

Russian Peasant Multiplication

In previous centuries knowledge of the multiplication was not common so many techniques were developed that did not require memorizing the multiplication table

Finger Reckoning was one technique

Russian Peasant Multiplication only requires doubling and halving (duplation and mediation)

How to do it

Write the two numbers to be multiplied in a row

On successive rows halve the first number and double the second number (ignoring fractions)

Stop when you get to 1

Cross off every row with an even number in the first column

Add up the remaining numbers in the second column

Example:

$$\begin{array}{r} 21 \quad 27 \\ \hline 10 \quad 54 \\ 5 \quad 108 \\ \hline 2 \quad 216 \\ 1 \quad \underline{432} \\ \hline 567 \end{array}$$

Is this right?

How does it work?