

Contents of
A Numerate Life
A Mathematician Explores the Vagaries of Life,
His Own and Probably Yours
by John Allen Paulos

Introduction – What It’s All About

Chapter One – Bully Teacher, Childhood Math

Some Early Estimates, Speculations

Pedagogy, Vanquishing Blowhards and Opponents, and Monopoly
Of Mothers and Collecting Baseball Cards

A Further Note on My Education

Chapter Two – Bias, Biography, and Why We’re All a Bit Far-out and Bizarre

Bias and Mindsets, Statistics and Biography

Despite Normal Appearances, We're All Strange

Misapplications of Mathematics to Everyday Life - a Caveat

Chapter Three – Ambition vs. Nihilism

Infinity, Sets, and Immortality

Selves and Absurdity

The Story of “I” - Neurons, Hallucinations, and Godel

Chapter Four – Life's Shifting Shapes

Primitive Math, Life Trajectories, and Curve Fitting

The Environment as a Pinball Machine, Quincunx of Life

Biographies and the Texas Sharpshooter

Chapter Five – Moving Toward the Unexpected Middle

A Few Touchstone Memories

Lunch, Goodnight, and My Parents - Milwaukee in the 1950s

Logic, Jokes, and Adult Life as an Unexpected Punch Line

Memories and Benford's Law

Chapter Six – Pivots - Past to Present

Kovalevsky, Prediction, and My Grandmother's Petty Larceny

Turning Points, Acadia to Kenya

Past Accomplishments vs. Present Potential

Chapter Seven - Romance Among Trans-Humans and Us Cis-Humans

Robomance and the End of Biography

Choosing a Spouse, Meeting My Wife, Sheila

Romantic Crushes, Bayesian Statistics, and Life

Domestic Math: Toilet Seats, Up or Down; Movies, Early or Late

Chapter Eight – Chances Are That Chances Are

If Only ... Probability and Coincidences, Good, Bad and Ugly

Innumeracy, A Mathematician Reads the Newspaper and Their Aftermath

Chapter Nine – Life in the Era of Numbers and Networks

How Many Emails, Where Did We Buy That - The Quantified Life

A Twitterish Approach to Biography

Scale and Predictability

Chapter Ten – My Stock Loss, Hypocrisy, and a Card Trick

My Stock Loss and a Few Pitfalls of Narrative Logic

One Cheer for Hypocrisy

Kruskal's Card Trick and Common Denouements

Chapter Eleven – Biographies: Verstehen or Superficial

Consciousness, Biographies, and Shmata

Leah and Daniel, My Grandsons and I

Gompertz's Law of Human Mortality and Lifespan

Chapter Twelve – Trips, Memories, and Becoming Jaded

Topology, Travel, and a Thai Taxi Driver

Experiencing vs. Remembering Selves and Autobiographies

Peak Experiences, Record-Setting, and the Path from Jade to Jaded

Joining My Father