

Writing Assignment # 3: Impressions of Flatland

Due: Friday, February 20th, at the *beginning* of class.

This assignment pertains to the following readings:

- E.A. Abbott, Flatland, Dover Publications, 1992.
- T. Banchoff, "Flatland: A New Introduction," in Flatland, Princeton University Press, 1991.
- pp. 180-193 of Kinsey & Moore, Symmetry, Shape and Space, Key College Publishing, 2002.

Assignment Instructions:

In Flatland, A. Square states,

I must omit many matters of which the explanation would not, I flatter myself, be without interest for my Readers: as for example, our method of propelling and stopping ourselves, although destitute of feet; the means by which we give fixity to structures of wood, stone, or brick, although of course we have no hands...

These and many other aspects of life in Flatland are left to the reader's imagination, so let's take up the challenge. Working within the confines of the geometry of Flatland, choose several of the following points to address. (Pick the ones that interest you most. Feel free to add in related points of your interest.) Be creative! Your paper should be **typed** and stapled, and should be a minimum of three pages in length.

- Figure out a way for the inhabitants of Flatland to propel and stop themselves. What about transportation?
- Invent and describe an alphabet and linear system of writing for the inhabitants of Flatland. Include samples of this writing system in your discussion.
- We have some descriptions of buildings in Flatland, and things like cupboards. Discuss architecture, and building construction in Flatland. How might the Flatlanders fix their houses in place (and join walls, etc.)? What kind of furniture do you think they use, and how would it be constructed?
- It appears that the Flatlanders have a fairly sophisticated society, at least in the upper classes, so they must certainly have interests in the arts. How might musical instruments in Flatland work? What about painting and sculpture?
- Discuss the transmission of power, cable TV, and phone service in Flatland. What fact about Flatland makes this transmission difficult?