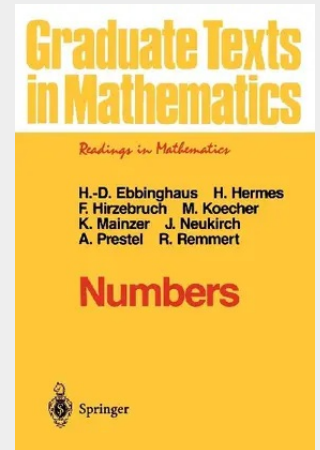


Numbers

A book about numbers sounds rather dull. This one is not. Instead it is a lively story about one thread of mathematics-the concept of "number" told by eight authors and organized into a historical narrative that leads the reader from ancient Egypt to the late twentieth century. It is a story that begins with some of the simplest ideas of mathematics and ends with some of the most complex. It is a story that mathematicians, both amateur and professional, ought to know. Why write about numbers? Mathematicians have always found it difficult to develop broad perspective about their subject. While we each view our specialty as having roots in the past, and sometimes having connections to other specialties in the present, we seldom see the panorama of mathematical development over thousands of years. Numbers attempts to give that broad perspective, from hieroglyphs to K-theory, from Dedekind cuts to nonstandard analysis.

To be used for a reading course or as a supplemental text for a course in number theory.



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