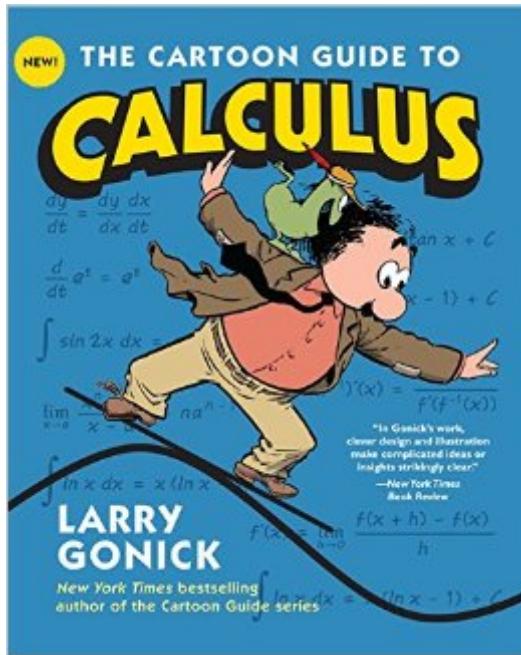


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# The Cartoon Guide To Calculus (Cartoon Guide Series)



## Synopsis

In Gonick's work, clever design and illustration make complicated ideas or insights strikingly clear. "New York Times Book Review" Larry Gonick, master cartoonist, former Harvard instructor, and creator of the New York Times bestselling, Harvey Award-winning Cartoon Guide series now does for calculus what he previously did for science and history: making a complex subject comprehensible, fascinating, and fun through witty text and light-hearted graphics. Gonick's The Cartoon Guide to Calculus is a refreshingly humorous, remarkably thorough guide to general calculus that, like his earlier Cartoon Guide to Physics and Cartoon History of the Modern World, will prove a boon to students, educators, and eager learners everywhere.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I was eagerly awaiting Larry Gonick's book on Calculus for some time, and now that it's finally here and I have a copy, I'm mostly pleased with it...BUT...I now understand why just having cartoons in a book does not necessarily make the book easier to understand -- it only provides a kind of amusing distraction. The main problem with Gonick's book is that there are too many places where the "explanations" are really no better than what you'd get in a stodgy establishment book, such as the section on "lemmas" and all that. For a true beginner -- or even someone with some experience in calculus -- it's still an alien mire of jargon and symbols. And what's worse is all the little self-serving cartoons where, after all the symbol-muck has been dumped on the page, the little Gonick-character keeps singing some little variant on "QED". Now, never mind that Gonick doesn't even explain what

his character is chanting, and not only does he not explain what "QED" means, but he uses it for instances where he may have "demonstratumed" it to the satisfaction of the math-droid race of Alpha Centauri or something, but he certainly hasn't "demonstratumed" it for real human beings -- presumably the ones he would most want to buy his book! So, which is it? Did Gonick write this book for newcomers to the subject, or did he write it for the cloistered clique of math priesthood? Because of course THEY're going to love it -- they ALREADY understand everything in it, and are getting a kick out of all the cliquey little cartoon references. But the rest of us? The "unwashed masses"? In too many places in this book, we've been left out in the cold.

Gonick has done it again. This book is very good at explaining the basic concepts of calculus in a lighthearted manner. One drawback is that this book has very few problems for the reader to work on or test themselves on their understanding of the material. One of the traps of mathematics is that it is easy to read something and think that you understand it. But when you go to workout a problem you may find out that you really didn't understand it after all. So it is important to work out problems to test your understanding. This book is a good supplement to calculus textbooks with problems to be worked out.

The reader must be very familiar with the Calculus to get much out of this book...if you are not familiar with the Calculus, this is nothing more than a silly cartoon book. Very disappointed in that I was expecting Gonick to take an often complicated process and simplify it for ease of understanding. This book is good for teachers of the Calculus but not for someone new to the maths and wants to learn something.

Larry Gonick's new book on "The" calculus takes a traditionally fearsome subject and renders it friendly, which is no mean feat. This book will get you through the introductory topics (polynomials, limits, functions, etc.) needed to acquire a basic fluency with the methods of differentiation and integration, which together form the foundation of calculus. I also appreciated the guidance on applications in statistics, as well as some idea of what to expect in more advanced topics. I would disagree with the previous reviewer on there not being any problems; they are given in later chapters. In fact, I found an omission in one: Chapter 8, Problem 3, part 2, dealing with methods of approximating the definite integral: "What do you get when you split the difference? [i.e. problems, 1, 2] Find:  $1/2 (E_{\text{high}} - E_{\text{low}})$  [graphically]. Do you see how this is the area of the light gray trapezoids?" My answer is "No". However, if the equation were  $(E_{\text{low}} + 1/2 (E_{\text{high}} - E_{\text{low}}))$ , my

answer would be "Yes". I think the first term was accidentally omitted. But, see? That just goes to show that when you're supported by such a friendly book, you can actually have fun being curious, rather than intimidated. I was a little put off by the flatulent functions (cartoon characters) of the earlier chapters. Kind of gross (but imaginative).

This book contains fairly good explanations of many of the basic principles of Calculus. Admittedly, this is a difficult subject, but it seems to me that this book occasionally lacks depth and emphasizes humor over substance. I do not recommend it as your sole Calculus book, but it might be a good supplement to a textbook for some people. If you are struggling with first semester Calculus, it would be worth a few dollars to buy a used one.

Where were these books when I was a kid? These books are fun to read and easy to understand, Thanks Larry! I assure you, we are not related... I am an instructor and really appreciate good, well written instructional material.

Gonick is a solid master of making the complex simple and going deeper into the fundamental meanings behind equations. He gets into why equations work at a level that my text books never even pretended to be able to do. The cartoons are great for visual learner at illustrating the abstract and creating an understanding of what you are looking at when you look at a graph in calculus. Read this before you take calculus, or teach calculus. FYI, I am a chemical engineer and I keep it around now just for fun.

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