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(Victor Cheng) 3

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an important skill in daily life. More and more leading businesses today use estimation questions in interviews to test applicants' abilities to think on their feet.

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real-world
concerns to
downright silly
ones.

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Weinstein, a professor of physics, offer a wide and often amusing assortment of Fermi flexes in a book that just caught my eye, Guesstimation: Solving the World's Problems on the Back of a Cocktail Napkin.

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Guesstimation: Solving the World's Problems on the Back of a Cocktail Napkin Paperback – Illustrated, 21 April 2008 by Lawrence Weinstein (Author)

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Guesstimation: Solving the World's Problems on the Back of a Cocktail Napkin

(Princeton).

Patricia Edwards
is senior
lecturer in art
at Old Dominion
University. Of A

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Weinstein and
Adam
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Guesstimation

*Guesstimation -
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As 85% of Sierra
Leone remains
unconnected to
the national
electricity
grid, the
country's solar
power providers
have jumped on

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an opportunity
to bridge the
gap in the last
five years.
CNN's Eleni ...

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a book that
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relative merits of internal-combustion and electric cars, of coal and nuclear energy? The problems are marvelously diverse, yet the skills to solve them are the same. The authors show how easy it is to

derive useful
ballpark
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breaking complex
problems into
simpler, more
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ones--and how
there can be
many paths to
the right
answer. The book
is written in a
question-and-

answer format with lots of hints along the way. It includes a handy appendix summarizing the few formulas and basic science concepts needed, and its small size and French-fold design make it conveniently portable.

Illustrated with humorous pen-and-ink sketches, Guesstimation will delight popular-math enthusiasts and is ideal for the classroom.

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mation--it's popular mathematics rounded to the nearest power of ten! The ability to estimate is an important skill in daily life. More and more leading businesses today use estimation questions in

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assumptions and elementary arithmetic. Lawrence Weinstein and John Adam present an eclectic array of estimation problems that range from devilishly simple to quite sophisticated

and from serious real-world concerns to downright silly ones. How long would it take a running faucet to fill the inverted dome of the Capitol? What is the total length of all the pickles consumed in the

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authors show how easy it is to derive useful ballpark estimates by breaking complex problems into simpler, more manageable ones--and how there can be many paths to the right answer. The book

is written in a question-and-answer format with lots of hints along the way. It includes a handy appendix summarizing the few formulas and basic science concepts needed, and its small size and French-fold design make

it conveniently portable. Illustrated with humorous pen-and-ink sketches, Guesstimation will delight popular-math enthusiasts and is ideal for the classroom.

Simple and effective

techniques for quickly estimating virtually anything

Guesstimation 2.0 reveals the simple and effective techniques needed to estimate virtually anything—quickly—and

illustrates them using an eclectic array of problems. A stimulating follow-up to Guesstimation, this is the must-have book for anyone preparing for a job interview in technology or finance, where

more and more leading businesses test applicants using estimation questions just like these. The ability to guesstimate on your feet is an essential skill to have in today's world, whether you're

trying to distinguish between a billion-dollar subsidy and a trillion-dollar stimulus, a megawatt wind turbine and a gigawatt nuclear plant, or parts-per-million and parts-per-billion

contaminants.

Lawrence
Weinstein begins
with a concise
tutorial on how
to solve these
kinds of order
of magnitude
problems, and
then invites
readers to have
a go themselves.
The book
features dozens

of problems along with helpful hints and easy-to-understand solutions. It also includes appendixes containing useful formulas and more. Guesstimation 2.0 shows how to estimate

everything from how closely you can orbit a neutron star without being pulled apart by gravity, to the fuel used to transport your food from the farm to the store, to the total length of all toilet paper

used in the United States. It also enables readers to answer, once and for all, the most asked environmental question of our day: paper or plastic?

An antidote to mathematical

rigor mortis, teaching how to guess answers without needing a proof or an exact calculation. In problem solving, as in street fighting, rules are for fools: do whatever works—don't just stand there! Yet

we often fear an unjustified leap even though it may land us on a correct result. Traditional mathematics teaching is largely about solving exactly stated problems exactly, yet life often hands us partly

defined problems needing only moderately accurate solutions. This engaging book is an antidote to the rigor mortis brought on by too much mathematical rigor, teaching us how to guess answers without

needing a proof or an exact calculation. In Street-Fighting Mathematics, Sanjoy Mahajan builds, sharpens, and demonstrates tools for educated guessing and down-and-dirty, opportunistic

problem solving across diverse fields of knowledge—from mathematics to management. Mahajan describes six tools: dimensional analysis, easy cases, lumping, picture proofs, successive

approximation, and reasoning by analogy. Illustrating each tool with numerous examples, he examples, he separates the tool—the general principle—from the particular application so that the reader

can most easily grasp the tool itself to use on problems of particular interest. Street-Fighting Mathematics grew out of a short course taught by the author at MIT for students ranging from first-year

undergraduates to graduate students ready for careers in physics, mathematics, management, electrical engineering, computer science, and biology. They benefited from an approach that

avoided rigor
and taught them
how to use
mathematics to
solve real
problems. Street-
Fighting
Mathematics will
appear in print
and online under
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Solving The

What
mathematical
modeling
uncovers about
life in the city
X and the City,
a book of
diverse and
accessible math-
based topics,
uses basic
modeling to

explore a wide range of entertaining questions about urban life. How do you estimate the number of dental or doctor's offices, gas stations, restaurants, or movie theaters in a city of a

given size? How can mathematics be used to maximize traffic flow through tunnels? Can you predict whether a traffic light will stay green long enough for you to cross the intersection? And what is the likelihood that

your city will be hit by an asteroid? Every math problem and equation in this book tells a story and examples are explained throughout in an informal and witty style. The level of mathematics

ranges from
precalculus
through calculus
to some
differential
equations, and
any reader with
knowledge of
elementary
calculus will be
able to follow
the materials
with ease. There
are also some

more challenging problems sprinkled in for the more advanced reader. Filled with interesting and unusual observations about how cities work, X and the City shows how mathematics undergirds and

plays an important part in the metropolitan landscape.

From an award-winning teacher, "a delightful and instructive accessory to an introductory physics course" (Physics World).

Physicists use "back-of-the-envelope" estimates to check whether or not an idea could possibly be right. In many cases, the approximate solution is all that is needed. This compilation of 101 examples

of back-of-the-envelope calculations celebrates a quantitative approach to solving physics problems. Drawing on a lifetime of physics research and nearly three decades as the editor of The

Physics Teacher, Clifford Swartz—a winner of two awards from the American Association of Physics Teachers —provides simple, approximate solutions to physics problems that span a

broad range of topics. What note do you get when you blow across the top of a Coke bottle? Could you lose weight on a diet of ice cubes? How can a fakir lie on a bed of nails without getting hurt? Does

draining water in the northern hemisphere really swirl in a different direction than its counterpart below the equator? In each case, only a few lines of arithmetic and a few natural constants solve

a problem to within a few percent. Covering such subjects as astronomy, magnetism, optics, sound, heat, mechanics, waves, and electricity, this book provides a rich source of

material for teachers and anyone interested in the physics of everyday life. "This is a book that will help make the study of physics fun and relevant."

—Mark P. Silverman, author of Waves

and Grains:
Reflections on
Light and
Learning
Problems On

How heavy is
that cloud? Why
can you see
farther in rain
than in fog? Why
are the droplets
on that spider
web spaced apart
so evenly? If

you have ever asked questions like these while outdoors, and wondered how you might figure out the answers, this is a book for you. An entertaining and informative collection of fascinating puzzles from the

natural world around us, A Mathematical Nature Walk will delight anyone who loves nature or math or both. John Adam presents ninety-six questions about many common natural phenomena--and a few uncommon

ones--and then shows how to answer them using mostly basic mathematics. Can you weigh a pumpkin just by carefully looking at it? Why can you see farther in rain than in fog? What causes the

variations in the colors of butterfly wings, bird feathers, and oil slicks? And why are large haystacks prone to spontaneous combustion? These are just a few of the questions you'll find inside.

Many of the problems are illustrated with photos and drawings, and the book also has answers, a glossary of terms, and a list of some of the patterns found in nature. About a quarter of the questions

can be answered with arithmetic, and many of the rest require only precalculus. But regardless of math background, readers will learn from the informal descriptions of the problems and gain a new

appreciation of the beauty of nature and the mathematics that lies behind it.

Tools to make hard problems easier to solve. In this book, Sanjoy Mahajan shows us that the way to master

complexity is through insight rather than precision.

Precision can overwhelm us with information, whereas insight connects seemingly disparate pieces of information into a simple

picture. Unlike computers, humans depend on insight. Based on the author's fifteen years of teaching at MIT, Cambridge University, and Olin College, The Art of Insight in Science and Engineering

shows us how to build insight and find understanding, giving readers tools to help them solve any problem in science and engineering. To master complexity, we can organize it or discard it.

The Art of

Insight in Science and Engineering first teaches the tools for organizing complexity, then distinguishes the two paths for discarding complexity: with and without loss of information.

Questions and
problems
throughout the
text help
readers master
and apply these
groups of tools.
Armed with this
three-part
toolchest, and
without
complicated
mathematics,
readers can

estimate the flight range of birds and planes and the strength of chemical bonds, understand the physics of pianos and xylophones, and explain why skies are blue and sunsets are red. The Art of

Insight in Science and Engineering will appear in print and online under a Creative Commons Noncommercial Share Alike license.

What does quilting have to do with electric

circuit theory? The answer is just one of the fascinating ways that best-selling popular math writer Paul Nahin illustrates the deep interplay of math and physics in the world around us in his latest

book of
challenging
mathematical
puzzles, Mrs.
Perkins's
Electric Quilt.
With his
trademark
combination of
intriguing
mathematical
problems and the
historical
anecdotes

surrounding them, Nahin invites readers on an exciting and informative exploration of some of the many ways math and physics combine to create something vastly more powerful, useful, and interesting than

either is by
itself. In a
series of brief
and largely self-
contained
chapters, Nahin
discusses a wide
range of topics
in which math
and physics are
mutually
dependent and
mutually
illuminating,

from Newtonian gravity and Newton's laws of mechanics to ballistics, air drag, and electricity. The mathematical subjects range from algebra, trigonometry, geometry, and calculus to differential

equations, Fourier series, and theoretical and Monte Carlo probability. Each chapter includes problems--some three dozen in all--that challenge readers to try their hand at applying what

they have learned. Just as in his other books of mathematical puzzles, Nahin discusses the historical background of each problem, gives many examples, includes MATLAB codes, and

provides complete and detailed solutions at the end. Mrs. Perkins's Electric Quilt will appeal to students interested in new math and physics applications, teachers looking

for unusual

examples to use
in class--and
anyone who
enjoys popular
math books.

From rainbows,
river meanders,
and shadows to
spider webs,
honeycombs, and
the markings on
animal coats,

the visible world is full of patterns that can be described mathematically. Examining such readily observable phenomena, this book introduces readers to the beauty of nature as revealed by mathematics and

the beauty of mathematics as revealed in nature. Generously illustrated, written in an informal style, and replete with examples from everyday life, Mathematics in Nature is an excellent and

undaunting introduction to the ideas and methods of mathematical modeling. It illustrates how mathematics can be used to formulate and solve puzzles observed in nature and to interpret the

solutions. In the process, it teaches such topics as the art of estimation and the effects of scale, particularly what happens as things get bigger. Readers will develop an understanding of

the symbiosis that exists between basic scientific principles and their mathematical expressions as well as a deeper appreciation for such natural phenomena as cloud formations,

halos and glories, tree heights and leaf patterns, butterfly and moth wings, and even puddles and mud cracks. Developed out of a university course, this book makes an ideal supplemental

text for courses in applied mathematics and mathematical modeling. It will also appeal to mathematics educators and enthusiasts at all levels, and is designed so that it can be dipped into at leisure.