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Common Sense Mathematics (Maa Textbooks)

Ethan D. Bolker, Maura B. Mast

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Common Sense Mathematics is a text for a one semester college-level course in quantitative literacy. The text emphasizes common sense and common knowledge in approaching real problems through popular news items and finding useful mathematical tools and frames with which to address those questions.

We asked ourselves what we hoped our students would remember about this course in ten year s time. From that ten year perspective thoughts about syllabus what topics should we cover?" seemed much too narrow. What matters more is our wish to change the way our students' minds work the way they approach a problem, or, more generally, the way they approach the world. Most people skip the numbers" in newspapers, magazines, on the web and (more importantly) even in financial information. We hope that in ten years our students will follow the news, confident in their ability to make sense of the numbers they find there and in their daily lives.

Most quantitative reasoning texts are arranged by mathematical topics to be mastered. Since the mathematics is only a part of what we hope students learn, we've chosen another strategy. We look at real life stories that can be best understood with careful reading and a little mathematics.

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