

List of films about mathematicians

This is a list of feature films that include mathematicians, scientists who use math or references to mathematicians.

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About mathematics

Films where mathematics are central to the plot:

- *21* (2008) – A group of MIT current and former students, mostly mathematicians, and a mathematics professor devise a card counting scheme for success at Las Vegas Strip blackjack tables.
- *The Bank* (2001) – A mathematician discovers a formula to predict fluctuations in the stock market.
- *Cube* (1997) – Six people, including Leaven, a maths student, awake in a deathtrap based on mathematical principles.
- *Fermat's Room* (2007) – Three mathematicians and one inventor are invited to a house under the premise of solving a great enigma and told to use pseudonyms based on famous historical mathematicians. At the house, they are trapped in a room. They must solve puzzles given by the host, who calls himself "Fermat", in order to escape the slowly closing walls of the room.
- *Gifted* (2017) – Frank Adler (Chris Evans) is a single man raising a child prodigy - his spirited young niece Mary (Mckenna Grace) - in a coastal town in Florida. Frank's plans for a normal school life for Mary are foiled when the 7-year-old's mathematical abilities come to the attention of Frank's formidable mother, Evelyn (Lindsay Duncan), whose plans for her granddaughter threaten to separate Frank and Mary.
- *Good Will Hunting* (1997) – Janitor and super-genius Will Hunting (Matt Damon) begins to turn his life around with the help of psychologist (Robin Williams) and a Fields Medal-winning professor (Stellan Skarsgård).
- *I.Q.* (1994) – Albert Einstein (Walter Matthau) helps a young man (Tim Robbins) pretend to be a physicist in order to catch the attention of Einstein's niece (Meg Ryan).
- *An Invisible Sign* (2011) – Mona Gray (Jessica Alba) gives up everything important to her in life, except mathematics, as part of a "deal with the universe" to help restore her father (a mathematician) to health. Years later, Mona teaches the subject, and does her best to help her students contend with their own personal crises.
- *Moebius* (1996) – Topologists including a young girl make contributions to the subway system and other facets of reality in Argentina in this math film with a science fiction and surreal feel.
- *Moneyball* (2011) – Oakland Athletics baseball team's general manager Billy Beane attempts to assemble a competitive team using statistics.

- *The Oxford Murders* (2008) – A Student (Elijah Wood) finds out about mysterious killings in Oxford and helped by a professor, they reveal the math patterns used by the killer.
- *Pi* (1998) – A mathematician searches for the number that underlies all of nature.
- *Proof* (2005) – A former student (Jake Gyllenhaal) of a recently deceased, brilliant mathematician (Anthony Hopkins) finds a notebook in his office containing a proof of an important theorem, but the mathematician's daughter (Gwyneth Paltrow) claims it is hers. The ensuing dispute is complicated by signs that she may have inherited her father's mental illness and a burgeoning romance.
- *Raising Genius* (2004) – The film is about a boy (Justin Long) who locks himself in the bathroom to work out math equations on the shower wall.
- *Sneakers* (1992) – An eclectic team is assembled to steal a code-breaking box developed by a rogue mathematician.
- *Travelling Salesman* (2012) – The US government hires four mathematicians to solve the most powerful problem ever to plague computer science (P vs NP problem).
- *X+Y* (2014) A teenage mathematical prodigy has difficulty understanding people, but finds comfort in numbers.
- *90 to Win* (2017) Short film. An Indian man quits a stable job to create an alternative to the Duckworth Lewis Method used in Cricket.

Mathematician biographical films

Biographical films based on real-life mathematicians:

- *Agora* (2009) – The life of Hypatia.
- *A Beautiful Mind* (2001) – A fictional account based loosely on the life of mathematician John Nash (Russell Crowe), who made a breakthrough that wins him the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences.
- *A Brief History of Time* (1991) – A biographical documentary film about the physicist Stephen Hawking, directed by Errol Morris.
- *Enigma* (2001) – A story of romantic and psychological intrigue set in Bletchley Park during the World War II effort to crack the German Enigma machine.
- *Hidden Figures* (2016) – African American mathematicians Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson are featured in this film about the early years of the NASA Project Mercury and racial and sexual segregation.
- *A Hill on the Dark Side of the Moon* (1983) – A drama film about the professor of mathematics, Sofya Kovalevskaya.
- *The Imitation Game* (2014) – British mathematician Alan Turing (Benedict Cumberbatch), a pioneer in digital computing and artificial intelligence, is tasked with cracking Nazi Germany's Enigma code that would help the Allies win World War II. A new adaptation of the play "Breaking the Code".
- *Infinity* (1996) – A story about Nobel Prize-winning physicist Richard Feynman (Matthew Broderick).
- *The Man Who Knew Infinity* (2015) – The true story of Indian mathematical genius, Srinivasa Ramanujan (Dev Patel), who develops numerous properties of infinite series as a clerk in India before writing to Oxford mathematicians who invite him to UK. Directed by Matthew Brown^[1]
- *N Is a Number: A Portrait of Paul Erdős* (1993) – A documentary directed by George Paul 'Duke' Csicsery about the life of Hungarian mathematician Paul Erdős.
- *Ramanujan* (2014) – A biographical film by Gnana Rajasekaran based on the life of Srinivasa Ramanujan.
- *Sofia Kovalevskaya* (1985) – Epic film in four episodes, based on a true story of mathematician scientist Sofya Kovalevskaya.
- *The Theory of Everything* (2014) – The story of the life and hardships faced by theoretical physicist and mathematician Stephen Hawking.

Starring mathematicians

Films where one or more mathematicians play the main role, but that are not otherwise about mathematics:

- *It's My Turn* (1980) – A mathematics professor (Jill Clayburgh) falls in love with her father's bride's son (Michael Douglas).
- *The Mirror Has Two Faces* (1996) – A math professor (Jeff Bridges) marries a literature professor (Barbra Streisand), but they want different things from the relationship.
- *Stand and Deliver* (1988) – Based on the true story of math teacher Jaime Escalante, who inspired the students in a school in a Hispanic neighborhood.
- *Straw Dogs* (1971) – David Sumner (Dustin Hoffman) is an American mathematical physicist who moves to England, where he and his wife are violently harassed by locals.
- *A Summer's Tale* (1996) – A young mathematician vacationing in Brittany.
- *Tall Story* (1960) – A college physics and mathematics whiz is also the star basketball player, partly because he has devised equations for making baskets.

Featuring mathematicians

Films where one or more of the members of the main cast is a mathematician:

- *21 Grams* (2003) – An accident changes many lives, including that of a critically ill mathematics professor (Sean Penn).
- *Antonia's Line* (1995) – A genealogical "line" of five generations of women includes a child prodigy, Thérèse, who grows up to be a mathematician.
- *Jurassic Park* (1993) – A mathematician (chaos theorist) (Jeff Goldblum) is among those invited to a theme park with cloned dinosaurs, in order to assess its safety.
- *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* (1997) – Mathematician Ian Malcolm (Jeff Goldblum) travels to an auxiliary Jurassic Park site to document dinosaurs.

References

1. Deborah Young (14 September 2015). " 'The Man Who Knew Infinity': TIFF Review" (<http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/man-who-knew-infinity-tiff-823301>). *The Hollywood Reporter*. Retrieved 24 February 2016. "Brown's screenplay brings math into the dialogue often and without embarrassment."

External links

- Mathematical Fiction: films (<http://kasmana.people.cofc.edu/MATHFICT/search.php?go=yes&medium=fl&orderby=title>) by Alex Kasman (College of Charleston)
- The Mathematical Movie Database (<http://www.qedcat.com/moviemath/index.html>) by Burkard Polster and Marty Ross
- Mathematics in Movies (<http://www.math.harvard.edu/~knill/mathmovies/>) by Oliver Knill (Harvard University)
- My Math Movie Picks (<http://www.math.unl.edu/~bharbourne1/MathInTheMovies.html>) by Brian Harbourne (University of Nebraska–Lincoln)
- Math in the Movies (<http://world.std.com/~reinhold/mathmovies.html>) by Arnold G. Reinhold
- Math Becomes Way Cool (https://web.archive.org/web/20130702044447/http://www.maa.org/devlin/devlin_11_98.html) by Keith Devlin (Mathematical Association of America)

- [Top 10 Math Movies \(http://www.mymathdone.com/top-ten-math-movies/#selectme\)](http://www.mymathdone.com/top-ten-math-movies/#selectme) (infographic)
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