

Re: obtaining notes on classic textbooks

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Wayne Brown wrote:

matthias@xxxxxxxxxxxxx wrote:

Dani wrote:

For me, the solutions are used to check my own solutions.

Suppose that you write a proof for some problem, and then you open the solutions manual and find a completely different proof. How does that help you tell whether your proof is correct?

Just speaking from my own experience: Sometimes there will be enough similarities at least to show me whether I've been working in the right direction. Or, perhaps I'll spend some time working out **why** the book solution's approach was different from mine, and if perhaps in similar situations in the future I should use the book's approach instead. At the very least it may show me an alternate approach that might help with other proofs.

But perhaps the most valuable thing to me is that it can keep me from getting permanently **stuck**. I'm the sort of person who has a very hard time making myself move on to question 5 if I haven't finished question 4 yet. I may spend hours -- or days -- trying to get past a particular problem without success. At such times it's really nice to be able to look at least a part of a solution and get some hints about how to proceed. That doesn't help me learn much if I do it every time I'm not sure about something, but after spending a **lot** of time wrestling with something it's nice to be able to look up a correct solution,

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figure out where I went wrong, and move on to something else. At least it avoids the situation of getting part way through a book, only to get irrevocably stuck, and end up putting the book away for a few days, or weeks, before coming back to it -- or possibly never finishing it at all.

A strong suggestion: Get over this do-it-in-orderness. Almost always, if you just move on, your brain keeps working in the background on the question you couldn't get. Then comes the aha moment as you brush your teeth.

Besides, you can always ask for hints here on sci.math. As long as you assure people it is self-study and show what you've tried, people in the know are often very generous here. How did we ever survive before the Internet?

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