

UOW College Hong Kong / Community College of City University
Student English Enhancement Unit (SEE U)
Daily English Practice

Week 8

#189 The great mathematician Al-Khwarizmi

Skills/ Objectives: Reading, Listening and Writing Skills

PART 1: Before you read...

Preparatory questions

Qt1: Have you heard of the famous Moslem mathematician, Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi who lived in the 9th century?

Qt2: Do you know where the word “algebra” came from?

The answers Qt1 to Qt 2 will be provided in the next set of exercises.

Vocabulary

- seminal (adj): contributing great work influencing later generations.
- copious (adj): of a large amount exceeding the need
- treatise (n): formal writing on a topic
- astrolabe (n): ancient instrument for measuring distance of the stars and ship.

PART 2: Article for Reading

Read the following article about al-Khwarizmi and learn more interesting facts about this famous mathematician in history.

<https://biography.yourdictionary.com/muhammad-ibn-musa-al-khwarizmi>

Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi Facts

PART 3: Listening Comprehension

Listen to the following video script posted on YouTube to learn more about the al-Khwarizmi while practicing your listening skills:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ar7CNsJUm58>

The weird truth about Arabic numerals

PART 4: Writing Practice

In a previous exercise, we learned the use of rearranged sentence order to put the prepositional phrase of a sentence at its beginning for emphasis. Here in this article, we see several good examples of its use. One of them is quoted below:

To al-Khwarizmi we owe the world "algebra," from the title of his greatest mathematical work.

By putting the infinitive phrase "To al-Khwarizmi" at the beginning, the writer emphasizes the importance of al-Khwarizmi in giving the term "algebra" its name. Such importance would not be so much emphasized if we put it at the later part of the sentence in a normal sentence order as follows:

We owe the world "algebra" to al-Khwarizmi from the title of his greatest mathematical work.

Can you write a few similar sentences in this way of expression? **Send your writing to:** see.u@cccu.edu.hk. Remember! Our SEE U teachers are always ready to give you feedback.