

John Edensor Littlewood

Quotes

*Math, Mathematics, Learning, Mean, Years, Teaching, Thinking, Mad, Feelings,
Two, Real, Wish, Writing, Professors, May, Doe, Failure, Book, Creation, Class*

Before creation, God did just pure mathematics. Then He thought it would be a pleasant change to do some applied.

~John Edensor Littlewood

Try a hard problem. You may not solve it, but you will prove something else.

~John Edensor Littlewood

The first test of potential in mathematics is whether you can get anything out of geometry.

~John Edensor Littlewood

The infinitely competent can be uncreative.

~John Edensor Littlewood

The surprising thing about this paper is that a man who could write it would.

~John Edensor Littlewood

A precision professor had the habit of saying: "... quartic polynomial $ax^4+bx^3+cx^2+dx+e$, where e need not be the base of the natural logarithms."

~John Edensor Littlewood

I've been giving this lecture to first-year classes for over twenty-five years. You'd think they would begin to understand it by now.

~John Edensor Littlewood

A linguist would be shocked to learn that if a set is not closed this does not mean that it is open, or again that "E is dense in E" does not mean the same thing as "E is dense in itself".

~John Edensor Littlewood

A good mathematical joke is better, and better mathematics, than a

dozen mediocre papers.

~John Edensor Littlewood

I listen only to Bach, Beethoven or Mozart. Life is too short to waste on other composers.

~John Edensor Littlewood

Mathematics is a dangerous profession; an appreciable proportion of us go mad.

~John Edensor Littlewood

I recall once saying that when I had given the same lecture several times I couldn't help feeling that they really ought to know it by now.

~John Edensor Littlewood

A Miscellany is a collection without a natural ordering relation.

~John Edensor Littlewood

A heavy warning used to be given that pictures are not rigorous; this has never had its bluff called and has permanently frightened its victims into playing for safety.

~John Edensor Littlewood

The referee said it was not acceptable, but the Press considered they could not refuse to publish a book by a professor of the university.

~John Edensor Littlewood

The first lecture of each new year renews for most people a light stage fright.

~John Edensor Littlewood

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