

Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>page</i> viii
1 Mathematics and its philosophy	1
1.1 Skipping through the big isms	2
1.2 Charting a course to contemporary topics	8
1.3 Planning for the trip	15
2 The limits of mathematics	21
2.1 The Löwenheim-Skolem Theorem	22
2.2 Gödel's Incompleteness Theorems	27
2.3 Independent questions	30
3 Plato's heaven	36
3.1 A menagerie of realisms	36
3.2 Indispensability arguments	41
3.3 Objections	46
4 Fiction, metaphor, and partial truths	55
4.1 Fictionalism	55
4.2 An easier route to nominalism?	62
4.3 Mathematics as metaphor	68
5 Mathematical explanation	75
5.1 Theories of explanation	76
5.2 Intra-mathematical explanation	77
5.3 Extra-mathematical explanation	90
6 The applicability of mathematics	98
6.1 The unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics	98
6.2 Towards a philosophy of applied mathematics	104
6.3 What's maths got to do with it?	109

7 Who's afraid of inconsistent mathematics?	118
7.1 Introducing inconsistency	118
7.2 Paraconsistent logic	123
7.3 Applying inconsistent mathematics	127
8 A rose by any other name	132
8.1 More than the language of science	133
8.2 Shakespeare's mistake	140
8.3 Mathematical definitions	145
9 Epilogue: desert island theorems	151
9.1 Philosophers' favourites	151
9.1.1 Tarski–Banach Theorem (1924)	152
9.1.2 Löwenheim–Skolem Theorem (1922)	152
9.1.3 Gödel's Incompleteness Theorems (1931)	152
9.1.4 Cantor's Theorem (1891)	153
9.1.5 Independence of continuum hypothesis (1963)	153
9.1.6 Four-Colour Theorem (1976)	153
9.1.7 Fermat's Last Theorem (1995)	153
9.1.8 Bayes's Theorem (1763)	155
9.1.9 Irrationality of $\sqrt{2}$ (c. 500 BCE)	156
9.1.10 Infinitude of the primes (c. 300 BCE)	157
9.2 The under-appreciated classics	157
9.2.1 Borsuk–Ulam Theorem (1933)	157
9.2.2 Riemann Rearrangement Theorem (1854)	158
9.2.3 Gauss's Theorema Egregium (1828)	159
9.2.4 Residue Theorem (1831)	160
9.2.5 Poincaré conjecture (2002)	161
9.2.6 Prime Number Theorem (1849)	162
9.2.7 The Fundamental Theorems of Calculus (c. 1675)	163
9.2.8 Lindemann's Theorem (1882)	164
9.2.9 Fundamental Theorem of Algebra (1816)	164
9.2.10 Fundamental Theorem of Arithmetic (c. 300 BCE)	165
9.3 Some famous open problems	167
9.3.1 Riemann hypothesis	167
9.3.2 The twin prime conjecture	167
9.3.3 Goldbach's conjecture	168

Contents vii

9.3.4 Infinitude of the Mersenne primes	168
9.3.5 Is there an odd perfect number?	168
9.4 Some interesting numbers	169
<i>Bibliography</i>	173
<i>Index</i>	184