

**Zeitschrift:** L'Enseignement Mathématique  
**Herausgeber:** Commission Internationale de l'Enseignement Mathématique  
**Band:** 36 (1990)  
**Heft:** 1-2: L'ENSEIGNEMENT MATHÉMATIQUE

**Artikel:** THE ROLE OF GAMES AND PUZZLES IN THE POPULARIZATION OF MATHEMATICS

**Autor:** de Guzmán, Miguel

**Kurzfassung**

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-57913>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

**Download PDF:** 09.03.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

## THE ROLE OF GAMES AND PUZZLES IN THE POPULARIZATION OF MATHEMATICS

by Miguel de GUZMÁN

SUMMARY. The main features of popularization of mathematics are described first. Then a brief analysis of the relations between games and mathematics is presented. In the third place the uses of mathematical puzzles and games for the popularization of mathematics are indicated and finally attention is directed towards some objections to the use of mathematical games.

### THE POPULARIZATION OF MATHEMATICS

In September 1989 the ICMI (International Commission on Mathematical Instruction) held an international meeting in Leeds (England) on the subject *The Popularization of Mathematics*. Almost one hundred participants from twenty different countries, including mathematicians, scientific journalists and writers of mathematics for a broad public gathered during a week in order to discuss the main features and problems of this activity called *the popularization of mathematics*. The main documents for study that arose for and from this meeting have been published by the ICMI [7] and by Cambridge University Press [4]. I shall borrow freely some of the very interesting ideas from these documents, above all from the introductory paper by Howson and Kahane, in order to better frame my own thinking about the role of games in this task of popularizing mathematics.

*What is popularization?*

Popularization is:

*sharing mathematics, its beauty and its power, with a wider public, in some cases trying to demolish the prejudices and the traditional barriers between the two cultures, much sturdier around mathematics than around any other science;*