



Prime Numbers: The Most Mysterious Figures in Math

David Wells

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A fascinating journey into the mind-bending world of prime numbers

Cicadas of the genus *Magicicada* appear once every 7, 13, or 17 years. Is it just a coincidence that these are all prime numbers? How do twin primes differ from cousin primes, and what on earth (or in the mind of a mathematician) could be sexy about prime numbers? What did Albert Wilansky find so fascinating about his brother-in-law's phone number?

Mathematicians have been asking questions about prime numbers for more than twenty-five centuries, and every answer seems to generate a new rash of questions. In *Prime Numbers: The Most Mysterious Figures in Math*, you'll meet the world's most gifted mathematicians, from Pythagoras and Euclid to Fermat, Gauss, and Erdős, and you'll discover a host of unique insights and inventive conjectures that have both enlarged our understanding and deepened the mystique of prime numbers. This comprehensive, A-to-Z guide covers everything you ever wanted to know--and much more that you never suspected--about prime numbers, including:

- * The unproven Riemann hypothesis and the power of the zeta function
- * The "Primes is in P" algorithm
- * The sieve of Eratosthenes of Cyrene
- * Fermat and Fibonacci numbers
- * The Great Internet Mersenne Prime Search
- * And much, much more

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