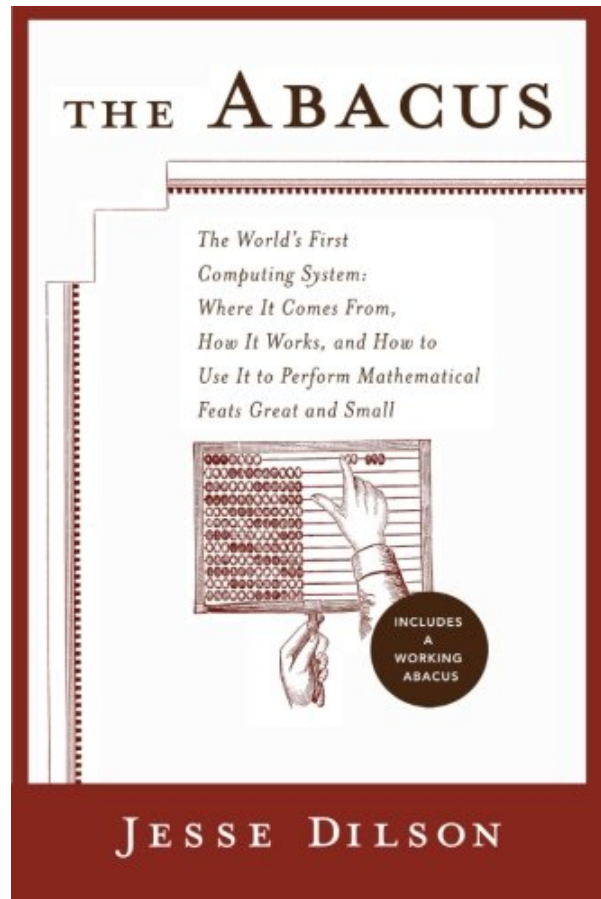


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THE ABACUS

*The World's First
Computing System:
Where It Comes From,
How It Works, and How to
Use It to Perform Mathematical
Feats Great and Small*



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About the Author

Jesse Dilson's classic text, *The Abacus*, was initially published nearly forty years ago.

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The abacus is as useful and efficient a machine today as it was when it was first created centuries ago. Whether you're an expert in the latest computer technology or you're mastering arithmetic and word problems for the first time, it won't take long to learn the basics (and even the not-so-basics) of adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing on this ingenious and fun-to-use mathematical tool.

- Sales Rank: #480775 in Books
- Brand: St. Martin's Press
- Published on: 1995-03-15
- Released on: 2007-09-04
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.98" h x .67" w x 4.49" l, .50 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 143 pages

Features

- Great product!

About the Author

Jesse Dilson's classic text, *The Abacus*, was initially published nearly forty years ago.

Most helpful customer reviews

22 of 25 people found the following review helpful.

Delightful--entertaining and informative

By Craig Kenneth Bryant

I spent years mildly curious about the abacus--particularly, any time I saw film of schoolkids or shopkeepers in Asia producing inerrant sums and differences with their fingers all a blur. Then, I saw this book, bundled with a little wooden abacus, and decided I'd give this ancient calculator a try.

I found the book an delight, with its friendly discussions of the history of the abacus, its variant forms from land to land (Chinese vs. Japanese, etc.), and, even its jolly little excursion into binary arithmetic on the abacus. Yes, I suppose it is a short book, and it doesn't spend a lot of pages on mathematical drill, but how many pages do you need? It's not like there's a complicated operating system or scripting language for this venerable tool...just the curious yet undeniable pleasure of sliding beads along sticks, just as people have been doing for centuries...

I should also mention that the abacus makes a great conversation piece, sitting out on the top of your Pentium tower at work. "My new palmtop," I tell everyone who asks.

44 of 52 people found the following review helpful.

Way too simple and short

By Vincent S. Yeung

If you thought you can buy this book and do arithmetic on the abacus, I'm sorry, but you're wrong. First, this book is **WAY TOO SHORT** to describe much. It's less than 1/2 inch thick and the size of each page is slightly bigger than that of a regular dictionary. Second, much of the sections don't relate to the abacus at all! There's one long chapter that talks about the binary system in computers and how you can use the abacus' top part to do binary arithmetic, which is basically pointless. Another chapter is a story about how a westerner gets amazed by the abacus, which is also useless. Out of the 140 pages, only about 70 pages teach you how to use the abacus. Also, although I haven't confirmed it yet, I am not sure if the way the author describes to do multiplication and division is the correct way to use it. I'll have to check. His way makes it the same as doing everything out on paper.

But still, look at what he teaches you: adding subtraction in detail, and some multiplication and division with doubted validity. He also takes like a bunch of pages describing adding and subtracting decimals. But that's unnecessary because it's the exact same thing with minor differences that he could have stated in a page and replaced with more information, like exponentiation.

The included abacus has height about that of 1 floppy disk and width of that of 1 and 1/4 floppies. It might even be smaller. Plus, it's hard to move and isn't colored (just wood and plastic).

In sum, this book is a total ripoff if you had wanted to do some cool stuff on the abacus. On the other hand, if you just wanted the book for casual purposes, maybe it's worth it. But the author's tone treats you like a moron that can't do arithmetic (he explains things like carrying and borrowing like you're in kindergarten and treats his multiplication and division methods, which are exact replicas from our normal paper ways, like the hardest things in the world)

78 of 80 people found the following review helpful.

poor and dated

By Fred K. Johnson

This book has some nice anecdotal information on the abacus. The one that comes with it is actually fairly nice. It is a Chinese 2/5 with 9 columns. This is not really enough for multiplication and division problems. Still it isn't a bad one. The algorithms for using it in the book are wrong. For instance you properly add and subtract going from left to right. You should actually do it this way on paper. Try it, it's easier than right to left. Yes they work but are not how to use it properly. If you want to really learn how to use it get Takashi Kojima's book, "Japanese Abacus: Its Use and Theory". This book will really teach you how and includes the standard tests for third and first degree certification. Understand that most modern use of the abacus is based on the 1/4 Japanese Soroban. You will never use both 5 count beads on the top, just one. And on the bottom you will use 4 of the 5 beads. You might get confused learning proper use with a Chinese Suan Pan(abacus). Still they are nice and some have larger beads easier to work than those on a Japanese Soroban. I use an abacus for teaching my first grade twins math. They are great for kids learning how to carry etc. When I was in highschool calculators were new and expensive. I used a Soroban with my slide rule. with some practice you can actually do some remarkable things with one even in the day of cheap calculators. For an alternative place for getting an abacus check out Tomoe Soroban on the internet.

See all 20 customer reviews...

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