

# What Your Brain Looks Like When It Solves a Math Problem

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***The New York Times:***

Solving a hairy math problem might send a shudder of exultation along your spinal cord. But scientists have historically struggled to deconstruct the exact mental alchemy that occurs when the brain successfully leaps the gap from “Say what?” to “Aha!”

Now, using an innovative combination of brain-imaging analyses, researchers have captured four fleeting stages of creative thinking in math. In a paper published in *Psychological Science*, a team led by John R. Anderson, a professor of psychology and computer science at Carnegie Mellon University, demonstrated a method for reconstructing how the brain moves from understanding a problem to solving it, including the time the brain spends in each stage.

Read the whole story: [\*The New York Times\*](#)