Reading Worksheet for Sections 2.3 and 2.4

History of Mathematics

Section 2.3

1. Find a vocabulary word with which you were unfamiliar in the text, and give its definition.

2. Explain what is meant by "false position".

3. Describe the evidence for the proposition that the formula for the sum of a geometric series was known to the Egyptians at the time of the Rhind papyrus.

4. According to our author, what motivated mathematical work in Egypt (at least based on extant manuscripts), and to what door does he lay the blame?

Section 2.4

1. Your vocabulary word for this section is "pyramidiot". Define it.

2. What are some of the "wilder" ideas about the pyramids that may be part of the foundations of the new science of pyramidiotology?

3. Summarize the history of the study of the circle (e.g. π) as presented here in section 2.4.