



Grown-ups Like Numbers, by Antoine Exupéry

Grown-ups like numbers. When you tell them about a new friend, they never ask questions about what really matters. They never ask: "What does his voice sound like?" "What games does he like best?" "Does he collect butterflies?" They ask: "How old is he?" "How many brothers does he have?" "How much does he weigh?" "How much money does his father make?" Only then do they think they know him. If you tell grown-ups, "I saw a beautiful red brick house, with geraniums at the windows and doves on the roof," they won't be able to imagine such a house. You have to tell them, "I saw a house worth a hundred thousand francs." Then they exclaim, "What a pretty house!" So if you tell them: "The proof the little prince's existence is that he was delightful, that he laughed, and that he wanted a sheep. When someone wants a sheep, that proves he exists," they shrug their shoulders and treat you like a child! But if you tell them, "The planet he came from is Asteroid B-612," then they'll be convinced, and they won't bother you with their questions. That's the way they are. You must not hold it against them. Children should be very understanding of grown-ups. But, of course, those of us who understand life couldn't care less about numbers! -- Antoine de Saint Exupéry (in *The Little Prince* [<http://www.angelfire.com/hi/littleprince/frames.html>])