The Progress in Calculations through Logarithms

Smrithi Valsaraj

Mathematical Evolutions

Ms. Jennifer McCarthy and Mr. Andrew Platek
Summer Ventures in Science and Mathematics
The University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Abstract

A logarithm is another way of expressing an exponential function. The idea of logarithms was first developed by John Napier who had a strong determination to make calculations simpler and less time-consuming. His approach to this new mathematical advancement was done through analyzing sequences. Later, he came up with a table of the approximate values of logarithms. Soon after, complicated logarithms were simplified by finding out several properties of logarithms. Napier's method of attacking this problem was peculiar as it vastly differed from the modern-day meaning of logarithms. However, Briggs transformed Napier's logarithms into those that are used today because computing the modern values was easier. This invention has proved to be useful by playing an important role not only in the field of mathematics, but also in the field of science and geology.