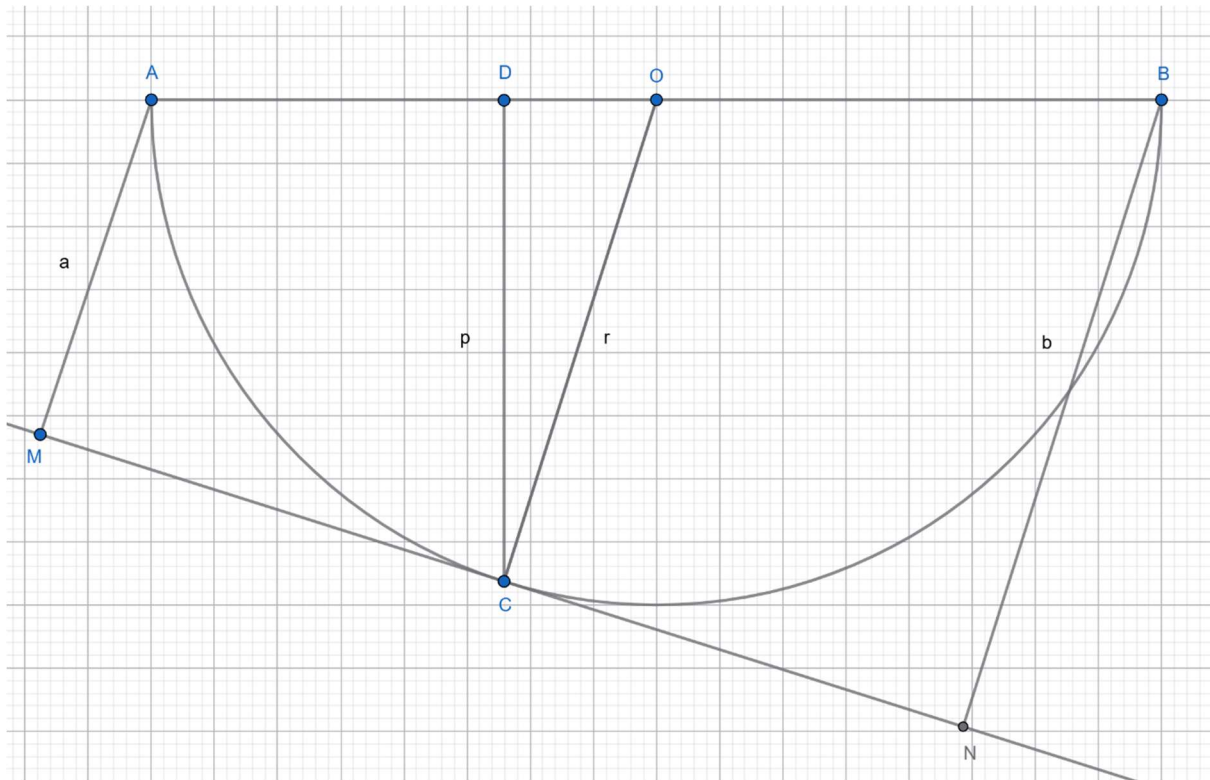


Nathan's hemispherical puzzle:



Let $a = AM$, $r = OC$, $P = BN$

By inspection

$$r = (a + b)/2$$

Now

$$p = r \cos\theta$$

and

$$\sin\theta = \frac{b - a}{2r}$$

giving

$$\cos\theta = \sqrt{\left(1 - \left(\frac{b - a}{2r}\right)^2\right)}$$

Substitute for $2r$

$$\cos\theta = \frac{\sqrt{(b+a)^2 - (b-a)^2}}{a+b} = \sqrt{4ab}/(a + b)$$

$$\text{So } p = r \cos\theta = \sqrt{ab}$$