ARE MATHEMATICS AND POETRY SIMILAR?

by JoAnne S. Growney

This "quiz" will enable you to test their similarity. If you don't use the author's name as a clue, you may find it difficult to decide whether "poetry" or "mathematics" (or "poet" or "mathematician" or a variation of one of these terms) has been left out of each quotation. Guess which is intended in each case.

(1) _______ is the art of uniting pleasure with truth. – Samuel Johnson

(2) To think the thinkable – that is the _______’s aim. – Cassius J. Keyser

(3) All _______ [is] putting the infinite within the finite. – Robert Browning

(4) The moving power of _______ invention is not reasoning but imagination. – A. DeMorgan

(5) When you read and understand _______, comprehending its reach and formal meanings, then you master chaos a little. – Stephen Spender

(6) _______ practice absolute freedom. – Henry Adams

(7) I think that one possible definition of our modern culture is that it is one in which nine-tenths of our intellectuals can't read any _______. – Randall Jarrell

(8) Do not imagine that _______ is hard and crabbed, and repulsive to common sense. It is merely the etherealization of common sense. – Lord Kelvin

(9) The merit of _______, in its wildest forms, still consists in its truth; truth conveyed to the understanding, not directly by words, but circuitously by means of imaginative associations, which serve as conductors. – T. B. Macaulay

(10) It is a safe rule to apply that, when a _______ or philosophical author writes with a misty profundity, he is talking nonsense. – A. N. Whitehead

(11) _______ is a habit. – C. Day-Lewis

(12) . . . in _______ you don't understand things, you just get used to them. – John von Neumann

(13) _______ are all who love–who feel great truths
    And tell them. – P. J. Bailey

(14) The _______ is perfect only in so far as he is a perfect human being, in so far as he perceives the beauty of truth; only then will his work be thorough, transparent, comprehensive, pure, clear, attractive, and even elegant. – Goethe

(15) . . . [In these days] the function of _______ as a game . . . [looms] larger than its function as a search for truth . . . . – C. Day-Lewis

(16) A thorough advocate in a just cause, a penetrating _______ facing the starry heavens, both alike bear the semblance of divinity. – Goethe

(17) _______ is getting something right in language. – Howard Nemerov
