

# HUNTING FOR TREASURE: ONLINE RESOURCES FOR INJECTING HISTORY INTO THE MATHEMATICS CLASSROOM

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Want a way to make your mathematics lessons come alive? Use history! There are many good sources of information on the history of mathematics in electronic format.

This scavenger hunt will introduce you to many different types of sources and the material available each source.

## DIRECTIONS:

In this assignment, you will visit many different web sites with information pertinent to the history of mathematics. As you move to each site, you should

- Familiarize yourself with the types of information at the site
- Explore prompts called “From this site.” (They should help with the scavenger hunt).
- Look for the information about your “cool mathematician” at the site (if information is requested).

After you’ve looked at each site, take the multiple-choice quiz below.

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## Lesson plans, worksheets, etc. for your classroom:

Go to the site <http://mathisgoodforyou.com/>

This website “is dedicated to the students of mathematics between the ages of 11 and 18 and to teachers who would like to have some ready-to-use and downloadable resources in the history of mathematics.”

FROM THIS SITE — **Check out the worksheets, especially the one on big numbers.**

COOL MATHEMATICIAN — **Click on the “Mathematicians” link to find a mathematician who seems cool to you. Why is he or she cool?**

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## Convergence:

Go to the site <http://mathdl.maa.org/mathDL/46/>

This website is maintained by the Mathematical Association of America, and contains quotations, articles, and classroom modules on the history of mathematics.

FROM THIS SITE — **Check out the link to quotations.**

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## General History Sites:

Go to the site <http://www-gap.dcs.st-and.ac.uk/~history/>.

This website contains short biographies of LOTS of mathematicians and the contributions of many cultures.

FROM THIS SITE — **Check out the “famous curves” link, especially anything that makes you think of Halloween.**

COOL MATHEMATICIAN — **From the list of biographies, find some more interesting facts about your “cool mathematician”, including dates lived (exact or estimates), place(s) of residence, and type of math s(he) worked on or their basic contribution.**

Go to the site: <http://www.dcs.warwick.ac.uk/bshm/resources.html>

The British Society for the History of Mathematics maintains a page created by June Barrow-Green that gives an organized set of internet links to sites on the history of mathematics. A great starting point for finding mathematics history information on the internet.

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## Women in Mathematics:

Go to the site: <http://www.agnesscott.edu/lriddle/women/women.htm>

This site contains biographies for women mathematicians through history.

FROM THIS SITE — **Check out the biographies of women**  
COOL MATHEMATICIAN — **If your “cool mathematician” is female, find out more about her.**

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## Euclid:

Go to the site: <http://aleph0.clarku.edu/~djoyce/java/elements/toc.html> contains the full text of Euclid's *Elements* with interactive capabilities.

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## Stamps:

Go to the site: <http://jeff560.tripod.com/stamps.html>

This site reproduces pictures of postage stamps that feature famous mathematicians.

FROM THIS SITE — **Check out the stamps for Leonard Euler.**  
COOL MATHEMATICIAN — **Try to find a stamp of your cool mathematician.**

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## Symbols:

Go to the site: <http://jeff560.tripod.com/mathsym.html>

This site has references to the earliest known uses of mathematical symbols.

FROM THIS SITE — **Check out the earliest known use the of equals symbol (=).**

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# HISTORY OF MATHEMATICS ON THE WEB

## SCAVENGER HUNT QUIZ

1. What is the “Witch of Agnesi”?  
A. A cubic curve    B. A conic that looks like a witches’ hat    C. An unsolvable problem  
D. A type of parabola
2. On the stamp that was issued by Switzerland on the 300th anniversary of the birth of Leonard Euler, Apr. 15, 2007, the formula is “ $e - k + f = ?$ ”  
A. 1    B. 0    C. -1    D. 2
3. The earliest known use of the equals symbol (=) is by Robert Recorde in what year?  
A. 1409    B. 1452    C. 1508    D. 1557
4. What is the name of the number  $10^{10^{10}}$  and who named it?  
A. “decimus” named by Gauss  
B. “googolplex” named by Edward Kasner  
C. “googol” named by Milton Sirotta  
D. “centomo” named by Archimedes
5. Who said, “I advise my students to listen carefully the moment they decide to take no more mathematics courses. They might be able to hear the sound of closing doors”?  
A. George Polya  
B. James Cabellero  
C. Paul Halmos  
D. Charles Darwin
6. Whose bedroom was papered with calculus notes?  
A. Mary Cartwright  
B. Sophie Germain  
C. Sofia Kowaleskaya  
D. Hypatia