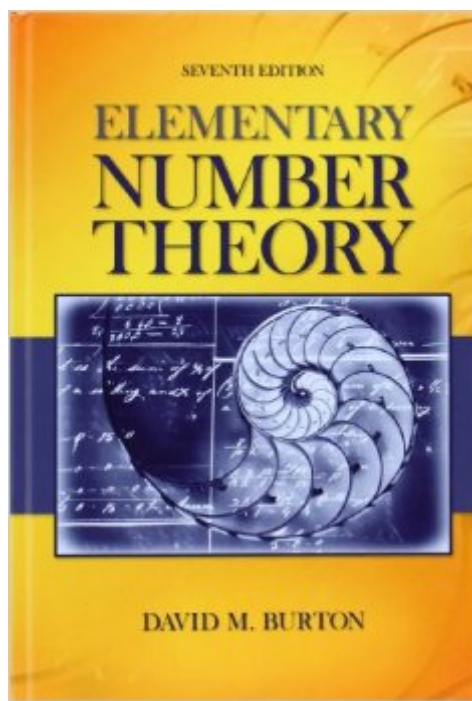


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Elementary Number Theory



Synopsis

Elementary Number Theory, Seventh Edition, is written for the one-semester undergraduate number theory course taken by math majors, secondary education majors, and computer science students. This contemporary text provides a simple account of classical number theory, set against a historical background that shows the subject's evolution from antiquity to recent research. Written in David Burton's engaging style, Elementary Number Theory reveals the attraction that has drawn leading mathematicians and amateurs alike to number theory over the course of history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I am going to teach an undergraduate course in number theory this fall, and the previous instructor recommended this book. Thought I'd check it out. First thing I see is the page. \$167.12! Here is a math question for you. A typical undergraduate student works at Chick-Fil-A for \$7.00 an hour. Of this, she pays 20% for social security and taxes. How long must she work to be able to buy this book? Publishers, do you have a clue? I have the power to oblige thirty students to buy a book of my choice. It ain't gonna be yours. ---Along these lines, one more point deserves comment. I see that the book is in its seventh edition. Seven editions! That's quite a lot. One is led to speculate that the purpose is to mix up the problems, making sure that students can't buy their books used. But am I being too cynical? After all, progress is still being made in number theory. Perhaps the book is being continually revised to reflect this? Not wishing to spend \$167, I tested my hypothesis on a copy of the sixth edition which I had handy, which was published in 2007. This gem can be found on p. 54. "It is an old, but still unsolved problem of whether there exist arbitrarily long but finite arithmetic

progressions consisting of only prime numbers." Bzzzzt. Ben Green and Terry Tao proved this in 2004. Similarly, the book discusses the history of Fermat's Last Theorem in some detail, and discusses how Andrew Wiles proved it, but then found an error, and fixed it. But in this vein the author neglects to mention the important contribution of Richard Taylor. One can only surmise that the eighth, ninth, and tenth editions of this book will all also fail to credit Yitang Zhang for proving the existence of infinitely many bounded gaps between primes, or Harald Helfgott for the resolution of the ternary Goldbach conjecture.

The sections start out very slowly, and are organized well enough that you can skip a whole section if you decide you don't need it while developing a course in number theory. Each chapter starts off with a section on the major mathematician involved with the subject of that chapter. While not mathematically important, they were extremely interesting and give a great history. The actual topics and problems are pretty well-explained, and would actually be a very easy read for someone interested in learning a little number theory in their spare time.

I would give this book 5 stars were it not for the ridiculous price. Burton gives clear historical context and motivation for the core ideas in elementary number theory. I used this book in an introductory undergraduate course in Number Theory and found it very easy to read with carefully developed Theorems with the necessary proofs. The problems at the end of each chapter are challenging enough to make the student really think about how to prove these ideas, but not so advanced that they are beyond the reach of any undergraduate with a precalculus level of mathematical maturity. This book contains enough material for a semester or even 2 quarters of number theory. We covered chapters one through 8 in our quarter based class. An Introduction to Theory of Numbers by Hardy & Wright would make a great second book, or companion book to this one for a nice well-rounded introduction to Number Theory. Buy this book used if you can. I was able to purchase it for \$55 used on , which is at most what it should be priced "as new", considering Hardy & Wright's book is about 200 more pages, covers more ground, and costs \$55 new.

It's a cute book.. But the problem is it does not offer much in the way of examples. Recognizing patterns is somewhat difficult with this textbook as it mainly shows the skeletal structure of formal proofs without showing applications of the proof...I got the international "illegal in USA" version. It's identical to the hard cover that's 4x the price.

I had to purchase this book for my math course. So far it is easy to follow. The sections are short and concise.

This book is good for those looking for a basic introduction to number theory. Gives good proofs and has good concepts

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