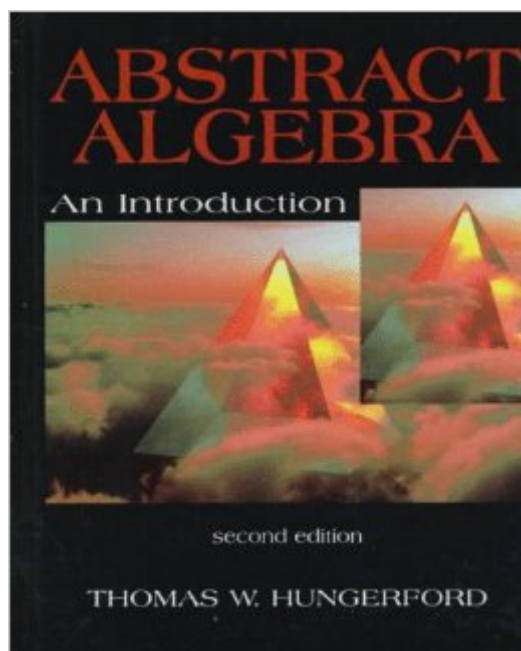


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Abstract Algebra: An Introduction



Synopsis

Great textbook for an introduction to abstract algebra.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This text was my first exposure to the beauty of Algebra and as my first text I must pay respect to Hungerford for his excellent, original and well written book. Hungerford has an uncanny knack for presenting material in a straight-forward and consistent manner as well as providing a rich graded (i.e. they ascend in difficulty) section of exercises that, yes, do depend upon prior results. This dependence does not in any way limit the quality of the book since, such inter-connected-ness shows how certain seemingly un-related aspects are indeed related and, moreover, if you are using this text and have not noticed that this theme is prevalent throughout the book, then you may want to stop and take a closer look. Hungerford begins with the familiar integers, their basic number-theoretic properties and then uses these ideas, suitably abstracted, to introduce operations on and within rings all the while reminding the reader of the similarities. Only after an introduction to rings, their ideals and ring homomorphisms does Hungerford give the reader a glimpse of groups and their basic properties, again reminding the reader along the way how these operations are generalizations of the previous and more familiar operations. Now, the approach of Hungerford in this introductory text is definitely non-traditional since he introduces rings before groups and for some this may be a problem, why I am not sure, but it is pedagogically sound. Remember that in this day and age of American academia that most students have had very little exposure to rigorous mathematics and hence for the sake of most undergraduate students it is important to continually

progress from the more familiar and less abstract (integers) to the less familiar and much more abstract (groups).

I have already had abstract algebra with Gallian and I got an A. Nonetheless, I wanted a different point of view and I heard good things about Hungerford's book from the reviews on . I bought the book and I was not disappointed. I like Gallian but I love Hungerford. Hungerford's proofs are better than Gallian's in my opinion. He develops modular arithmetic completely in terms of sets. The book is elementary but the author does not shy away from defining concepts and proving theorems. Another advantage of Hungerford over Gallian is that Hungerford lets you know when he is going to change his notation. For example, $[5]$ is not really 5, but Hungerford makes this change because so many authors use it. He tells you when he makes this transition. Gallian leaves you hanging in this regard. My review mainly concerns the first part of the book. Hungerford introduces you first to the integers and modular arithmetic. This makes sense because many the ideas presented later in the book draw from these initial topics. He then introduces the concept of a field and gives plenty of examples. The exposition is clear and detailed. Hungerford does not take notorious leaps of faith, which is a welcome change. The problem sets are very workable and informative. I found that even the hardest problems can be solved with time and thought. You should do them because they reinforce the ideas and help you remember the theorems. I like the fact that Hungerford introduces fields first. In doing so, Hungerford allows the reader to quickly get to some of the interesting details about fields without getting bogged down with groups. Note that some of the problems that seem hard become crystal clear when you find out that they follow immediately from previous theorems.

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