

Gian-Carlo Rota

Quotes

*Science, Mathematics, Giving, Two, Ideas, Writing, Littles, Math, Personality,
Statistics, Mean, Lasts, Errors, Men, Progress, Tricks, Civilization, Cutting,
Advice, Order*

God created infinity, and man, unable to understand infinity, had to invent finite sets.

~Gian-Carlo Rota

We often hear that mathematics consists mainly of "proving theorems." Is a writer's job mainly that of "writing sentences?"

~Gian-Carlo Rota

If we have no idea why a statement is true, we can still prove it by induction.

~Gian-Carlo Rota

Nature imitates mathematics.

~Gian-Carlo Rota

The progress of mathematics can be viewed as progress from the infinite to the finite.

~Gian-Carlo Rota

Are mathematical ideas invented or discovered? This question has been repeatedly posed by philosophers through the ages and will probably be with us forever.

~Gian-Carlo Rota

There is something in statistics that makes it very similar to astrology.

~Gian-Carlo Rota

[In mathematics] There are two kinds of mistakes. There are fatal mistakes that destroy a theory, but there are also contingent ones, which are useful in testing the stability of a theory.

~Gian-Carlo Rota

Running overtime is the one unforgivable error a lecturer can make. After fifty minutes (one microcentury as von Neumann used to say)

everybody's attention will turn elsewhere.

~Gian-Carlo Rota

Very little mathematics has direct applications - though fortunately most of it has plenty of indirect ones.

~Gian-Carlo Rota

It is a common public relations gimmick to give the entire credit for the solution of famous problems to the one mathematician who is responsible for the last step.

~Gian-Carlo Rota

The pendulum of mathematics swings back and forth towards abstraction and away from it with a timing that remains to be estimated.

~Gian-Carlo Rota

The advice we give others is the advice that we ourselves need.

~Gian-Carlo Rota

A technique is a trick that works.

~Gian-Carlo Rota

Stan Ulam was lazy, ... He talked too much ... He was self-centered He had an overpowering personality.

~Gian-Carlo Rota

Mathematicians - for what they do - are really poorly rewarded. And it's a very competitive field, almost as bad as being a concert pianist.

~Gian-Carlo Rota

The lack of real contact between mathematics and biology is either a tragedy, a scandal or a challenge, it is hard to decide which.

~Gian-Carlo Rota

How did he do it? He must be a genius!

~Gian-Carlo Rota

Theorems are not to mathematics what successful courses are to a meal.

~Gian-Carlo Rota

Our faith in Mathematics is not likely to wane if we openly acknowledge that the personalities of even the greatest mathematicians may be as flawed as those of anyone else.

~Gian-Carlo Rota

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