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The theory of matroids connects disparate branches of combinatorial theory and algebra such as graph and lattice theory, combinatorial optimization, and linear algebra. Aimed at advanced undergraduate and graduate students, this text is one of the earliest substantial works on matroid theory. Its author, D. J. A. Welsh, Professor of Mathematics at Oxford University, has exercised a profound influence over the theory's development.

The first half of the text describes standard examples and investigation results, using elementary proofs to develop basic matroid properties and referring readers to the literature for more complex proofs. The second half advances to a more sophisticated treatment, addressing a variety of research topics. Praised by the Bulletin of the American Mathematical Society as "a useful resource for both the novice and the expert," this text features numerous helpful exercises.