

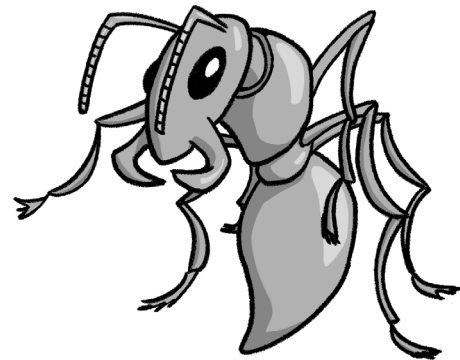
# THE MATH PROBLEM

We are all familiar with the many tragedies that have resulted from science gone mad. What many folks don't realize is that it isn't science's fault. More often than not, it's the math that is the problem.

Take Jorge Geofferson for instance. Jorge was a scientist who just wanted to create a new kind of rat. Jorge figured out that if he fed his rats a precise number of radioactive biscuits, they would grow big googly eyes and sprout tentacles! Unfortunately, Jorge did the math wrong and put 53 biscuits in the cage. Even after eating that many biscuits the gigantic monster that resulted was very hungry! For a rat that weighed 8 ounces, the number of biscuits was determined by the formula:  $5 + 2 \times 8 - 3$ . What was the correct number of biscuits?

Or look at what happened to Georgina Johnston! She was a brilliant chemist who had discovered a new kind of soap. Georgina's instructions clearly stated that the gallons of bleach that should be added to 100 gallons of solution was equal to  $100 \div 5 \div 5 + 5$ . Unfortunately, her assistant did not read her instructions correctly and added 105 gallons. While Greenville, SC was thoroughly cleaned, disinfected, and deodorized, the chemicals were so eco-unfriendly that it forced the entire city to be abandoned! How much bleach should the assistant have added?

Remember the time that giant ants attacked Sedona, Arizona? That was also caused by a math error. Some scientists were trying to make super strong ants that could power a car. They had 1000 ants that they were going to feed a growth compound in the amount of  $1000 \times (1 - .99)$  grams. One of them misread the formula and fed the ants a little more than 999 grams of the stuff. The results were, of course, unfortunate. How much should the scientists have used?



And don't get me started about that hole in the moon! Everyone knows that the number of grams of atomic fuel for a 5000-pound rocket is calculated by the formula:  $(5 \times 10^3 + 2 \times 10^2) \div 2$ . If someone puts 5100 grams in and makes it go too fast, it's not the fault of science! What is the correct amount?

So remember, the next time you hear about science causing havoc, try to find out more about the situation. You will probably find a math problem!