

THINKING ABOUT MATHEMATICS

MATH 105-6: FRESHMAN SEMINAR: THEORIES OF MIND AND MATHEMATICS
PROF. THEO JOHNSON-FREYD, NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY, FALL 2015

INNER MESSAGE

Develop one idea from your first essay, or from our readings or in-class discussions, into a short academic essay about the nature of mathematical thinking. Your essay should present a main message or argument (“thesis”), supported with evidence drawn from both your own lived experience and from at least one of our readings so far (Hofstadter, Thurston, Penrose).

OUTER MESSAGE

Your essay should be addressed towards an “educated lay audience” — for example, a Northwestern undergraduate who is interested in the ideas of this course but is not enrolled. It should communicate mastery of the conventions of academic writing: it should be carefully proofread; it should be precise and to the point, without trying to trump up a weak argument with highfalutin or “purple” prose; it should have a clear structure, with an informative title and internal sign-posting; it should include a bibliography in which full citations are provided for cited material.

FRAME MESSAGE

Your essay should be two to three pages, double spaced, written in a normal typeface and 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 Thursday, October 8.