



# History of the "Pythagorean theorem" before and after Pythagoras



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**Abstract:** The result that we know today as the Pythagorean theorem has arisen independently in many different cultures. In this talk I will review its appearance in the Old Babylonian culture (more than 1000 years before Pythagoras!), in China, and in Greece. This inquiry raises a number of questions: What does it mean to "know" a mathematical result? What is the role of proof in establishing the truth of a result? And then, what is the rationale for attributing this result to Pythagoras?

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