



2009

Blockhead: The Life of Fibonacci

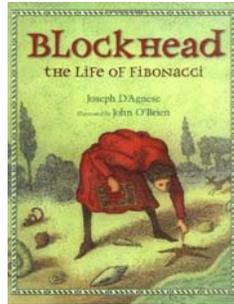
Tessa McMillan

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McMillan, Tessa (2009) "Blockhead: The Life of Fibonacci," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 30 : Iss. 5 , Article 4.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol30/iss5/4>

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D'Agnese, Joseph. *Blockhead: The Life of Fibonacci*. Illustrated by John O'Brien. Henry Holt, 2010. ISBN 9780805063059. \$16.99. 40 p.

Reviewer: Tessa McMillan

Reading Level: Preschool, Primary

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Historical fiction; Picture books;

Subject: Fibonacci, Leonardo, ca. 1170-ca. 1240--Juvenile fiction; Fibonacci numbers--Juvenile fiction; Mathematicians--Italy--Biography--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Leonardo Fibonacci loves numbers in a way other people don't understand. While contemplating numbers and problems, those around him make fun of him by calling him a "blockhead." His father, Bonaccio, is outraged and decides to take Fibonacci away from Pisa to become a merchant. Fibonacci friend, Alfredo, advises him to learn as much about numbers as he can during his travels. As he grows up, he learns of the different uses of numbers and math in foreign countries. While with Alfredo, Fibonacci creates a mathematical problem dealing with rabbits. From that problem, Fibonacci discovers a special set of numbers that are naturally found in the environment: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, etc. After his travels, Fibonacci returns to Pisa, but he is again ridiculed by his countrymen. The ghost of his friend Alfredo reminds him that he is the first person to discover nature's special numbers. Then Fibonacci creates a special box diagram to showcase his sequence of numbers called the Fibonacci sequence.

D'Agnese acknowledges that there isn't much information on Fibonacci life. It is known that he had a nickname close to the word and meaning of "blockhead," but most of the book is fiction. The end materials include activities on discovering and solving problems with the Fibonacci sequence and using the book's illustrations to solve problems as well.

Volume 30, no.5 (May/June 2010)