 221
 ∂R : the boundary of a region R , 230
 $\mathcal{D}(r)$: the disk of radius r around a given point, 248
 $\lim_{x \rightarrow x_0} f(x) = A$: the limit of the function $f(x)$ as x approaches x_0 , 286
 $\sup_{[a,b]} f$: the least upper bound of all $f(x)$, where $x \in [a, b]$, 301
 $\inf_{[a,b]} f$: the greatest lower bound of all $f(x)$, where $x \in [a, b]$, 301
 $f'(a)$ or $\frac{df}{dx}|_a$: the derivative of f at the point a , 310
 $f''(a)$ or $f^{(2)}(a)$ or $\frac{d^2f}{dx^2}|_a$: the second derivative of f at the point a , 310
 $f^{(n)}(a)$ or $\frac{d^n f}{dx^n}|_a$: the n -th derivative of f at the point a , 310
 $f^0(a)$: $f(a)$ ("zeroth derivative"), 310
 $\int_a^b f(x)dx$: the integral of f over $[a, b]$, 329 and 337
 α^x : the exponential function with base α ($\alpha > 0$), 373
 $\log_\alpha t$: the logarithm with base α , 378

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Index

- AA criterion, 2, 32
- Abel, Niels Henrik, 42, 97
- absolute convergence of a series, 201
 - implies convergence, 201
 - ratio test for, 202
- absolute error (of an approximation), 223, 247
- absolute value, 111, 120, 123
 - interpretation in terms of distance, 122
- acute angle, 26
- addition formulas for sine and cosine, 41, 101
 - characterize sine and cosine, 356–357
 - compiling trigonometric tables, 41
 - proof in general, 43, 44
 - proof over the interval $(0, 90)$, 43
 - significance of, 41–42
- additive inverse
 - in \mathbf{Q} , 104
 - in \mathbf{R} , 113
- additivity (geometric measurements), 212, 246, 253, 349
- adjacent angles, 385
- alternate interior angles, 385
- alternating harmonic series, 201
- angle
 - acute, 26
 - between two lines in 3-space, 265
 - clockwise, 10
 - complementary, 6
 - convention about convex and nonconvex angle, 10
 - counterclockwise, 10
 - determined by a point on the unit circle, 12
 - obtuse, 26
 - straight, 390
- angle between a line and the x -axis, 39
- angle sum theorem for right triangles, 235
- arc subtended by a central angle, 56
- arccosine function, 93
- arccotangent function, 95
- Archimedean property (of \mathbf{R}), 29, 149, 188, 197, 366
- Archimedes, 119, 149, 242, 252, 271, 279–281
 - his proudest discovery, 280
- arclength, 54
- arcsine function, 93
- arctangent function, 95
- area
 - invariance under congruence, xv, 212
- area formula
 - for a disk, 248
 - for a right triangle, 233
 - for a sector, 348
 - for parallelogram, 239
 - for trapezoid, 238
 - for triangles, xv
 - Heron's formula, 242
 - in terms of ASA, 241
 - in terms of base and height, 237
 - in terms of SAS, 240
 - in terms of SSS, 242
- area of a rectangle, 231–233
- area of a region, 258
 - relation to dilation, 259
- area of a square, 214
- area under the graph of a function, 329

- equal to an integral, 329, 338
- argument of a complex number, 71
- ASA data, *xv*
- Askey, Richard A., 31, 50, 53
- asymptote, 293, 294
 - vertical, 294
- attains a local maximum at a point, 316
- attains a maximum at a point, 301
 - for quadratic functions, 325
- attains a minimum at a point, 301
- average speed, 385
- axiomatic system, xxvi
- Babylonians, 54
- base
 - of a cone, 274
 - of a cylinder, 274
 - of a prism, 273
 - of a right cylinder, 273
 - of a triangle, 237
- basic isometries, 75, 385
 - importance of, 80
 - in 3-space, 267
- bijjective function, 89, 366, 370, 371, 385
- bilateral symmetry, 385
 - for graphs of quadratic functions, 325
- binary expansion of a real number, 190
- binomial theorem, 153, 160, 391
- bipolar mathematics education, xxix
- Bolzano, Bernard, 119
- bound
 - for a set on the number line, 138
 - of a function on a set, 298
- bounded
 - function, 299
 - integrable on $[a, b]$, 337
 - sequence, 138
 - set, 385
 - on number line, 138
- bounded above, 114
 - sequence, 138
- bounded below, 114
 - sequence, 138
- Brahmagupta, 244
- Brahmagupta's formula, 244
- Bretschneider's formula, 244
- Briggs, John, 378
- calculus, 96, 103
- cancellation law, 106
- Cantor, Georg, 119, 189
- Cartesian coordinates, 67
- Cauchy sequences, 104
- Cauchy, Augustin-Louis, 119
- Cavalieri's principle, 270, 277–280
 - in 2 dimensions, 271
- Cavalieri, Bonaventura, 271
- CCSSM, xvi, xix
- celestial sphere, 6
- central angle, 385
- chain rule, 311, 378
 - subtlety in the proof, 312
- Champollion, Jean-François, 99
- change sign, 334
- changing coordinate systems, 80, 88
- Chebyshev polynomials, 53
- Cicero, 281
- circular cone, 275
 - right, 275
- circular cylinder, 274
 - volume formula, 274
- circumcircle, 25, 26, 385
- circumference, 209, 223
 - formula for, 248
- circumradius, 25
- circumscribing cylinder of a sphere, 280
- clockwise angle from a ray to a ray, 10
- closed disk, 385
- closed half-plane, 385
- closed interval, 131, 385
 - key feature in terms of limits, 149
 - partition of, 330
- coherence, 13
 - importance of, xxiv, 236
- Common Core State Standards for Mathematics (= CCSSM), xix
- common logarithm, 379
- comparison test for series, 206
- complementary angles, 6
- complete expanded form of a finite decimal, 385
- complete ordered field, 116

- completeness axiom (= least upper bound axiom), 116
 complex conjugate, 77
 complex exponential function, 42
 addition formula, 42
 complex fraction, 386
 complex number
 absolute value of, 71
 argument of, 71
 modulus of, 71
 polar form, 70
 concatenation (of segments), 386
 conceptual understanding and skills, xiv, 242, 275, 364
 concurrence of the medians of a triangle, 248
 concyclic, 386
 cone, 274
 base of, 274
 height of, 274
 rulings of, 279
 vertex of, 274
 volume formula, 275
 why the factor of $\frac{1}{3}$, 275–277
 congruence, 386
 in 3-space, 267
 congruent figures, 386
 constant sequence, 118
 constant speed, 323
 characterization in terms of the derivative, 324
 continued fraction expansion of $\sqrt{2}$, 155
 continuity at a point, 289
 alternate definition, 289
 behavior under arithmetic operations, 290
 continuous function, 290
 continuous function on closed bounded intervals
 attains intermediate values, 305
 attains maximum and minimum, 301
 boundedness, 300
 integrability of, 337
 uniform continuity, 304
 convention about changing from degrees to radians, 66
 convergence
 in the plane, 166
 of a sequence, 119
 intuitive discussion, 123–128, 130–131
 of a sequence of regions to a region, 230
 of a series, 171
 of polygonal segments to a curve, 222
 convergence theorem for area, 230, 236, 246, 249, 250, 253
 convergence theorem for length, 222, 246
 convergent infinite series, 171
 examples, 171
 convergent sequence, 119
 an example, 128–130
 arithmetic of, 138–143
 convex angle, 386
 convex function, 323
 convex set, 386
 coordinate system in 3-space, 266
 coordinates
 Cartesian, 67
 in 3-space, 266
 polar, 69
 rectangular, 67
 coplanar lines in 3-space, 267
 corner, 216, 217
 corresponding angles, 386
 cosecant function, 40
 cosine addition formula, 41
 cosine function, 5
 addition formula, 41
 proof of, 43–45
 an alternate approach, 350–356
 as a solution of $f'' + f = 0$, 351
 change of notation, 33
 diagram of signs, 14
 differential equation approach, 102, 351
 differentiation formula, 347
 double-angle formula, 45
 extension of, 8
 from $[-360, 360]$ to \mathbf{R} , 16–21
 from $[0, 90]$ to $[-360, 360]$, 10–16
 rationale for, 27

- graph on $[-360, 360]$, 37
- half-angle formula, 46
- history of, 6
- inverse function, 93
- on $[-360, 360]$, 15
- on $[0, 360]$, 13
- on \mathbf{R} , 20
- origin of the name, 5
- periodic of period 360, 21
- power series approach, 100
- power series of, 100
- relation to sine, 33, 36
- special values in terms of degrees, 36
- special values in terms of radians, 67
- value at 0, 5
- value at 90, 5
- cotangent function, 40
 - inverse function, 95
- counterclockwise angle from a ray to a ray, 10
- cross-multiplication algorithm, 106
- cross-multiplication inequality, 111
- cube root
 - of a complex number, 73
 - of a positive number, 156
- curve has length (= curve is rectifiable), 225
- curve in the plane
 - as a mapping from an interval to the plane, 354
 - mathematical definition of, 219
 - nonrectifiable, 225
 - example of, 225
 - piecewise smooth, 216
 - length of, 222
 - rectifiable, 225
 - length of, 225
- curve with a direction, 219
 - polygonal segment on, 220
- cyclic quadrilateral, 244, 386
- cylinder, 274
 - base of, 274
 - height of, 274
 - right, 273
 - volume formula, 274
- de Moivre's formula, 71, 72, 74
- de Moivre, Abraham, 71
- decimal, 169
 - as an infinite series, 171
 - finite, 167, 169
 - infinite, 167, 169
 - integer part of, 169
 - repeating, 174
- decimal digit, 386
- decimal expansion of a fraction using
 - long division of the numerator by the denominator, 191
- decimal expansion of a real number, 120, 182
- decreasing function, 89, 93
 - graph is rectifiable, 227
- decreasing sequence, 147
- Dedekind, Richard, 119
- definitions
 - absence of, in TSM, xx
 - importance of, xx–xxi, 192
 - the role of, xxi–xxiii
- degree of an angle, 11
 - conversion to radians, 63
 - interpretation in terms of arclength, 57
- deleted δ -neighborhood of a point, 287, 288
- density of \mathbf{Q} in \mathbf{R} , 146, 151, 154, 159
- derivative, 217
- derivative at a point, 308
 - behavior under arithmetic operations, 309
 - relation to the slope of the tangent line to the graph, 311
- diagonalization of quadratic forms, 88
- difference quotient, 324
- differentiable at a point, 308
- differentiable function, 308
 - on a closed interval, 310
 - relation to continuous function, 309
- differential equation approach to sine and cosine, 102
- dilation, 386
 - effect on area, 259
 - relation to length, 223
- Diophantus, 30

- direction on a curve, *219*
 - endpoint point, *219*
 - in case of a circle, *220*
 - starting point, *219*
- discriminant of a quadratic function, *326*
- disk, *248*
- distance
 - between parallel lines, *386*
 - between points in 3-space, *267*
 - of a point to a line, *3*
 - of a point to a plane, *267*
- distance formula in 3-space, *267*
- distributive law for infinite series, *176*
- diverge to $+\infty$, *144*
- diverge to $-\infty$, *144*
- diverge to \pm infinity, *134*
- divergence test for series, *200*
- division
 - in \mathbf{Q} , *105*
 - in \mathbf{R} , *113*
- division-with-remainder, *20*
- domain of definition (of a function), *89, 94*
 - restriction of, *89*
- double-angle formulas, *45*
- e*
 - formula to compute its value, *380*
- $e = \exp 1$, *371*
- e^x , *78, 205*
 - compared with $\exp x$, *376*
 - power series of, *78*
- electronic synthesizer, *100*
- ellipse, *386*
- elliptic functions, *42, 97*
- endpoint (of a curve with a direction), *219*
- ϵ - δ language, *290*
- ϵ -neighborhood of a curve, *230, 236, 250*
- ϵ -neighborhood of a point, *123, 123–128, 202, 288*
- equality of sets, *386*
- equation of degree 2 in two variables, *80*
 - mixed term in, *80*
- error of an approximation
 - absolute, *223*
 - relative, *223*
- Euclid, *149*
- Eudoxus, *119, 149*
- Euler's constant, *367*
- Euler's formula, *71, 78*
- Euler, Leonhard, *71*
- even function, *23*
- existence, *155–157, 162, 182, 184–189, 211, 224, 266, 286, 308, 363, 373*
- existence of the limit of a sequence, *119*
- exponential function, *204, 368*
 - addition formula, *42*
 - complex, *42, 100*
 - main theorem, *371*
- exponential function with arbitrary base, *373*
 - derivative of, *378*
 - main theorem, *373*
 - negative exponent, *373*
 - rational exponent, *375*
 - real exponent, *373*
 - the direct definition, *377*
- extension
 - of α^n for a whole number n , *372*
 - of a general function, *10*
 - of an analytic function, *13*
 - of arithmetic operations from \mathbf{Q} to \mathbf{R} , *112*
 - of sine and cosine, *8*
 - from $[-360, 360]$ to \mathbf{R} , *16–21*
 - from $[0, 90]$ to $[-360, 360]$, *10–16*
 - rationale for, *27*
- exterior angle, *387*
- FASM, *xvi, 103, 109, 114, 152, 385*
 - proof of, *292*
- Fermat's theorem, *317*
- Fermat, Pierre de, *317*
- field, *111*
- figure, *387*
- finite decimal, *167, 169, 387*
 - as a repeating decimal, *174, 190*
- finite geometric series, *170*
- fixed point of a function, *308*
- Fourier coefficients, *99*
- Fourier series, *99, 100*

- Fourier, Jean Baptiste Joseph, 99
- fraction
 - conversion to decimal by long division, 191
 - multiplication, 387
 - proper, 193
 - subtraction, 387
- fractional unit of area, 232
- FTS, xvi, 163, 250
- FTS*, 163
- Fubini's theorem, 271
- full angle, 387
- function
 - attaining a maximum at a point, 301
 - attaining a minimum at a point, 301
 - bijjective, 89, 385
 - bounded, 299
 - on a set, 298
 - continuous, 290
 - continuous at a point, 289
 - convex, 323
 - decreasing, 89, 93
 - differentiable, 308
 - differentiable at a point, 308
 - discontinuous at a point, 289
 - elliptic, 42
 - even, 23
 - increasing, 89, 94
 - infinitely differentiable, 310
 - injective, 89, 388
 - integrable, 337
 - integral of, 337
 - n times differentiable, 310
 - odd, 23
 - periodic of period 360, 38
 - piecewise continuous, 339
 - real analytic, 13, 22
 - surjective, 89, 390
 - translation of, 33
 - twice differentiable, 310
 - uniformly continuous, 303
- functional limit, 285
 - equivalent formulation, 288
- fundamental assumption of school mathematics (= FASM), 385
- fundamental principles of geometric measurements, 212–214
- fundamental principles of mathematics, xxv, xxxi, 96
- fundamental theorem of algebra, 72
- fundamental theorem of calculus (= FTC), 342
- fundamental theorem of similarity (= FTS), xxx
- ⊗ (figures for which geometric measurement is meaningful), 212
 - rationale for, 225, 258
 - significance of, 214–215
- Gauss, Carl Friedrich, 75
- geometric figure, 387
 - piecewise smooth, 215
- geometric measurements, 211
 - additivity of, 212
 - behavior under convergence, 214
 - emphasis on explicit formulas, 216
 - fundamental principles of, 212–214
 - invariance under congruence, 212
 - same for congruent figures, 212
- geometric series
 - finite, 170
 - infinite, 173
 - summation formula, 173
- GLB (= greatest lower bound), 116
- greatest lower bound, 116
 - relation to least upper bound, 117
- grid, 253, 330–332
 - associated inner polygon, 254
 - corresponding to a partition, 330
 - covers a region, 254
 - lattice, 254
 - mesh of, 259
 - rectangle in, 253
- half-angle formulas, 46
- half-line, 387, 392
- half-perimeter
 - for a triangle, 242, 247
 - of a quadrilateral, 244
- half-plane, 383, 387
 - lower, 11, 388
 - upper, 11, 390
- harmonic mean, 241

- relation to average speed, 242
- harmonic series, 171
 - alternating, 201
 - divergence of, 171
- has area (for a region), 258
- has length (for a curve), 225
- Heaviside function, 295, 305, 344
- height
 - of a circular cylinder, 274
 - of a cone, 274
 - of a prism, 273
 - of a right cylinder, 273
 - of a triangle, 237
- Heron of Alexandria, 242
- Heron's formula for area of triangle, 242
- Hipparchus, 7
- hyperbola, 388

- identity, 47
- identity theorem for real analytic functions, 13, 22
- increasing function, 89, 94
 - graph is rectifiable, 227
- increasing sequence, 146
- index of a sequence, 118
- infimum (= greatest lower bound), 116
- infinite decimal, 167, 169
 - $0.\bar{9} = 1$, xiv, 173, 179
 - behavior when multiplied by 10^n , 177
- infinite geometric series, 173
 - summation formula, 173, 176, 203
- infinite series (see *series*), 171
- infinite sum, 169
- infinitely differentiable function, 310
- injective function, 89, 388
- inner content of a region, 256
- inner polygon associate with a grid, 254
 - it is not necessarily a polygon, 255
- inscribed in a circle, 218, 388
- inscribed polygon, 222
- integer part of a decimal, 169
- integrability of continuous functions
 - on closed bounded intervals, 337
- integrable function on $[a, b]$, 337
- integral of a function on $[a, b]$, 329, 337
- integrand, 364
- intermediate value theorem, 305, 353, 354, 366, 370
- interval, 388
 - closed, 385
 - open, 388
 - semi-infinite, 114, 292
 - semiclosed, 188
 - semiopen, 188, 226, 290, 292
- inverse function, 89, 368
- inverse transformation, 388
- invert-and-multiply rule
 - for rational quotients, 106
 - for real numbers, 117
- irrational numbers, 112
- isometry, 388
 - in 3-space, 267

- Jacobi, Carl Gustav Jacob, 42, 97

- (L1)–(L8) (geometric assumptions), 383–384
- L'Hôpital's rule, 381
- Lang, Serge, 276
- lattice grid, 254
- law of cosines, 26, 31, 243
- law of sines, 25, 247
- laws of exponents, 376, 388
- least upper bound, 115
- least upper bound axiom, 116
 - not satisfied by \mathbf{Q} , 148
- Lebesgue measure, 210
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, 271, 308
- length, 388
 - of a piecewise smooth curve, 222
 - of a polygonal segment, 218
 - of the repeating block of a repeating decimal, 174
 - relation to dilation, 223
- limit
 - existence of, 119
 - functional, 285
 - its critical presence in geometric measurements, 210, 282–283
 - of a convergent sequence, 119
 - uniqueness of, 134
- limit comparison test for series, 206

- line perpendicular to a plane in
 - 3-space, 266
 - existence of this line from a given point, 266
- linear polynomial, 388
- lines in 3-space
 - coplanar, 267
 - parallel, 268
 - skew, 268
- logarithm, 364
 - common, 379
 - its derivative, 365
 - main theorem, 366
 - natural, 379
- logarithm with arbitrary base, 378
- long division algorithm, 167,
 - 191–193, 196, 197
- long division of the numerator (of a fraction) by the denominator, 190
- lower bound, 114
- lower half-plane, 388
- lower integral on a closed interval, 335
- lower Riemann sum (with respect to a partition), 335
- LUB (= least upper bound), 115
- (M1) (geometric measurements), 212
- (M2) (geometric measurements), 212
- (M3) (geometric measurements), 212
- (M4) (geometric measurements), 214
- major arc, 388
- mapping, 23
- mathematics educators, xix
- maximum, 301
- mean value theorem, 315
 - applications, 320–322
- Meda, Gowri, 241
- mensuration formulas, 209
- mesh
 - of a grid, 259
 - of a polygonal segment, 221
- minimum, 301
- minor arc, 388
- mixed term, 80
 - elimination of, 85
- multiplicative inverse
 - in \mathbf{Q} , 104
 - in \mathbf{R} , 113
- multiplicity of a root of a polynomial, 314
- n times differentiable function, 310
- n -th power, 163
- n -th root
 - of a complex number, 72
 - of a positive number, 156
- n -th roots of unity, 72
 - primitive, 73
 - relation to regular polygons, 74
- natural logarithm (= logarithm), 364
- NCTM, xvi, xx
- negative number, 109
- nested intervals, 297
 - lemma on, 297
- Newton, Isaac, 271
- nondecreasing sequence, 146, 297
- nonincreasing sequence, 147, 297
- nonrectifiable curve, 225
 - example of, 225
- normal form of a quadratic function, 327
- obtuse angle, 26
- octagon, 218
- odd function, 23
- of (as in fraction of a fraction), 388
- one-to-one correspondence, 388
- open interval, 342, 388
- opposite arc, 388
- opposite interior angle, 388
- opposite signs, 389
- ordered field, 111
- ordered triple of numbers, 266
- ordering relation, 108
- Oresme, Nicole, 171
- orthogonal matrix, 75
- Osgood, William Fogg, 258
- outer content of a region, 257
- parabola, 389
- parallel lines in 3-space, 268
- parallelogram
 - area formula, 239
- parallelogram law, 31
- parameter, 23
- parametrization of the unit circle, 23

- partial dilation, *252*
 with double scale factor, *252*
 partial sum of a series, *171*
 partition of a closed bounded
 interval, *330*
 grid corresponding to, *330*
 perimeter of a polygon, *218*
 period, *21, 98*
 period of sine and cosine, *21*
 periodic function, *38, 97, 98, 98*
 periodicity, *21, 22, 38*
 perpendicular lines
 in 3-space, *266*
 π , *167, 248*
 as an infinite decimal, *171*
 how to get an approximation,
 260–262
 meaning of its decimal expansion,
 168
 relation to circumference, *248*
 piecewise continuous function, *339*
 integrability on $[a, b]$, *339*
 piecewise smooth
 curves, *216*
 lengths of, *222*
 rectifiability of, *226*
 geometric figures, *215*
 pigeonhole principle, *198*
 point of discontinuity, *289*
 polar coordinates, *69*
 angle of rotation in, *68*
 radius in, *68*
 polar form of a complex number, *70*
 polygon, *389*
 regular, *390*
 polygonal segment, *216*
 corners of, *217*
 mesh of, *221*
 vertices of, *217*
 polygonal segment on a curve
 subtlety in the definition, *223*
 polygonal segments on a curve, *220*
 converging to the curve, *222*
 polynomial, *389*
 positive n -th root, *156, 156*
 behavior with respect to taking
 limits, *161–163*
 positive number, *109*
 power series, *205*
 of $\cos x$, *100, 204, 350*
 of $\sin x$, *100, 204, 350*
 of e^x , *78, 204*
 power series approach to sine and
 cosine, *100*
 precedes (for points on a curve with
 a direction), *219*
 precision
 importance of, *xxiii*
 problem solving, *xxvi, xxviii–xxx,*
 xxx, xxxi
 product of two fractions, *389*
 proportional reasoning, *65, 349, 359*
 Ptolemy, *7*
 Ptolemy's theorem, *31*
 purposefulness, *96*
 importance of, *xxiv–xxv*
 pyramid, *275*
 right, *275*
 Pythagorean identity, *23, 346, 350,*
 351, 353–355
 Pythagorean theorem, *22, 234, 279*
 dependence on the parallel
 postulate, *235*
 proof using area, *234–235*
 Pythagorean triple, *30*

Q is dense in \mathbf{R} , *151*
 quadrant, *389*
 quadratic formula, *327*

 (R1)–(R6) (assumptions on real
 numbers), *113–116*
 radian
 convention about changing from
 degrees to radians, *66*
 conversion to degrees, *63*
 measure of an angle, *56*
 rationale for, *54–55*
 radius
 of a circular cylinder, *274*
 rapidly convergent series, *205*
 ratio test, *202*
 rational numbers
 abstract structure of, *104*
 rational quotients, *389*
 formulas for, *106*
 ray, *389*

- real analytic function, 13, 22, 33
 - identity theorem, 13, 22
- real numbers **R**
 - as limits of increasing sequences of rational numbers, 152
 - assumptions (R1)–(R6), 113–116
 - decimal expansions, 182
 - more numerous than **Q**, 189
 - similarity with **Q**, 113, 114
- real-valued function, 286
- rectangle
 - area formula for, 231–233
 - in a grid, 253
- rectangular coordinates, 67
- rectangular prism
 - base of, 273
 - height of, 273
 - volume formula, 273
- rectifiable curve, 225, 347
 - length of, 225
 - relation to graph of increasing or decreasing function, 227
 - relation to piecewise smooth curve, 226
- reflection, 325, 389
 - described by complex numbers, 78
 - in 3-space, 267
- region, 389
 - example that has no area, 258, 262
 - with piecewise smooth boundary has area, 259
- region has area (= a region for which area can be defined), 258
- regular polygon, 390
- relative error (of an approximation), 223, 247
- removing parentheses, 107
- repeating block of a repeating
 - decimal, 174
 - length of, 174
- repeating decimal, 174
 - conversion to fraction, 174, 178–179
 - finite decimal as, 174
 - repeating block of, 174
 - length of, 174
- Richter scale, 379
 - magnitude, 379
- Riemann sum (with respect to a partition), 335, 367
- right circular cone, 275
- right cylinder, 273
 - base of, 273
 - height of, 273
 - volume formula, 273
- right pyramid, 275, 276
- right tetrahedron, 275
- right-hand rule, 266
- Rolle's theorem, 318
- Rolle, Michel, 318
- root test for series, 207
- Rosetta Stone, 99
- rotation, 390
 - in 3-space, 267
 - of t degrees, $t \in \mathbf{R}$, 16, 21
 - intuitive discussion, 17–20
- rotations described by complex numbers, 75, 77
- rulings of a cone, 279
- (S1)–(S7) (informal assumptions about 3-space), 265–267
- same sign, 390
- sandwich principle, 132, 347, 350
- SAS, 32
- secant function, 40
- second derivative of a function, 310
- second derivative test, 322
- sector, 348
 - of t radians, 348
 - area formula, 348
- segment, 390
- semi-infinite interval, 114, 292
- semiclosed interval, 188
- semiopen interval, 188, 226, 290, 292
- sequence, 118
 - bounded, 138
 - bounded above, 138
 - bounded below, 138
 - constant, 118
 - convergence to a number, 119
 - decreasing, 147
 - diverge to $+\infty$, 144
 - diverge to $-\infty$, 144
 - divergence of, 119
 - i -th term of, 118
 - in a set of numbers, 118

- increasing, 146
- index of, 118
- limit of, 119
- nondecreasing, 146
- nonincreasing, 147
- series, 171
 - absolute convergence, 201
 - comparison test, 206
 - convergence of, 171
 - divergence test, 200
 - harmonic, 171
 - limit comparison test, 206
 - n -th partial sum of, 171
 - n -th term of, 171
 - rapidly convergent, 205
 - ratio test, 202
 - root test, 207
- sigma notation $\sum_1^n s_n$, 168, 170
- similar figures, 390
- similarity, 2, 390
 - with respect to the bases of a triangle, 262
- sine addition formula, 41
- sine function
 - addition formula, 41
 - proof of, 43–45
 - an alternate approach, 350–356
 - as a solution of $f'' + f = 0$, 351
 - change of notation, 33
 - diagram of signs, 14
 - differential equation approach, 102, 351
 - differentiation formula, 347
 - double-angle formula, 45
 - extension of, 8
 - from $[-360, 360]$ to \mathbf{R} , 16–21
 - from $[0, 90]$ to $[-360, 360]$, 10–16
 - rationale for, 27
 - graph on $[-360, 360]$, 37
 - half-angle formula, 46
 - history of, 6
 - inverse function, 93, 93
 - on $[-360, 360]$, 15
 - on $[0, 360]$, 13
 - on $[0, 90]$, 3, 3, 4
 - on \mathbf{R} , 20
 - periodic of period 360, 21
 - power series approach, 100
 - power series of, 100
 - relation to cosine, 33, 36
 - special values in terms of degrees, 36
 - special values in terms of radians, 67
 - value at 0, 4
 - value at 90, 4
- skew lines in 3-space, 268
- slope, 390
 - relation to tangent function, 39
- smooth curve, 216, 217
- solving triangles, 6
- speed of a motion at a given instant, 324
- sphere
 - formula for surface area, 280
 - its circumscribing cylinder, 280
 - volume formula, 280
- square root, 156
- squeeze theorem, 132, 260, 295, 344
- starting point (of a curve with a direction), 219
- straight angle, 390
- subtend an angle, 56
- subtraction
 - in \mathbf{Q} , 105
 - in \mathbf{R} , 113
- supremum (= least upper bound), 115
- surface area, 281
 - of a circular cylinder, 281
 - of a sphere, 280
- surjective function, 89, 390
- tangent function, 37
 - diagram of signs, 39
 - graph, 38
 - inverse function, 95
 - periodic of period 180, 38
 - relation to slope of a line, 39
- tangent line
 - to the graph of a function, 311, 323
- telescoping phenomenon, 227, 332, 338
- term
 - of a sequence, 118
 - of a series, 171

- tetrahedron, *275*
 right, *275*
- Textbook School Mathematics, *xix*
- 3-space
 basic isometries, *267, 267*
 informal assumptions (S1)–(S7),
265–267
 isometry, *267*
 reflections, *267*
 rotations, *267*
 setting up coordinates, *266*
 translations, *267*
- top
 of a right cylinder, *273*
- transformation, *390*
- transitive relation, *108, 113*
- translation, *390*
 in 3-space, *267*
- translation of a function, *33*
- translations described by complex
 numbers, *75*
- trapezoid
 area formula, *238*
- triangle
 area formula in terms of ASA, *241*
 area formula in terms of base and
 height, *237*
 area formula in terms of SAS, *240*
 area formula in terms of SSS, *242*
 base, *237*
 concurrence of its medians, *248*
 height, *237*
- triangle inequality, *111, 139, 140, 226*
- triangulation of a polygon, *245, 250,*
283
- trichotomy law, *108, 113, 368, 390*
- trigonometric functions, *37*
 inverse functions, *88*
 rationale for, *95–96*
- trigonometric identities
 how to prove, *46–51*
- trigonometric table, *7*
 relation to the addition formulas,
41
- TSM, *xii, xiv–xvi, xix–xxix, 1, 5, 7,*
16, 31, 32, 46, 53, 65, 88, 96,
103, 117, 155, 156, 162, 163,
167, 177, 179, 191, 192, 209,
212, 235, 238, 329, 349, 359,
360, 363
- twice differentiable function, *310*
- uncountable, *189*
- uniformly continuous function, *303*
- uniqueness, *20, 21, 28, 104, 134, 155,*
182–183, 351, 384
- uniqueness of limit, *134, 147, 359*
- unit circle, *390*
- unit cube, *212, 276*
 center of, *276*
 mid-section of, *276*
- unit figure, *212*
- unit segment, *212*
- unit square, *212*
- upper bound, *114*
- upper half-plane, *390*
- upper integral on a closed interval,
335
- upper Riemann sum (with respect to
 a partition), *335*
- vanish, *33, 169*
- vector (in the plane), *219, 391*
- vertex
 of a parabola, *391*
 of a polygonal segment, *217*
 of the graph of a quadratic
 function, *326*
- vertex form of a quadratic function,
327
- vertical asymptote, *294*
- volume formula
 for a circular cylinder, *274*
 for a cone, *275*
 for a cylinder, *274*
 for a rectangular prism, *273*
 for a right cylinder, *273*
 for a sphere, *279*
- volume of a sphere = volume of the
 solid inside a sphere, *278*
- Weierstrass, Karl, *119*
- well-defined, *40, 113*
- x*-axis in 3-space, *266*
- y*-axis in 3-space, *266*

z -axis in 3-space, 266
zero product property, 117
zero product rule, 117

zeroth derivative, 310
Zu Chongzhi, 271, 280
Zu Geng, 271, 280

This is the last of three volumes that, together, give an exposition of the mathematics of grades 9–12 that is simultaneously mathematically correct and grade-level appropriate. The volumes are consistent with CCSSM (Common Core State Standards for Mathematics) and aim at presenting the mathematics of K–12 as a totally transparent subject.

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