

Dr. Jay Wile, formerly of Apologia Educational Ministries, Inc., is best known as the author of many of the “Exploring Creation With ...” series of science textbooks. The following is an email that the author of our Algebra books received in 2006. It is copied in its entirety.

Hello,

Thank you for sending me your algebra 1 and 2 books for review. We have finally completed the review, and overall, it is very positive. The books are quite comprehensive, and they also offer an incremental approach that makes the mathematics more accessible to students who might otherwise have problems. I like your idea of presenting few rules and, for the ones you do present, waiting until after the student has been working with the concept for a while. I agree that students can often "work out" the rules for themselves, which makes them easier to remember and more understandable.

I would like to see a bit more discussion on the WHY of mathematics. For example, when you teach the substitution method of solving simultaneous equations, I would have liked to see just a sentence or two about the fact that the reason this method works is that when you solve for a variable (like x) in terms of other variables (like y), the result you get is just another name for " x ." That's why you can substitute it into the second equation. However, this comment should not detract from the fact that overall, both books are quite good.

If you think that you want to market to homeschooling families (that's the market I am in), I do have some suggestions in terms of packaging:

(1) Detailed, step-by-step solutions for the even-numbered problems should be combined with tests and detailed, step-by-step solutions to the tests into a book that the parent would use to grade as well as to help the student when he or she gets stuck.

(2) Since most homeschooling parents are not experts in math, it would be nice to have in the book mentioned above a list of some of the topics the student could skip if the student has trouble finishing the entire book. This is one of the challenges of homeschooling. Some students will finish the entire book, others simply cannot. Since the parents don't know what to skip and what not to skip, it is tough for them to "stratify" the course according to talent.

(3) I know that this adds to the cost, but most homeschoolers like hardcover books, because they plan to use the same book for several children. This is a minor issue, but you might consider it if sales get large.

God Bless,

Dr. Jay L. Wile