

The Beginning of the Greek Era

Now that we have looked at the mathematics done by the ancient Egyptians and Babylonians, we turn our attention to the Greeks. Here, we find the first evidence of what we might recognize today as “mathematics”: statements about objects and their properties, followed by proofs of these statements. We will begin by considering two of the most well-known Greek mathematicians: Thales and Pythagoras.

Readings

First Reading: Thales: Our Founder?

Second Reading: Pythagoras biography

Third Reading: A Brief History of Numbers

- Read Section 2.2, pages 28 - 30. (The earlier parts of Section 2.2 are a review of Egypt and Babylon if you'd like to read them.)
- Read Chapter 3, pages 31 - 42

Questions

Question 1 How many theorems was Thales said to have proven? 5
given

Question 2 What is Pythagoras primarily considered?

Multiple Choice:

- (a) A philosopher. ✓
- (b) A mathematician.
- (c) A traveler.
- (d) An astronomer.

Learning outcomes:
Author(s):
See Thales: Our Founder? at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3615512>
See Pythagoras biography at <http://www-history.mcs.st-and.ac.uk/Biographies/Pythagoras.html>
See A Brief History of Numbers at <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/lib/ohio-state-ebooks/detail.action?docID=2084891>