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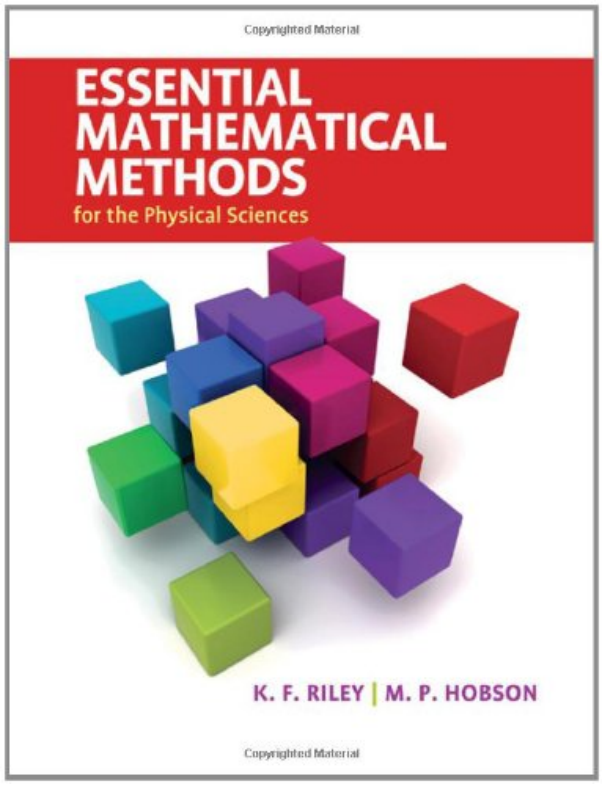

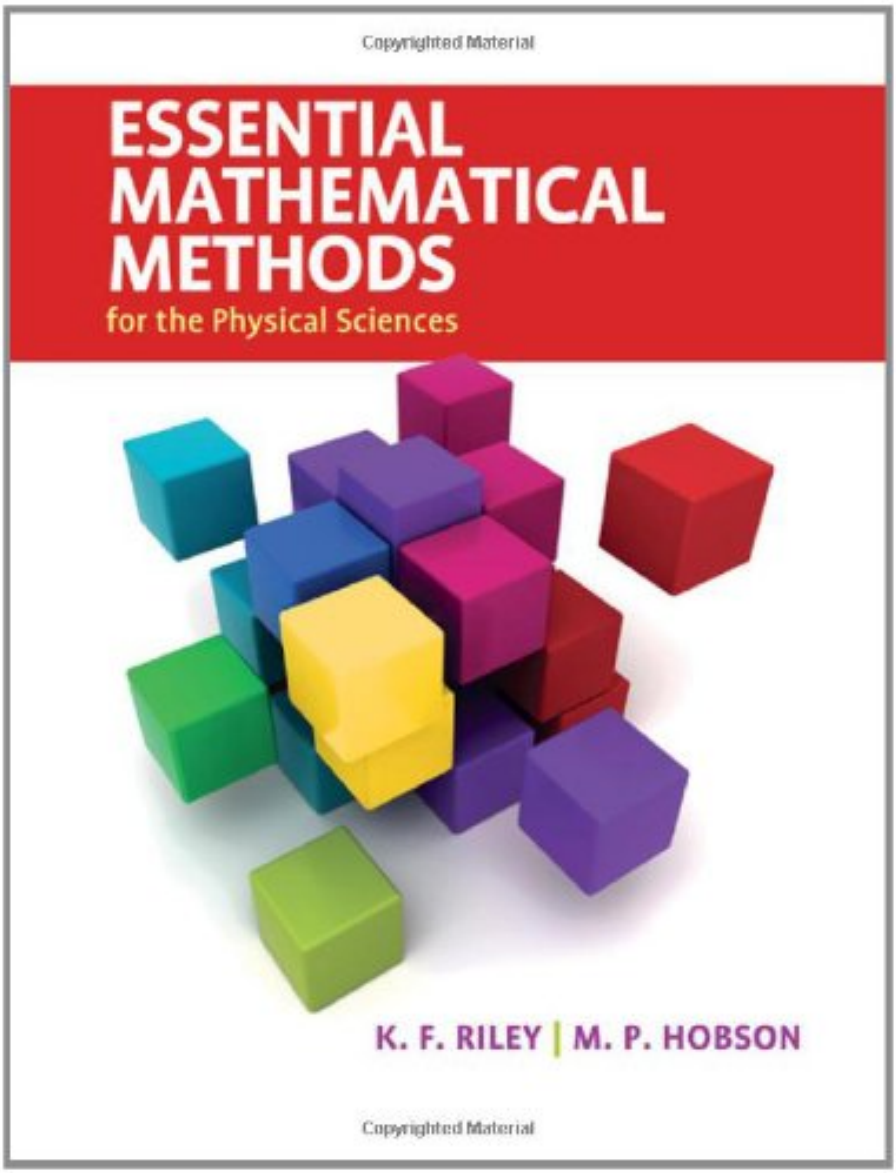

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C. A. Downing, Contemporary Physics

About the Author

K. F. Riley read mathematics at the University of Cambridge and proceeded to a Ph.D. there in theoretical and experimental nuclear physics. He became a Research Associate in elementary particle physics at Brookhaven, and then, having taken up a lectureship at the Cavendish Laboratory, Cambridge, continued this research at the Rutherford Laboratory and Stanford; in particular he was involved in the experimental discovery of a number of the early baryonic resonances. As well as having been Senior Tutor at Clare College, where he has taught physics and mathematics for over 40 years, he has served on many committees concerned with the teaching and examining of these subjects at all levels of tertiary and undergraduate education. He is also one of the authors of 200 Puzzling Physics Problems.

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Don't even consider buying this
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This book is singularly unhelpful. I purchased it because it is required for a class I am taking, but have it found it utterly useless for understanding any of the material it purports to cover. I have had to consult multiple outside sources - other books, websites, programs, people, and even notes from other classes - for every single topic this book is supposed to cover - just to understand what the problems at the end of the chapter are even asking the reader to attempt to do.

There are two purposes of a textbook: 1) to aid the reader in understanding the material's use, significance, and background and 2) to supply sample problems for the reader to practice and test their understanding of that first objective.

In the first objective this textbook has failed utterly in every way. There is virtually no explanation of the usage of any of the material being covered except in off-handed comments such as "this is important in the physical sciences." There is no explanation or proof of most of the theorems, formulae, and other concepts. Lastly, it is simply void of practical, actionable examples clearly showing how to use the material and situations in which to apply it. Instead it regularly skips over most steps of the examples, with implications that certain things are possible to do and yet never giving an explanation as to how to do them.

As a result, while the book supplies an ample number of problems at the end of each chapter, they are utterly incomprehensible to anyone who has been using only this textbook, making them completely unusable without consultation of outside sources.

If a textbook cannot stand on its own, and if it cannot enhance the reader's understanding of the material, it has failed.

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Not Meant for Learning

By Alex
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As noted by others, examples skip steps. Show me the steps that get to the solution so I can understand; don't draw abstract conclusions from the problem without any explanation.

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By R. Hall
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