



## The Boy Who Loved Math

by Deborah Heiligman

This month Practickle is reviewing a biography. Paul Erdős(AIR-dish), known as The Magician of Budapest, is one of history's great mathematicians. At the age of four, Paul would ask someone the date of his/her birth. In his head he could calculate the number of seconds the person had been alive.

Even as a child, Paul was eccentric. (Great vocabulary word that you will be using during the Third Reading!) He grew up in Budapest, Hungary during World War I. At an early age, he loved numbers and people. However, he hated rules. So, with the help of a loving nanny, his mother home-schooled him. At a young age, Paul could accomplish great mathematical feats. Yet, as an adult, he couldn't do simple tasks like cooking or driving because Paul was always thinking about math. "Paul thought about math whatever he was doing, wherever he was."

Ms. Heiligman's joyful story will be enjoyed by you as much as your child. You will learn something new about numbers every time you read the book. Your child might not grasp all of the math concepts presented in the text and the illustrations, but Paul was a delightful person your child will love. The vivid artwork by LeUyen Pham is full of math ideas. I think she must be a math genius! How she has woven numbers and concepts into these happy illustrations is truly amazing.

This book has won numerous citations, among them: A Kirkus Reviews Best Book of 2013, a New York Times Book Review Notable Children's Book 2013, and The New York Library's placement on its "100 Titles to Read and Share" list.

The Reading Comprehension Best Practice that will be highlighted in your readings is **Activating Prior Knowledge/Making Connections** as you play with the numbers in the illustrations and talk about Paul's personality traits.

This is as much a personal story as it is a work about math. It is about being different and follow-ing your passion. I had not heard of Paul Erdős before previewing this book, and I am sad to re-port that my Erdős number is 0.