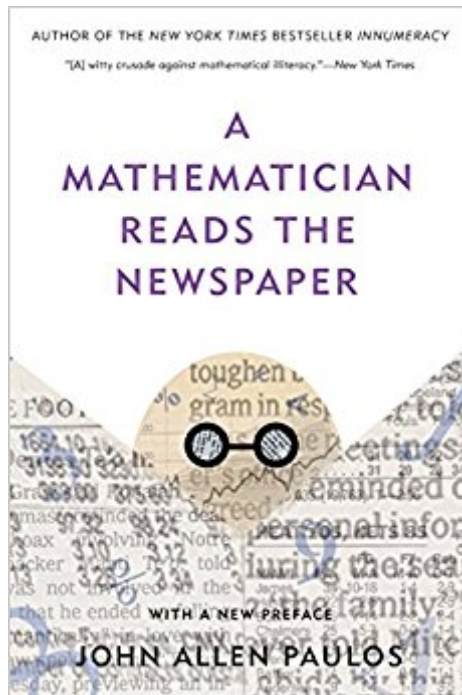




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# A Mathematician Reads The Newspaper



## Synopsis

In this lively volume, mathematician John Allen Paulos employs his singular wit to guide us through an unlikely mathematical jungle—the pages of the daily newspaper. From the Senate and sex to celebrities and cults, Paulos takes stories that may not seem to involve math at all and demonstrates how mathematical naïveté can put readers at a distinct disadvantage. Whether he's using chaos theory to puncture economic and environmental predictions, applying logic to clarify the hazards of spin doctoring and news compression, or employing arithmetic and common sense to give us a novel perspective on greed and relationships, Paulos never fails to entertain and enlighten.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In this book the author of *Innumeracy : Mathematical Illiteracy and Its Consequences* reveals the hidden mathematical angles in countless media stories. His real life perspective on the statistics we rely on and how they can mislead is for anyone interested in gaining a more accurate view of their world. The book is written with a humorous and knowledgeable style that makes it great reading.

--This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Paulos (*Beyond Innumeracy*) examines the often overlooked mathematical angle behind news stories in this informally written, enlightening survey. He uses simple arithmetic to expose consumer fallacies, electoral tricks and sports myths; applies the concept of self-reference to puncture inflated

news reporting or celebrity coverage; and assesses health risks and accounts of racial or ethnic bias using probability and other tools. The Temple University math professor also investigates whether SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) scores are a predictor of success in college; the enormity of the cost of the savings-and-loan bailout; safety considerations in GM trucks. Loosely modeled on the format of a daily newspaper, his analysis ranges from politics to crime to lifestyles and obituaries, with discussions of futurists' attempts to spot global trends, "man-on-the-street" reaction stories, deceptive advertisements, meaningless precision. A timely antidote to mathematical naivete. QPB, Library of Science, Natural Science Book Club, Astronomy Book Club, Reader's Subscription and Newbridge Executive Program alternates. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Our world is permeated by the fragrance of that which is not so, and this is the book to help you detect it from a mile away. In this entertaining volume, Paulos dissected example articles from his years of studying the newspaper, showing what the journalist reported and how the numbers in the articles were applied (usually incorrectly) in each case. Each topic includes discussions of the logic behind the newspaper articles and of the math that underlies the claims made by the writers. It seems that one could realize almost full value from the book even if the math is too hard to follow. However, I particularly enjoyed his detailed reviews of the appropriate calculations. I heartily recommend the book to anyone who wants to become a better-informed citizen and a skilled spotter of BS.

I have to say I really enjoy John Allen Paulo's style of writing. His wry observations and insights are wonderful to behold on paper. The book is somehow timeless, it is as useful and observant now as it was when written. An easy recommendation to make.

Should be required reading for everyone. Our innumeracy is on constant display. Paulos shows us how to look at the use and misuse of numbers in an enjoyable and readable way. This book is a lesson in how to think.

This book is a collection of very short essays describing the use of mathematics in a number of public contexts. The examples are simplified and there is little or no explanation of computational methods or deeper mathematical concepts. It does, however, point out in a number of interesting examples the ways in which the casual use of mathematical concepts in the news frequently

misleads or deceives the casual reader.

Just re-read this book again, jumping from one subject to another during a lonely weekend. Reading the ones I mark the last time I read it. I love Innumeracy, and I love this one too.... This book consists of loosely connected materials that you often see in the newspaper and John takes a fresh mathematician look into it, sneering and smiling and teaching us what to watch over next time we read it. The logic will make you smile a lot, and the awakening will make you look at your newspaper with a different point of view, some sort of small revelation. I believe that John Allen Paulos has awakened up the mathematic curiosities in a lot of his readers, including me. He would argue that the percentage is too small to make a dent to this world of innumeracy people, (which is mathematically correct, and he has mathematically proven that into this world). But to those who have been changed, it did matter for their lives. Go get it and have fun reading, if you found it too daunting, take a rest, and re-read the book next week, you will be glad you did. Thank You John.

This book shows a clarity of mind. The author has great examples, but it did not age well. Makes me miss newspapers.

A very well written book, both interesting and instructive. Full of common sense, the author provides a plethora of reports commonly found in almost any newspaper, and highlights errors of facts, of inferences from bad assumptions, of statements supported by little or no evidence, of our poor grasp of probabilities of events, and of much else. An excellent read that will make us more critical in our reading of newspapers.

It's a great book. The book presents a critical thinking based on both math and sociology view.

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