

# The Boy Who Loved Math

THE IMPROBABLE LIFE OF PAUL ERDÖS

## A RIF GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

**Themes:** Numbers, Mathematicians, Social Skills

**Book Brief:** Math in the morning, math in the afternoon, math at night—Paul loved math! He thought about it all the time. This true story is about how Paul Erdős made his obsession for math work for his everyday life.

**Author:**

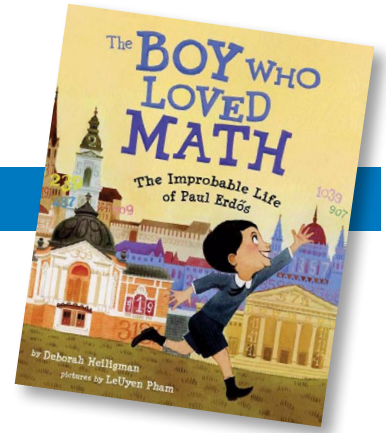
Deborah Heiligman

**Illustrator:**

LeUyen Pham

**Content Connections:**

Math, Social Studies



## TIME TO READ!



### BEFORE WE READ, LET'S LOOK AT...

**The Cover:** What clues does the cover illustration give you about the setting—the time and place of the story? What might “improbable” mean?

**The Pictures:** Flip through the pictures. The illustrator did a lot of research for this book and gives detailed information about the contents of each picture and why. Other than *Fraulein*, all the drawings of people are taken from pictures of actual family and friends.

The buildings and numbers on each page have a purpose. After reading, can the students tell what each picture means?

**Prior Knowledge:** Discuss with the class what the role of a mathematician might include. Do we need mathematicians today? What do they do? Why are they important to our everyday lives?

**Vocabulary:** mathematician, infinity, prime numbers, *Fraulein*

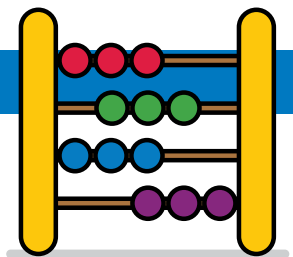
**Purpose for Reading:** As we read, think about what qualities made Paul important as a mathematician and how he was able to make such an impact on the math world.

## WHILE WE READ

### MONITORING COMPREHENSION

- ◆ What does it mean to love someone or something “to infinity”?
- ◆ Are rules important? Why or why not?
- ◆ Why are numbers such a comfort to Paul?

- ◆ How do you fall in love with numbers?
- ◆ How would you describe Paul's life?
- ◆ What makes someone a genius?



## LET'S THINK ABOUT

**Our Purpose:** What did Paul do that enabled him to have such an impact on the math world?

**Extending Our Thinking:** Paul Erdős was a mathematical genius. Are there other kinds of genius? Can a person be a genius if they're not very good at math or history or other academic subjects? Ask students for examples of different kinds of genius. Do you need to be a genius to change the world? How can an ordinary person make the world a better place?

### NOTE TO EDUCATORS

- ◆ Extension Activities for Educators also available.
- ◆ Vocabulary Scaffolding Sheet also available.



Reading Is  
Fundamental