

Today in Math History...

-17 August 1601

Pierre Fermat born.



*With his gift for number relations and his ability to find proofs for his theorems, Fermat essentially created the **modern theory of numbers**. The quality of his work can be gauged by the fact that many of his results were not proved for over a century after his death, and one of them, his **Last Theorem**, took more than three centuries to prove. It was the convention among mathematicians in his day to challenge each other to prove a result, often not publishing their own proof to retain an advantage in such competitions.*