

## Mathematical Quotations

A problem worthy of attack  
Proves its worth by fighting back.

Piet Hein

*by mathematicians*

Tell me something is impossible and I will set about it immediately.

Donald Coxeter

Seek the beginner's mind.

Jennifer Quinn

A science is said to be useful if its development tends to accentuate the existing inequalities in the distribution of wealth, or more directly promotes the destruction of human life.

G. H. Hardy

A habit of basing convictions upon evidence, and of giving to them only that degree of certainty which the evidence warrants, would, if it became general, cure most of the ills from which the world suffers.

Bertrand Russell

It is not knowledge, but the act of learning, not possession but the act of getting there, which grants the greatest enjoyment. When I have clarified and exhausted a subject, then I turn away from it, in order to go into darkness again... I imagine the world conqueror must feel thus, who, after one kingdom is scarcely conquered, stretches out his arms for others.

Karl Friedrich Gauss

The outcome of any serious research can only be to make two questions grow where only one grew before.

Thorstein Veblen

I hope that posterity will judge me kindly, not only as to the things which I have explained, but also to those which I have intentionally omitted so as to leave to others the pleasure of discovery.

René Descartes

There are many questions which fools can ask that wise [people] cannot answer.

George Polyá

If you lived in a zero-dimensional world, you'd be home by now.

Edward Burger and Michael Starbird

*by physicists*

What [people] are poets who can speak of Jupiter if he were like a man, but if he is an immense spinning sphere of methane and ammonia must be silent?

Richard Feynman

We absolutely must leave room for doubt or there is no progress and there is no learning. There's no learning without having to pose a question, and a question requires doubt.

Richard Feynman

It is nothing short of a miracle that modern methods of instruction have not yet entirely strangled the holy curiosity of inquiry.

Albert Einstein

*by novelists*

Ideas should not be allowed to pass without examination.

Salman Rushdie

“When I use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, “it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less.” “The question is,” said Alice, “whether you can make words mean so many different things.” “The question is,” said Humpty Dumpty, “which is to be master – that’s all.”

Lewis Carroll

Skepticism is an excellent watchdog if you know when to take it off its leash.

Rex Stout

There are two kinds of statistics: the kind you look up, and the kind you make up.

Rex Stout

The truth! It is a beautiful and terrible thing, and should therefore be treated with great caution.

J.K. Rowling

Professor Binns had been very old indeed when he had fallen asleep in front of the staff room fire and got up next morning to teach, leaving his body behind him.

J.K. Rowling