by H. Farid (www.cs.dartmouth.edu/~farid)

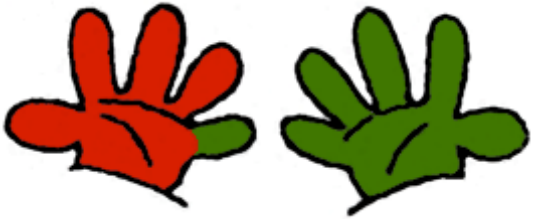
Once upon a time there were 10 fingers,

with wonderous mathematical powers.

They could count,

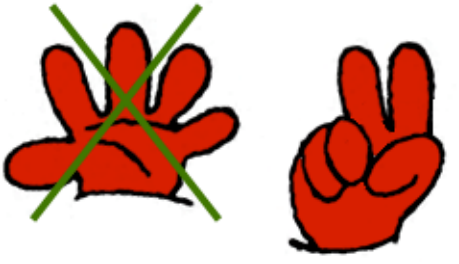
$$1,\ \ 2,\ \ 3,\ \ \ldots$$

add,



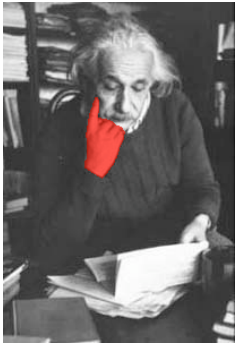
$$4 + 6 = 10$$

subtract,



$$7 - 5 = 2$$

and explore marvelous mathematical mysteries.



$$\Delta E \;=\; \frac{h\omega}{e^{h\omega/kT}-1} \cdot \frac{V\omega^2\Delta\omega}{\pi^2 c^3}$$

One day the 10 fingers discovered a

dejected,
depressed,
and despondent

number nine.

"Why so down?", asked the 10 fingers.

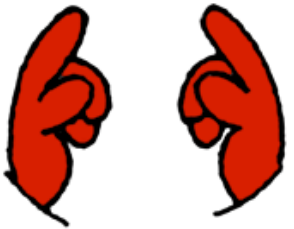
"I am just an

unimportant,
uninteresting,
and uninspiring

little number", muttered the number nine.

"No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no", said all 10 fingers.

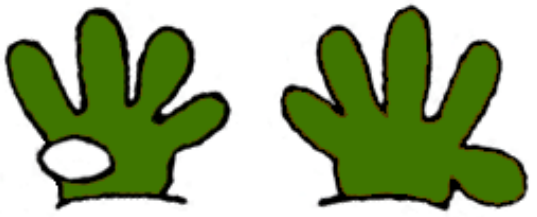
"You are a magnificent number, for even with all of our mathematical might, it is only with you that we can multiply."



"Look, 9×1", said the 10 fingers. As they all stood at attention, the first finger lowered itself for the remaining 9 fingers to reveal the product.

The number nine was unimpressed.

"Wait, there is more", said the 10 fingers.

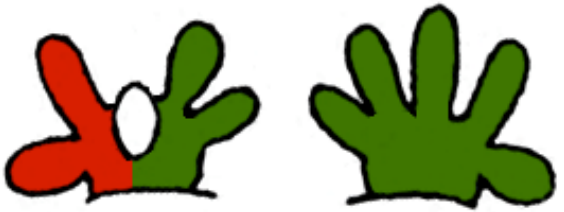


$$9 \quad \times \quad 1 \quad = \quad 9$$

This time, they put their second finger down and counted what was to the left, 1, to the right, 8, and put them together: 18

and on they went...

$$9 \times 2 = 18$$

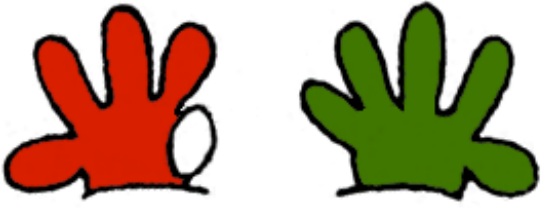


$9 \times 3 = 27$

$9 \times 4 = 36$

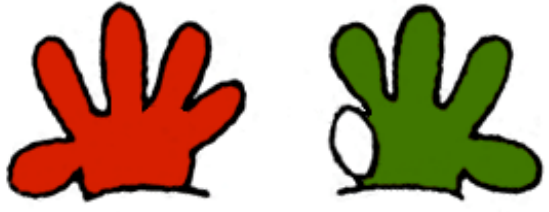
The number nine began to perk up.

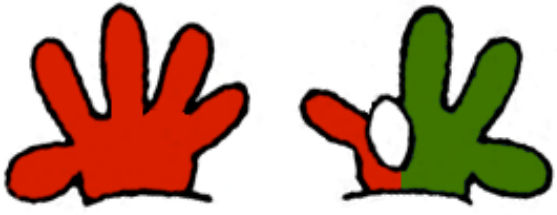
But the 10 fingers weren't done...



$$9 \times 5 = 45$$

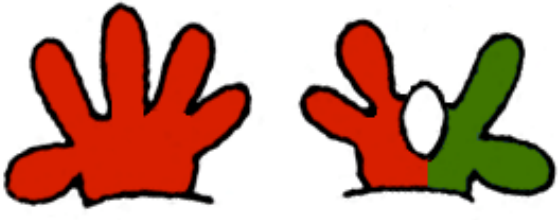
$$9 \times 6 = 54$$





$9 \times 7 = 63$

$9 \times 8 = 72$



“Hot stuff!”, cried the delighted nine.

$9 \times 9 = 81$

$9 \times 10 = 90$

The delirious number nine was on cloud, well... nine.

The 10 fingers gathered some friends and in a final act of of mathematical mastery proved the

unequaled
unlimited,
and unparalleled

uniqueness of the number nine.

$$9 \times 27 = 243$$

$\mathcal{T}$he

$\mathcal{E}$nd