



You Can Count on Monsters: The First 100 Numbers and Their Characters

By Richard Evan Schwartz

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This book is a unique teaching tool that takes math lovers on a journey designed to motivate kids (and kids at heart) to learn the fun of factoring and prime numbers. This volume visually explores the concepts of factoring and the role of prime and composite numbers. The playful and colorful monsters are designed to give children (and even older audiences) an intuitive understanding of the building blocks of numbers and the basics of multiplication. The introduction and appendices can also help adult readers answer questions about factoring from their young audience. The artwork is crisp and creative and the colors are bright and engaging, making this volume a welcome deviation from standard math texts. Any person, regardless of age, can profit from reading this book. Readers will find themselves returning to its pages for a very long time, continually learning from and getting to know the monsters as their knowledge expands. You Can Count on Monsters is a magnificent addition for any math education program and is enthusiastically recommended to every teacher, parent and grandparent, student, child, or other individual interested in exploring the visually fascinating world of the numbers 1 through 100.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 4–8—This hybrid math/art book is both ambitious and imaginative. An introductory section explains the colored-dot configurations and factor trees for numbers 1 to 100, which appear on the verso of each spread. These factor trees are "all the way grown out" to the lowest common factors, or prime numbers. On the opposite page is a monster scene that represents the number. Schwartz has created a creature for each prime number: "Each monster has something about it that relates to its number, but sometimes you have to look hard (and count) to find it." Thus, the monster for 5 is a five-featured, five-pointed star, and the 13 monster sports a pink-and-white eye-patch with 13 segments. The illustration for 14 is a "7" monster eating a "2" monster. The "78" picture includes monsters representing 2, 3, and 13, the prime factors of that number. The pages are glossy black with flat, colorful abstractions. The author's claim, "The only thing you really need to know in order to enjoy this book is how to multiply whole numbers together, like 2 and 3," is an understatement; readers will need patience and an open, undaunted mind to deconstruct the monster scenes. This is a book for math lovers who want to have some fun. Challenge these students to create their own prime monsters and combinations. While the dot configurations and factor trees are less inventive, they provide a more concrete explanation of the math for the rest of us.—*Barbara Auerbach, PS 217, Brooklyn, New York*

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Review

This delightful book is the result of the author's desire to teach his daughters about primes and factorization. Apart from an introduction and some explanatory material in the back, it consists of one hundred double pages: on the left page is a number and that many dots, arranged into clusters that display its factorization. On the right page is a picture that represents the same information using the author's 'monsters,' which represent the prime numbers. --MAA

This compact, innovative book counts to 100 using prime numbers represented as monsters, each with identifying characteristics (two resembles a bee with two buggy eyes, and three is an angry-looking triangular creature). The book opens with explanations of multiplication, prime and composite numbers, and factor trees, then moves on to a list of numbers. Each prime number looks unique, while composite numbers are represented by scenes involving their prime monsters (eight is illustrated as three of the beelike twos, i.e., two times two times two. Readers may have difficulty deciphering the pictures, which come to resemble little works of abstract geometric art. But especially for creative learners, visualizing the roles each monster plays may lead to deeper number sense. Ages 4 to 8. --Publishers Weekly

My eight-year old granddaughter Natalie is just learning about multiplication and as we read through almost the whole book, she especially liked the 'special numbers' (primes) where a new shape appeared. At one point she paused and said, 'You never get two special numbers one right after the other.' I gave positive reinforcement for this, her first mathematical conjecture (not mentioning the one counterexample of 2 and 3). She's going to take the book to her second grade class. Every school library should have one. --Thomas Banchoff, former MAA President

About the Author

Richard Evan Schwartz, Brown University, Providence, RI, USA.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jimmy Hicks:

Have you spare time for any day? What do you do when you have considerably more or little spare time? Yes, you can choose the suitable activity with regard to spend your time. Any person spent their spare time to take a wander, shopping, or went to typically the Mall. How about open as well as read a book called You Can Count on Monsters: The First 100 Numbers and Their Characters? Maybe it is for being best activity for you. You recognize beside you can spend your time with the favorite's book, you can wiser than before. Do you agree with their opinion or you have additional opinion?

Kenneth Hill:

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Carol Benally:

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Gay Swiderski:

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