

Manual for the Slide Rule, Drooyan & Wooten, 1969

As described in the Preface, “The purpose of this book is to help students learn to use the slide rule for simple numeric computation.” For this text, the term 'students' refers to anyone in commerce, finance, the trades & crafts, and science and engineering. To broaden his potential audience, the author has used purely numerical exercises and examples, avoiding practical applications from various fields of work because, “..they may not be familiar to the individual student and thus may tend to distract from the primary purpose of the course.” The mathematical background of the reader is assumed to be minimal. The first ten lessons can be mastered with little or no background in algebra; the last six lessons require a working knowledge of simple algebra and numerical trigonometry. The book would be equally useful in self-instruction or in a classroom setting.

Although there is one chapter late in the book devoted to logarithms (immediately prior to chapters teaching use of the Log Log scales), little log theory is included in the first thirteen chapters. As the author says in Chapter 2, “... you can learn to use the slide rule very effectively for elementary computations without it.” I think the only reasons the author included the material is because: a) all slide rule books are 'supposed' to talk about logarithms, and b) Chapter 16 shows how to use the LL scales to take logs to base ϵ , so he needed to at least mention base 10 logs first!

The scale set used includes, C, D, A, B, K, L, CI, CIF, CF, DF, S, ST, T, and a complete set of LL scales. No specific rules or manufacturers are recommended. Illustrations in the text are generic line drawings, not photographs of identifiable rules.

Two appendices cover instructions on how to use Mannheim-type rules for trig functionality (use of S scale with A or B, and T scale with C or D; no ST scale). A third appendix covers the use of LL0 and LL00 scales with the A and B scales to determine powers and roots of numbers less than 1. The one and one half page index (88 entries) is less helpful than might be expected for an otherwise excellent text.