

Challenging Brainteasers

by Bernardo Recamán Santos, published by Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1997

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This book is a compilation of mathematical games and puzzles which the author has either created or collected over the years. He divides the problems into four categories: Arithmetical Puzzles, Geometrical Puzzles, Logical Puzzles, and Algebraic Puzzles. The puzzles range from simple algebraic word problems to some relatively difficult combinatorial problems.

Each section has 14 or 15 questions. Many of the problems are probably familiar to readers of such articles. In the foreword, the author explains that most of the problems are ones that he has collected, and only a few are original. The solutions provided for the problems range from simple answers to more complete discussions of the problem. In some cases, the author suggests variations on the problem, or the problems introduce unusual mathematical terms such as "exotic numbers". The book is probably suitable as a resource for high school or senior elementary school teachers. Teachers can use the problems in their classroom as enrichment, or as a catalyst to start discussing other mathematical concepts.

Although educators can always find a place on their bookshelf for this type of compilation, *Challenging Brainteasers* is not an extraordinary collection of problems and solutions. The solutions section could have been expanded significantly. Ideally it would include more problem-solving techniques, more variations for the problems, and more complete solutions rather than just answers. As a set of classic math problems this book is adequate, but if you are looking for more you will not find it here.