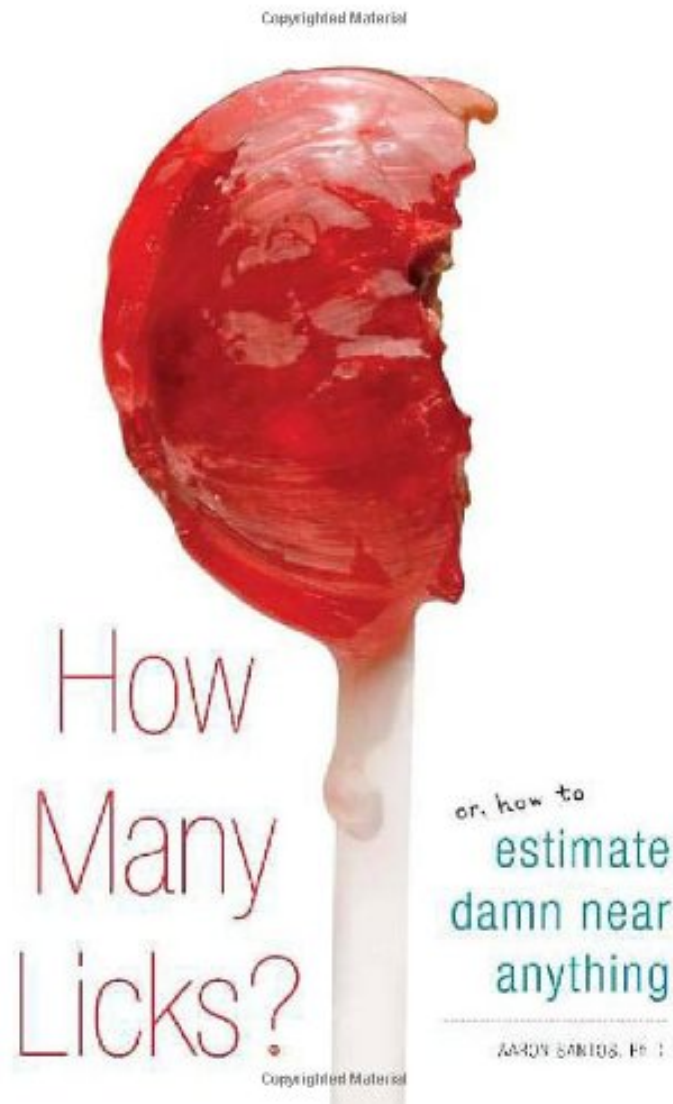


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How Many Licks?: Or, How to Estimate Damn Near Anything

Aaron Santos

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Aaron Santos : How Many Licks?: Or, How to Estimate Damn Near Anything before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised How Many Licks?: Or, How to Estimate Damn Near Anything:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A funny and light-hearted quick read By Edina After having been exposed to Fermi problems earlier this year and loving them, I ordered this book because I couldnt get enough. For those unfamiliar with Fermi problems, they start with a question that seems impossible to answer and use a series of guesstimates to arrive at a somewhat reasonable solution. As I read the book, I found myself somewhat let down. I had

hoped to get better at estimating when I don't know much at all about the initial question but for nearly anything that wasn't common knowledge, the answer was simply provided with a quick Google search or in the back of the book. I already knew how to do basic math and how to Google. Despite this, the author did provide amusing scenarios to preface each question and the questions themselves were either interesting or downright hilarious. And learned a lot of fun facts along the way that I can add to my collection such as that I could lose 10 pounds immediately by running at Mach 6 (six times the speed of light) or that more silicon is used each year for computer chips than for breast implants. I also enjoyed the format the problems were presented in, as it's a good problem solving method in general. Overall, it was a light read and I got some good chuckles and fun facts out of it along the way but I don't feel as though I got better at solving problems than I was before reading it. Perhaps it's more well suited for someone who has had no exposure to Fermi problems.

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. How to: Take a guess, or use common sense! By Ahmed J. Aldoseri I'm not sure what I was expecting when I ordered this book, but I must admit that the clincher (for me, anyway) was the set of example questions listed on the product description - you have to admit, they were funny and intriguing. Having read the book, I don't think I'm much better at "estimating damn near anything". In the first chapter, the book gives you some advice on how to start addressing a question - any question of approximation - and the rest of the book provides many exercises. The gist of advice on approximating anything is: take a guess! How many dirt bike racers are in New York? Well, round up the total population of New York, apply exponential notation, decide on a reasonable maximum and minimum possible number of racers, etc. Of course, there are some questions within the book that require knowledge of specific values, such as the elasticity of rubber, the pull of gravity, and the distance between the Earth and the Moon. For these questions you'll find the values at the back of the book. For other such values in real life just hope you paid attention in school. There is no secret art in guesstimating anything - either take an educated guess or use some degree of common sense. I was hoping for something new to take away from this book, but found very little. The sample problems presented in the book are great, though, and it has a very good format.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Pam Nielsen he loved it

How many licks to the center of a Tootsie Pop? How many people are having sex at this moment? How long would it take a monkey on a typewriter to produce the plays of Shakespeare? For all those questions that keep you up at night, here's the way to answer them. And the beauty of it is that it's all approximate! Using Enrico Fermi's theory of approximation, Santos brings the world of numbers into perspective. For puzzle junkies and trivia fanatics, these 70 word puzzles will show the reader how to take a bit of information, add what they already know, and extrapolate an answer. Santos has done the impossible: make math and the multiple possibilities of numbers fun and informative. Can you really cry a river? Is it possible to dig your way out of jail with just a teaspoon and before your life sentence is up? Taking an academic subject and using it as the prism to view everyday off-the-wall questions as math problems to be solved is a natural step for the lovers of sudoku, cryptograms, word puzzles, and other thought-provoking games.

Danica McKellar, actress and author of *Math Doesn't Suck* and *Kiss My Math* Never before have I seen a book that could so effectively prepare a person to create their own depository of party trivia while brushing up on math skills. Nice! American Profile, October 4, 2009