

THINKING ABOUT THINKING ABOUT THE MU PUZZLE

MATH 105-6: FRESHMAN SEMINAR: THEORIES OF MIND AND MATHEMATICS
PROF. THEO JOHNSON-FREYD, NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY, SPRING 2014

INNER MESSAGE

Write a first-person expository essay about your thought processes when writing your essay about the MU puzzle. To what extent were you thinking “mathematically” when reflecting on the MU puzzle? How is doing mathematics similar to or different from thinking about mathematics? How is thinking about mathematics similar to or different from thinking about art or science? How is thinking about mathematics similar to or different from thinking about thinking about mathematics? When thinking about thinking, are there clearly defined “levels,” or do “thinking” and “thinking about thinking” and “thinking about thinking about thinking” and so on get blurred together? For example, how are the techniques needed to write an essay about your thought processes when solving the MU puzzle similar to or different from the techniques needed to write this essay?

Of course, don’t try to answer all of these questions. Rather, choose a particular point you would like to make, and support it with your personal experiences. Write your essay so that it both participates in the conversation in this class, but also is readable by and interesting to someone who has not participated in the class so far. In particular, don’t assume that your reader knows what the “MU puzzle” is or what the “Thinking about the MU puzzle” assignment was.

OUTER MESSAGE

Your essay should be carefully proofread and in standard academic English. In addition to the main topic of your essay (thinking about thinking), you should communicate that you have understood and incorporated the feedback you received on your first essay for this class.

FRAME MESSAGE

Your essay should be two to three pages, double spaced, written in a normal typeface (like this one, which is called “Computer Modern,” or the ever-popular Times and Times New), in a normal size (11pt or 12pt), with normal margins (between 1in and 1.5in). It should be submitted in PDF form by email to theo.jf@math.northwestern.edu.

Your essay is due by 9am on Tuesday, April 15.