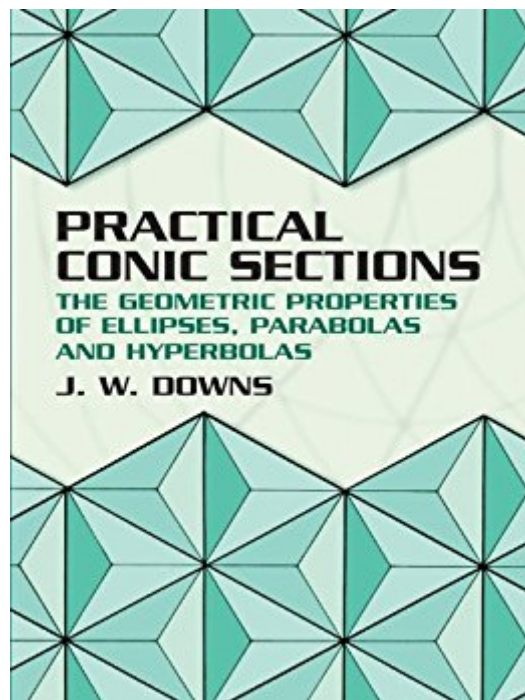


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# Practical Conic Sections: The Geometric Properties Of Ellipses, Parabolas And Hyperbolas (Dover Books On Mathematics)



## Synopsis

Illustrated with interesting examples from everyday life, this text shows how to create ellipses, parabolas, and hyperbolas and presents fascinating historical background on their ancient origins. The text starts with a discussion of techniques for generating the conic curves, showing how to create accurate depictions of large or small conic curves and describing their reflective properties, from light in telescopes to sound in microphones and amplifiers. It further defines the role of curves in the construction of auditoriums, antennas, lamps, and numerous other design applications. Only a basic knowledge of plane geometry needed; suitable for undergraduate courses. 1993 edition. 98 figures.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This small book does a great job of presenting the elegant heart of the conic sections and their intersection with the material world. The book was a gift to a new engineering student who liked it very much

Simple and clear explanation of all the conic sections. Useful construction techniques. If you are looking for something a little more technical and mathematically rigorous look to another publication. Great introductory treatise.

This is a fun, quirky book, but I don't know what sort of reader it's geared toward. Much of the book runs through methods of "deriving" conic sections--some traditional construction with a straightedge & a compass and some other stuff. (Method 2 of deriving an ellipse: "Ellipses occur naturally in free orbital motion." Method 5 of deriving hyperbolas involves drilling holes in a drawing table.) There are a few sections that address technological applications of conic sections, but the "practical" in the title seems mainly meant to distinguish the book's approach from "tedious proofs that abound in most books on the subject." The lack of proofs makes "Practical Conic Sections" mostly a catalogue of interesting facts. For a fun but more substantial book, try *Excursions in Geometry*.

What a ridiculous review below, which completely skews the rating on this book! It's a perfectly good, handy summary of the mathematics of the conic sections. My own work is in the history of mathematics, and I've often turned to this book to find obscure little facts that sixteenth or seventeenth-century mathematicians were taking for granted in their papers on conic sections -- and which are rarely taught in school or college geometry. Very dry, obviously, but very highly recommended, if it's the sort of thing you need.

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