



Math for the people, by the people.

Friedrich Bessel

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Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel (1784 - 1846) German astronomer and mathematician, perhaps best known for the Bessel function.

As a teenager, he was apprenticed to a merchant and soon became his accountant. As the merchant did a lot of business with ships, Bessel developed an interest in astronomy. After publishing tables of atmospheric refraction, Bessel came up with the idea of using the parallax effect to measure the distance from the Earth to a star on the sky. In recognition of his achievements in astronomy, an asteroid was named after him.