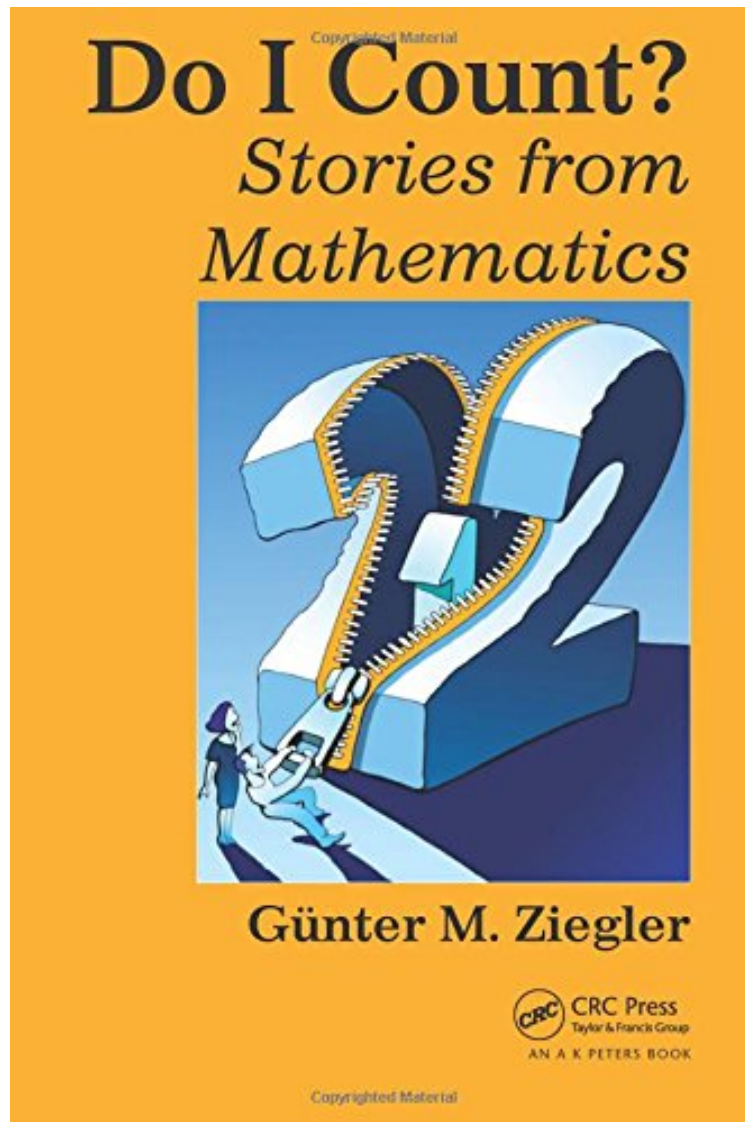


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Do I Count?: Stories from Mathematics

Gunter M. Ziegler

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Gunter M. Ziegler : Do I Count?: Stories from Mathematics before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Do I Count?: Stories from Mathematics:

8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. A modern classic in mathematics popularizationBy D ZeilbergerI grew up (as did all the mathematicians of my generation) with E.T. Bell's classic "men of mathematics", that with all its flaws, was andwould, remain a classic, in portraying great mathematicians as flesh and blood humans.While different in scope, I am sure that this book would be sure to be a classic. Guenter Ziegler, in addition to his "day job" asone of the greatest experts in the world in combinatorial geometry, is also one of the greatest mathematical

popularizers alive today. His "Proofs from the Book", with Martin Aigner, is already a classic, but intended for professionals (and future professionals). "Do I count" is a wonderful blend of stories (and not only!, you would learn some fascinating hard facts as well), that would appeal to everyone, both "laymen", and professionals. I particularly LOVED Chapter 9, with the vivid, witty, and heartwarming portraits of five fascinating mathematicians, all so different from each other, showing that mathematical people are at least as diverse, in their personalities, as the members of the complement set of people. 0 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Emeric Deutsch excellent

The subject of mathematics is not something distant, strange, and abstract that you can only learn about and often dislike in school. It is in everyday situations, such as housekeeping, communications, traffic, and weather reports. Taking you on a trip into the world of mathematics, *Do I Count? Stories from Mathematics* describes in a clear and captivating way the people behind the numbers and the places where mathematics is made. Written by top scientist and engaging storyteller Gnter M. Ziegler and translated by Thomas von Foerster, the book presents mathematics and mathematicians in a manner that you have not previously encountered. It guides you on a scenic tour through the field, pointing out which beds were useful in constructing which theorems and which notebooks list the prizes for solving particular problems. Forgoing esoteric areas, the text relates mathematics to celebrities, history, travel, politics, science and technology, weather, clever puzzles, and the future. Can bees count? Is 13 bad luck? Are there equations for everything? What's the real practical value of the Pythagorean Theorem? Are there Sudoku puzzles with fewer than 17 entries and just one solution? Where and how do mathematicians work? Who invented proofs and why do we need them? Why is there no Nobel Prize for mathematics? What kind of life did Paul Erdős lead? Find out the answers to these and other questions in this entertaining book of stories. You'll see that everyone counts, but no computation is needed.

"The writing is quick-witted, entertaining, and easy to read." Zentralblatt MATH 1285 "Rarely does one find a good general interest math book. This book, a collection of brief, fascinating, stand-alone essays, is the exception; it should be in libraries and bookstores everywhere. an absolute delight and a significant contribution to mathematical literature for general readers and mathematicians. Summing Up: Essential. All library collections." W.R. Lee, CHOICE, May 2014 "It is good to find a section in the book where several occasions of misuse of mathematics are explained. In the second half of the book, the focus of the author slowly shifts from the discipline itself to where and how it is done and who are the people in mathematics. the way that Ziegler describes this is still interesting to read. From the philosophical perspective, the most interesting part of the book is the one discussing the nature of computer proofs: can we trust them? after reading the book, all of us, mathematicians and non-mathematicians, understand that we do actually know a lot more math than we thought. However, it will never be too much." Peeter Mrsepp, Mathematical s, March 2014 "This is a wonderful book, by a strong research mathematician at the Free University of Berlin, about what it means to do mathematics. a pleasant and worthwhile read for all who do mathematics." Robert E. OMalley, Jr., SIAM "Do I Count? is packed full of thought-provoking stories exploring the concept and purpose of numbers. children grow up not realising that mathematics has similarly been discovered and was not always there, and that therefore that there is still more mathematics out there waiting to be revealed. Ziegler seeks to remedy this misconception. Many historical mathematicians are mentioned. Alongside the history there are examples of mathematical problems that have recently been solved and others that are currently being worked on. This all gives the reader an insight into the variety of mathematics that is out there." Noel-Ann Bradshaw, LMS Newsletter, February 2014 "This very enjoyable book is informative on so many levels for specialists and non-specialists alike." Peter Ruane, MAA s, October 2013 "In 2008, Gnter M. Ziegler won Germany's highest distinction for the communication of science to the general public, the Communicator Award. The award panel honoured a young and outstanding mathematician for his special ability to communicate results in his field in a fresh and innovative way. His new book, *Do I Count?*, reaffirms this ability to reveal the central role and beauty of mathematics, and provides excellent and inspiring reading." Dr. Eva-Maria Streier, Director New York Office, German Research Foundation (DFG) "In a book filled with humor, fascinating stories, and graceful and imaginative writing, Gnter Ziegler unlocks the secrets of what mathematicians do and how they go about doing it. Along the way, he touches on the making of mathematics as an analogue of the making of love, and talks about such things as number superstitions, prime numbers old and new, interesting mathematical characters dead and alive, and some intriguing mathematical questions, questions that can be understood by virtually anyone, but which mathematicians are still trying to answer. This is a book that everyone can enjoy from someone who failed high school geometry to the practicing mathematician. Zieglers knowledge about the ins and outs of mathematics is inexhaustible." Jacob E. Goodman, Founding Editor, *Discrete Computational Geometry* "For Ziegler, it's a fact that doing math is a tough, sometimes dirty, business, but also brings incredible amounts of fun." *Der Tagesspiegel* " [the author] succeeds, in his own way, to give an idea of what drives mathematicians, what fascinates them, and where they develop their research. The portraits of colleagues whom he knows personally and whom he describes engagingly and animatedly contribute to this substantially." Wolfgang Blum, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* "Caution, formulas, Ziegler warns us and advises not to take everything that's expressed as a formula as true, rather, to

cheerfully and carefully look for errors. This book invites the reader to look at numbers skeptically, examine statistics carefully, and check over other peoples calculations. The author offers this encouragement, "We cant all be below average in mathematics."Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung "Many consider mathematics as difficult. But it is precisely that which makes it interesting for Gnter Ziegler, professor of mathematics and recipient of many awards, who is here starting a charm offensive for his discipline. His blazing argument for the field is spiced with anecdotes and true stories, bringing to the fore its multiplicity and the variety of the people who devote themselves to it."ct "Gnter M. Ziegler is professor of mathematics at the Freie Universitt Berlin and the director of the research group for discrete geometry. He is a working mathematician who offers stories about his friends and colleagues, their working habits, their favorite anecdotes, their problems, and why they like being mathematicians. He is a gifted storyteller with a delightful sense of humor. All these provide a sense of the depth and breadth of the field of mathematics, with an emphasis on what mathematicians do and how they do it. Zieglers stories give answers to both problems mentioned at the outset: Upon finishing the book, the reader will know some interesting people who do mathematics and who can serve as role models, and will understand the sense of accomplishment and the enjoyment that comes from doing mathematics."Ulrich Daepf, *The Mathematical Intelligencer*, July 2016

About the AuthorGnter M. Ziegler is a MATHEON professor at Freie Universitt Berlin. Dr. Ziegler is a member of the executive board of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences, a member of the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina, and a fellow of the American Mathematical Society. His honors include the Leibniz Prize from the German Research Foundation DFG, the Chauvenet Prize from the Mathematical Association of America, and the Communicator Award from DFG and Stifterverband. His research interests connect discrete and computational geometry (especially polytopes), algebraic and topological methods in combinatorics, discrete mathematics, and the theory of linear and integer programming. He earned a Ph.D. from MIT.