

Puzzle 2

Your task is to match up the mathematician with one of the following causes of death:

- **Shot in a duel**
- **Pushed overboard from a ship**
- **Suicide**
- **Lost his mind**

Bonus points for explaining the work of any of the mathematicians shown.

Answer

a. Hippasus – Pushed overboard from a ship for his discovery and subsequent proof that the square root of 2 is an irrational number (cannot be written as a fraction).

b. Cantor – Lost his mind after discovering that there are more one type of infinity. For example the positive integers (whole numbers) are countably infinite, whilst the real numbers are uncountably infinite.

c. Boltzmann – Suicide. He is most famous for the development of statistical mechanics which explains how the properties of atoms determine the physical properties of matter.

d. Galois – Shot in a duel after being involved in a ‘love triangle’. Fortunately he wrote down all of his work/thoughts the night before which now forms the basis of Galois theory.