

MISCELLANEA II

Mnemonics

Mnemonics Reports

[General]

Some of you may be familiar with the sentence: How I want a drink, alcoholic of course, after the heavy lectures involving quantum mechanics! The number of letters in each word represents successive digits of pi:
3.14159265358979.

Over the years, pi enthusiasts have created mnemonic devices for encoding pi in just about any language you can imagine -- from ancient Greek to modern Icelandic. These sentences, poems, miniature dramas, comic episodes, and so forth reflect not only the digits of pi but also the considerable ingenuity of their authors. Even going beyond the 31st decimal digit requires invoking some new rule -- such as using 10-letter words -- to encode the zeros of pi.
(...)

Ivars Peterson's MathLand : A Passion for Pi (March 11, 1996)
http://www.maa.org/mathland/mathland_3_11.html

[Chinese]

I do recall there was a poem written in Shanghai dialect which gives the first 100 digits of pi.
From: Hongyuan Zha

[German]

Johann A. Sajdowski aus Frankfurt hat, wie er schreibt, einen Text verfaßt, der als Hymnus an die Natur sogar die ersten 500 000 Stellen von pi wiedergibt.
Dewdney (de), p. 56

[Japanese]

There is a Japanese song which gives the first 50 digits of pi, and used to be taught to Japanese school children.
From: Mike Keane.

[Polish]

I seem to remember that Ode to Mnemosine was about 40 words.
From: Marek Kirejczyk
Editor's Note: Cf. Polish #4

[Slovak]

A poem in Slovak allows to write down Pi on more than 50 digits.

It starts as follows:

(3), o boze o dobry

/O'h God o'h good .../

From: Otokar Grosek

Editor's Note: Cf. Slovak #1

Mnemonics References

[PhD Thesis]

Date: Wed, 21 Feb 1996 04:58:14 -0500

From: Ubiratan DAmbrosio iee - 815-7216 <ubi@usp.br>

To: math history <math-history-list@maa.org>

To those interested in mnemonics:

A PhD thesis by Robert Alan Hrees with title "An Edited History of Mnemonics from Antiquity to 1985: Establishing a Foundation for Mnemonic-based Pedagogy with Particular Emphasis on Mathematics" was presented in Indiana University in 1985. It is a 2485 pages , in 15 volumes, thesis. It contains practically everything one wants to know about mnemonics.

Ubiratan D'Ambrosio

[Pi and e mnemonics in several languages]

In one of issues of "Scientific American" (1988?) was a report about a competition for the longest poem about Pi or e. They gathered such poems in 101 languages.

From: Igor Markov

Editor's Note:

Dewdney's ?

Dutch Pi Mnemonics

It seems, that Simon Stevin (mathematician, military architect and private secretary of the Dutch Stadhouder Maurits in the end 16th - beginning 17th century) already has composed a long mnemonic verse for pi and that Christiaan Huygens made one too.

From: Pieter de Groen

Persian Pi Mnemonic

The book (= Struik) also mentions the Persian astronomer / mathematician

Jamsjid al-Kasji (around 1425), Samarkand, who supposedly approximated pi in 17 decimals and 8 sexagesimals, and also made a mnemonic to it.

From: Joop van den Eijnde

Mnemonics for the Prime Factors of Fermat Numbers

John Pollard is an English mathematician. His main interest is in factoring big numbers into their prime factors. He has composed several mnemonics for the prime factors of the Fermat numbers.

From: Hendrik Lenstra

Memorizing Pi

John Conway

See: Pi Mnemotechniques, Conway's Technique #2

A. C. Aitken

New Zealand's greatest mathematician A. C. Aitken (1895-1967) had a phenomenal memory. Even when old and sick, he found it easy to memorize Pi to 2000 places ("by the rhythm!"). He invited people to recite digits from Pi, going forwards or backwards from anywhere in those 2000 places; and after they had recited about 10 digits he would continue from there!

From: Garry J. Tee

Joanna

-joanna

who memorized over 100 digits of pi while waiting for her high-school boyfriend to finish getting math help after school.

From: calliope@leland.Stanford.EDU

Date: 28 Jul 1996 21:53:59 -0700

Newsgroups: rec.music.tori-amos

Subject: Re: tori on pi