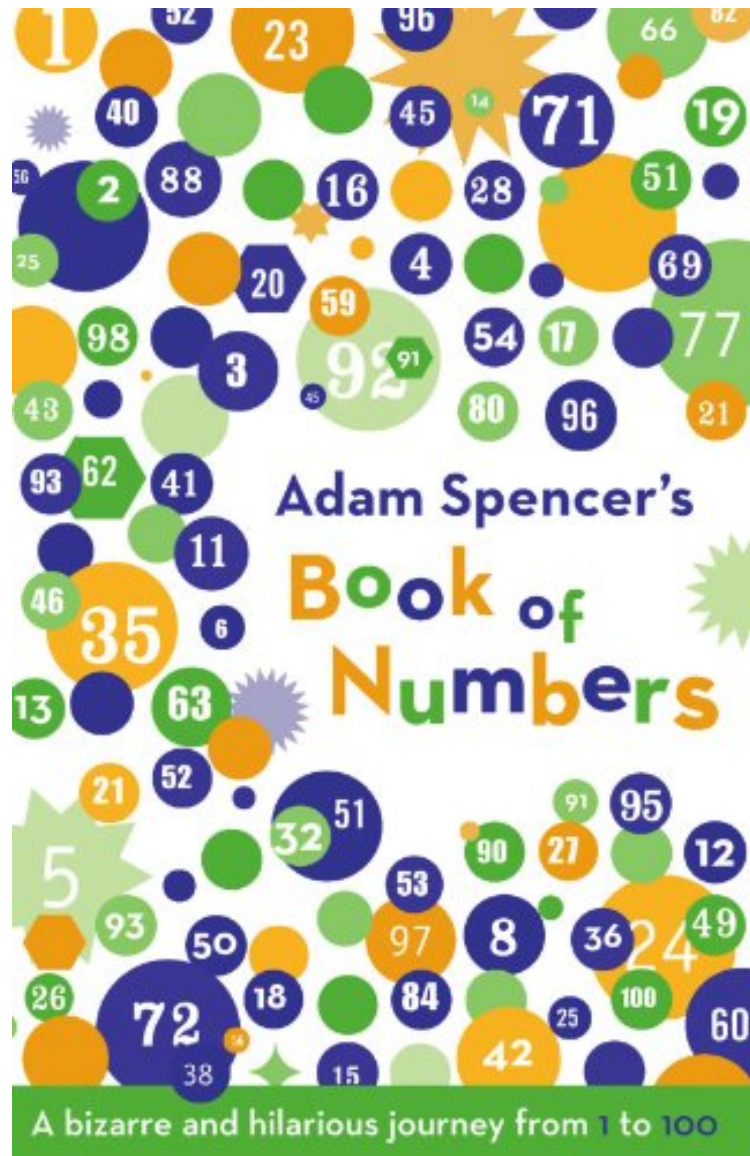


[Download] Adam Spencer's Book of Numbers: A Bizarre and Hilarious Journey from 1 to 100

## Adam Spencer's Book of Numbers: A Bizarre and Hilarious Journey from 1 to 100

*Adam Spencer*

*ebooks / Download PDF / \*ePub / DOC / audiobook*



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#1599455 in Books Basic Books 2004-02-16Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.50 x .41 x 5.50l, .38 #File Name: 1568582897238 pagesISBN13: 9781568582894Condition: NewNotes: BRAND NEW FROM PUBLISHER! 100% Satisfaction Guarantee. Tracking provided on most orders. Buy with Confidence! Millions of books sold! | File size: 30.Mb

**Adam Spencer** : Adam Spencer's Book of Numbers: A Bizarre and Hilarious Journey from 1 to 100 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Adam Spencer's Book of Numbers: A Bizarre and Hilarious Journey from 1 to 100:

0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars By Heidi M. interesting 16 of 20 people found the following review helpful. Not the best example of this sub-genre By Dennis Littrell Here's a book idea. You're a comedian who also knows a lot of number theory. People are fascinated by numbers--and heaven knows we could all use a chuckle or two. So... Aussie comedian, DJ and math PhD Adam Spencer decided he'd have something to say about all the numbers from 1 to 100, but he'd try to keep it lively and funny and relevant to people's lives with references to the popular culture and such. And he'd throw in some jokes and shore it up with some number puzzles. This would appeal to both the general public and people who love numbers. Well, I am sorry to say that I don't think he was entirely successful. First of all the book is not all that funny. (But you might want to judge for yourself.) Second, most of the mathematical stuff is about number theory which is famously that part of mathematics that is the most removed from practical application (and therefore the public interest). In fact, until an offshoot of prime number explorations contributed to data encryption (in credit card numbers and corporate and military messaging, etc.) number theory was proudly the province of the utterly impractical, the purest of pure mathematics. (A nice lesson here is that we can never know when some esoteric endeavor may yield a practical application.) Third--and to my mind most important--the information about numbers in this book is in many cases information that is only tangentially or accidentally related to the numbers themselves. For example for the number 44, Spencer tells us that "Drinking 1 cup of tea a day is thought to reduce your risk of major heart attack by up to 44 per cent." The number could just as well have been 43 or some other percent. Or "The highest recorded number of different costumes ever sashayed around a Hollywood movie was 85, by Madonna in *Evita*." (I don't even think this is correct, but never mind.) In other words, Spencer is writing like he is trying to appeal to the readers of say *People Magazine*. My guess is that the typical imbibers of *People Magazine* or its equivalent is not likely to even pick up a book on numbers let alone buy it. Fourth, since Spencer has made an obvious attempt at uncovering the cultural significance of the first 100 numbers (and I think that is a fine idea) he really needed to do more research in that area so that he could come up with something more significant than say "20/20 is the name of a Beach Boys album" for inclusion in his remarks about the number 20. If Spencer had spent more time looking at the historical and cultural significance of numbers, he would have had to weight his remarks heavily toward the lower numbers since the human significance of especially the single digit numbers greatly outweighs that of the larger numbers. Indeed an entire book could be written about the number 3 for example. And I would say that in the beginning there was the one which became through duality the two, which became with three the many, and then "the ten thousand things." There is so much that Spencer could have told us about the number one, the IDEA of the number one, of oneness as opposed to something more or less than oneness, but instead he tells us that "Some things only happen once. Snails have sex only once in their lives." Indeed, I think Spencer missed a great opportunity here. If he had focused on the deep human meaning (and experience with) number and on the philosophic and emotional ideas associated with numbers, his sidebars into the pop culture might have been funnier. To do this he would have needed to do more than just Google the numbers or go to pop culture Web sites such as the Get Smart home page where he found (and listed for our edification) "the 51 phones so far discovered on Get Smart," e.g., the "address book phone," the "doughnut phone," the "perfume spray phone," etc. There are many books on number that attempt to show us the human side of numbers and even books that make experiences with numbers funny. Some of the best are written by John Allen Paulos who really is funny and very much worth reading. Finally, Spencer includes a kind of mathematical puzzle or "Quiz Question" for the reader to answer for most of the 100 numbers. He gives the answers in the back. Questions (or tasks) range from "What is the name of the first official episode of *South Park*?" to "What are the next 3 square pyramidal numbers after 55?" (he does explain what a pyramidal number is) to "Using only +, - or x, join the digits 1-9 to make a total of 100..." I even think that including some hard core numerology (anathema to mathematicians of course, but beloved by New Age types) along with the number theory and the pop culture references would have improved this book. At least it would have broadened the context. To his credit Spencer does include some religious aspects of numbers, for example he writes, "Among Indian gods, Brahma had 4 heads to symbolize the 4 directions of the world, while Shiva has 4 arms with which he destroys and recreates the world in his dance." I think there is a readership for this book (after all I read it, although I didn't attempt to answer the questions--other constraints in life being what they are), but I think such a readership is small and rather exclusive. His ideal reader is someone who loves numbers, trivia, TV culture (*South Park*, *Homer Simpson*, *Seinfeld*, etc.) and who has a lot of time for exactly that. How about an independently wealthy, mathematically-inclined couch potato?

How many people do you need in a room before there'll be a birthday in common? Why is 70 weird, and what can we do about it? How can 56 people eat 1 pizza? In 100 bite-size chapters of no more than three pages each, Adam Spencer gives each number, 1 to 100, its place in the limelight. For example, take 65. It's the constant of a 5 x 5 "magic square" -- a square that contains the numbers 1 to 25, where all the rows and columns and each diagonal add up to 65. Elizabeth Taylor had 65 costume changes in *Cleopatra*. And sharks can travel up to 65 kilometers per hour (about 40 mph). After reading Adam Spencer's *Book of Numbers*, readers will never look at numbers the same way again.

About the Author Adam Spencer who has a PhD in mathematics is a stand-up comedian and DJ in Australia, from whence he declares he is on a mission to "take the 'numb' out of 'numbers.'"