



Exploring mathematics: a powerful tool

Why is maths useful?

Carmen Pryce:

You've seen some examples of how the behaviour of the world can be modelled mathematically. More and more, mathematicians are able to form a partnership with researchers from many other disciplines and so contribute their skills to refining the view of the world about us. It's such an intricate and intriguing world that there can never be an end to the demand for mathematical modelling. But just why is maths so useful? Is it that maths is an inherent part of the world?

Colin Fox:

I really see mathematics and mathematical modelling particularly as a human endeavour. It's a thing that we use because it's a useful set of concepts in which to describe the world. But no, I don't believe that if I do a modal decomposition, for instance of a wave field, I don't believe the world is doing a modal decomposition, nature just gets on and does what it does, you know, it's not mathematical. Mathematics is just useful for describing the world.