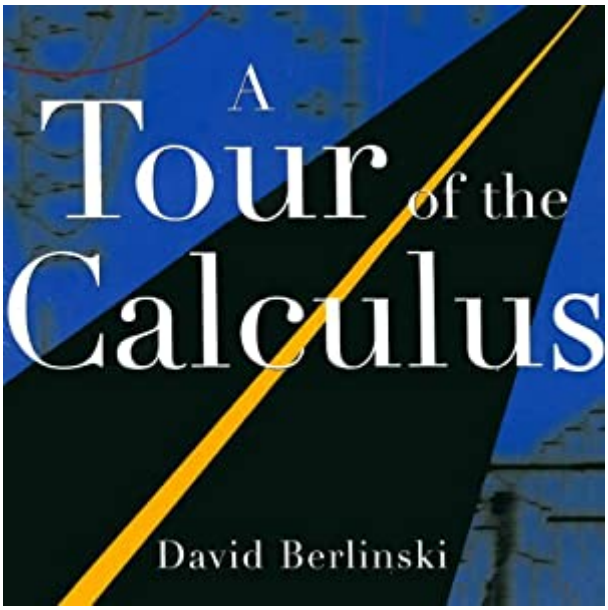
# A Tour Of The Calculus



## Synopsis

Were it not for the calculus, mathematicians would have no way to describe the acceleration of a motorcycle or the effect of gravity on thrown balls and distant planets, or to prove that a man could cross a room and eventually touch the opposite wall. Just how calculus makes these things possible and in doing so finds a correspondence between real numbers and the real world is the subject of this dazzling book by a writer of extraordinary clarity and stylistic brio. Even as he initiates us into the mysteries of real numbers, functions, and limits, Berlinski explores the furthest implications of his subject, revealing how the calculus reconciles the precision of numbers with the fluidity of the changing universe.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

My friend Alexander recommended this book to me in passing one day, so I ordered it and promptly forgot about it. The package arrived and sat on my desk for a week before I had time to open it. I started reading. And reading. And reading. It’s hard to believe that a math book can be a page turner, but David Berlinski has accomplished that feat.This won’t make you an expert in calculus. It’s a tour, as the title says, not an in-depth course. However, Berlinski does a wonderful job of making the material continuously engaging by interweaving history, practical application, and theory. He starts with an excellent ground rule: prove no theorems. You must take everything he says on faith (but you can switch to a calculus textbook any time if your faith wavers ;). That brush-clearing maneuver gets the reader out of the mess of mathematical rigor, revealing the beauty of calculus.Although I studied calculus years ago, this was a great reminder of the fundamentals. I also

learned a great deal about the people behind The Calculus -- Newton, Leibnitz, et al -- that I never knew before. A great gift book for your intelligentsia friends.

Mr. Berlinski book has made me see, through a powerful pedagogical lens, that most mathematics books, Calculus in particular, are a distilled and purified product of a brew made from the blood, sweat and tears of many mathematicians across the centuries. The next time I pick up a textbook and read "it easily follows" or " it is clearly evident", I'll know for sure that those words are, at least, presumptuous.

I have given this book to students who have just completed their first semester of Calculus as reading to keep them fresh for their second semester. Without fail, they have reported it as a positive influence in helping them throughout that tough course. I have also given it to all of my Liberal Arts friends to encourage their appreciation of the Calculus as our culutral heritage. So far, all have been delighted that they could, at the least, follow the discussion. This is due, I believe, to the wonderful way in which Dr. Berlinski writes.

A beautiful explanation of calculus, from the beginning, the very beginning. The language is lovely and the explanation is done in a manner understandable to less mathematically inclined but still interesting to those who have achieved the higher levels of math. Couching his tale in the history of the topic, the author interlaces interesting experiences, observances and anecdotes drawn from his experiences as a university professor. The book is a good one for any level of mathematical ability. Very readable.

We read this to supplement a college math course. It is very interesting, and if you can get over the high-flown voice of the author, very informative. I would recommend this for anyone in advanced calculus or real analysis.

This is a great book but hard to read if you're not a math person. It sounded interesting but I needed Calculus for dummies to be able to read the book. With a few simple concepts under my belt, the book was fabulous

This is an excellent read. The book covers the fundamental principals of The Calculus in a historical context. The writing is excellent and the subject is well covered. This is not a textbook, and should

be accessible to most readers.

If there were an editor, I'd say fire her/him. Not only is the prose sophomoric beyond description (read some other reviews on this web site), but also the content is sometimes shakey or even just wrong. (Look at the graphs on page 86, and then go look up the sines and cosines for 90 degrees. How'd that not get caught?)Do yourself a favor, buy some other book on calculus, a real math book perhaps. This is not a math book.