

# THAT'S MATHEMATICS

**words and music by Tom Lehrer**

Counting sheep --- when you're trying to sleep,

Being fair --- when there's something to share,

Being neat --- when you're folding a sheet,

That's mathematics!

When a ball --- bounces off of a wall,

When you cook --- from a recipe book,

When you know --- how much money you owe,

That's mathematics!

How much gold

Can you hold

In an elephant's ear?

When it's noon

On the moon,

Then what time is it here?

If you could count for a year,

Would you get to infinity

Or somewhere in that vicinity?

When you choose --- how much postage to use,

When you know --- what's the chance it will snow,

When you bet --- and you end up in debt,

Oh, try as you may,

You just can't get away

From mathematics!

Tap your feet --- keeping time to the beat

Of a song --- while you're singing along,

Harmonize --- with the rest of the guys,

Yes, try as you may,

You just can't get away

From mathematics!

Optional verse, to be inserted before "Tap your feet....."

Andrew Wiles  
Gently smiles,  
Does his thing, and voilà!  
Q.E.D.,  
We agree,  
And we all shout "hurrah!"  
As he confirms what Fermat  
Jotted down in that margin  
(Which could have used some enlargin').

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:**

This song was originally written to and intended to be sung to the tune of "That's Entertainment" (lyrics by Howard Dietz, music by Arthur Schwartz, from the movie *The Bandwagon*). It was written in 1985 as a potential theme song for a Children's Television Workshop series, which was eventually called "Square One TV". In 1993 it was used as part of a celebration, presented by the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute of Berkeley, California, in honor of Andrew Wiles's proof of Fermat's Last Theorem. The optional verse about Wiles was added for that occasion. However, the owners of the copyright to "That's Entertainment" refused to allow the music to be used, so I wrote an original tune. My words may of course be sung to the tune of "That's Entertainment".