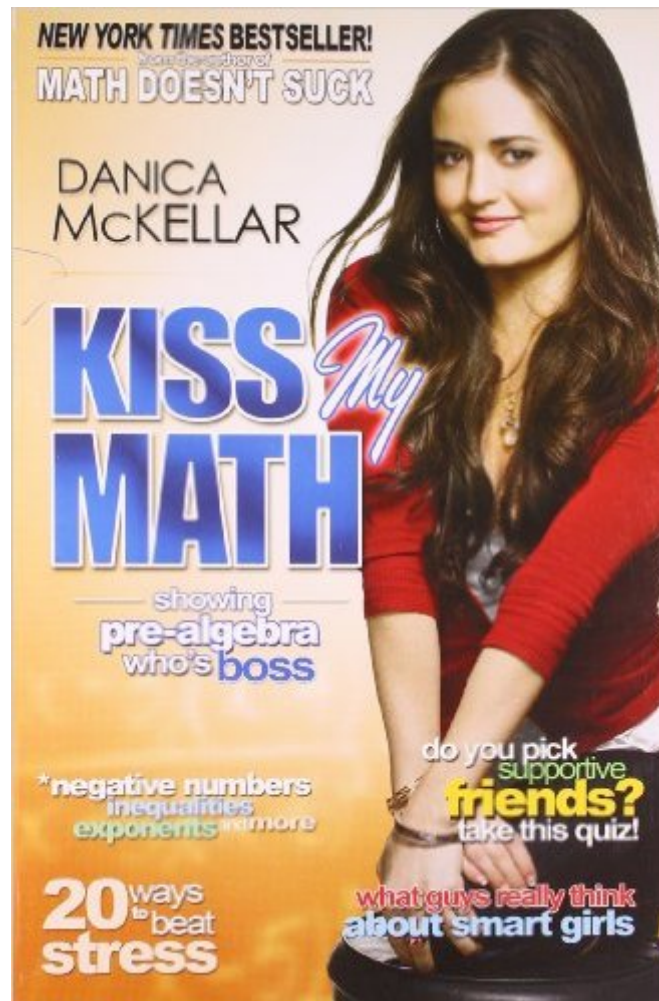


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Kiss My Math: Showing Pre-Algebra Who's Boss



Synopsis

Read Danica McKellar's posts on the Penguin Blog. The New York Times bestseller—from the "Dancing With The Stars" contestant and popular author of *Math Doesn't Suck*, *Hot X: Algebra Exposed*, and *Girls Get Curves*—teaches girls how to kick pre-algebra butt! In her New York Times bestselling books, actress and math genius Danica McKellar shatters the "math nerd" stereotype and gives girls the tools to ace middle-school math in her unique, just-us-girls style. Now, in her second book, *Kiss My Math*, McKellar empowers a new crop of girls—seventh to ninth graders—to tackle the next level of mathematics: pre-algebra. Stepping up not only the math but the sass and style, McKellar helps math-phobic teenagers moving up into high school chill out and finally "get" negative numbers, variables, absolute values, exponents, and more. As she did so effectively in *Math Doesn't Suck*, McKellar uses personality quizzes, reader polls, real-life testimonials, and stories from her own life—in addition to clear instruction, helpful tips, and practice problems—revealing why pre-algebra is easier, more relevant, and more glamorous than girls think. McKellar is clearly reaching her audience: parents, teachers, and especially girls are asking for more.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This funny math book teaches girls that it's OK to be smart, and that they are perfectly capable of kicking a little pre-algebra butt. McKellar takes a lightweight approach to math, but is deadly serious about it. In the prologue, she writes that "lots of people change their majors and abandon their dreams just to avoid a couple of math classes in college." Girls in particular, she emphasizes, often use their fear of math to keep them from learning the skills they'll need to succeed in life, and they

start backing away from the subject in middle school. And it's not just fear. Girls often don't see how they'll use math once they get out of school. Testimonials in *Kiss My Math* fight this. Stephanie Perry, the finance director for *Essence* magazine, explains how she uses algebraic formulas to stay on top of the magazine's financial performance. Jane Davis, financial strategist at Polo Ralph Lauren, was hired as an assistant buyer because of her facility with math. She describes determining inventory over time by finding the mean of a list of numbers. McKellar -- famous for playing Winnie Cooper in the "The Wonder Years" but also a summa cum laude math graduate from UCLA -- uses simple language and lots of illustrations to teach pre-algebra. Each chapter covers a single topic, such as the distributive property or exponents. She clearly explains each topic, and includes problems for the reader to solve (answers are in the back). The author is generous with helpful notes and shortcuts. A lively, breezy writing style makes it seem as if McKellar is sitting next to the reader. She uses examples girls can relate to, like clothes shopping, working on the school play, blind dates, parties, kissing and breath mints. It's like having the perfect math tutor.

Danica McKellar is a beautiful actress who is probably very well off and successful. So why did she go to UCLA to study math after being a very successful child star on the wonder years and then bother to write a book entitled *Math Doesn't Suck*. Well it is because she wanted to prove she was more than just a good looking actress. She had a brain and could handle math. The attitude that math is not for the ladies was a horrible prejudice in my high school years and even in this enlightened age we haven't quite gotten over it and many a capable young lady lacks the confidence and courage to try to do math. Danica is a role model who proves that they can. Her first book was so successful and helped young middle school girls overcome their fears and learn that math is not really hard and can be fun and interesting when it is approached in the right way. So math does not suck! But in addition to convincing young girls and boys that they can learn it she became encouraged to write another book based on the encouraging emails from young ladies who benefitted from the book. Well love of math should not end with middle school and algebra, geometry and calculus are very different from the kind of math you learn in the elementary and middle schools that a good series of lectures in pre-algebra is needed to help those who become discouraged again in high school. It bothers Danica to see a girlfriend of hers give up on medical school just because calculus is required. So in the same interesting style as her first book Danica interests the high schoolers with concepts like negative numbers, mathematical inequalities, exponential functions and much more. By uncovering the mysteries of pre-algebra Danica unlocks the door to advanced levels of mathematics that students in high school need.

I highly recommend this book for high-school girls. It is a guide or a text in elementary algebra. What makes this book stand out is that it uses silly analogies, it explains the algebra well, it boosts the girl's self-esteem, and it is relevant to her life. One of the first things Danika does is that she gives us the order of operations: parentheses, exponentiation and so forth, spelling the acronym PEMDAS. She calls these pandas and shows some pandas doing some math. She even expands PEMDAS into "Pandas eat mustard on dumplings and apples with spice." She makes functions into sausage factories. (for veggie sausages, let's hope). Silly analogies like this have been shown to enhance memory of things. So this would be a good book to use for studying for a test. She explains the math well. Her use of a cutesy daisy for an unknown shows that there is nothing particularly special in alphabet letters. I like her way of dealing with word problems. Sometimes you get an equation with a large number of minus signs; this can be kind of hairy. Her remedy is to multiply everything by -1 . Most textbooks say to clear complex fractions by multiplying by a common denominator, but few have this type of advice. She tells us that word problems involves English grammar as well as mathematics, and lists the mathematical equivalents for such expressions as "is less than" or "three times". The book is not entirely about math. Math for some reason causes stress in people, including high-school girls. So she includes plenty of material on how to relieve stress. She tells girls how to deal with boys in an assertive and positive way. And she has plenty of testimonials from girls who deal with mathematics in some way.

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