

HOW TO STUDY MATH

Before class, read the section of your math book that the instructor plans to cover in class. Don't be concerned if you don't understand it at this point. The first reading is only to acquaint you with the material. Concentrate on vocabulary. Review related topics from earlier sections/chapters.

How to read your math textbook

- Read every paragraph and sentence completely. Do not use skimming techniques that you might use in a history or English class. Math texts are written in a concise language that puts the most meaning into the fewest possible words. **READ ALL OF THE WORDS!**
- Read with a pencil in hand so you can do the example problems in the book
- Write down any questions or comments – flag difficult items in the text with sticky notes
- Recite rules, ideas and concepts aloud
- Use note cards to record rules, formulas, procedures, or steps
- Keep a list of math vocabulary words – be aware of the language of math

Schedule time everyday (as soon after class as possible)

Read your lecture notes

- Fill in the gaps – complete the sentences you couldn't finish because the instructor was talking faster than you could write. Fill in missing steps and explanations so you know how to get from one step to the next. Underline or * asterisk to emphasize important ideas and procedures.

Read directions carefully.

Name it – identify the type of problem you are asked to solve.

- By naming each problem and saying the name to yourself or aloud, before doing it, you are developing a habit that will help you in problem solving as well as test taking.

Work carefully and neatly.

- Keep your work organized – write on every other line of your paper; make neat columns
- Be methodical – try to follow the same steps when working similar problems
- Look out for careless errors
- Check your answers- this helps you catch your errors as you go

Troublesome problems

- Mark problems you are still unable to do
- Do not erase wrong attempts (your instructor or a tutor can help you pinpoint your error)

Get all questions answered

- Ask during or after class
- Don't be afraid to get help from your instructor or a tutor if your instructor is unavailable

Work with classmates

- Study groups benefit everybody in the group
- To get the most from a study groups: Everybody should come prepared, have read the text and tried the problems.

Review frequently (at least once a week)

Use all available resources such as tutors, video tapes, computer software, solution manuals, etc.

If you have to miss a class...

- Get missed assignments
- View a video on the missed material if possible

- Copy someone else's notes
- Have someone tape the lecture (if possible)

And last, but not least, PRACTICE-PRACTICE-PRACTICE!!!

PREPARING FOR MATH TESTS

- Preparation begins on the first day of class. Math is a cumulative subject; everything builds on the previous topics. If you do not begin the class with this in mind, you may never have time to catch-up one you're behind.
- Begin to review several days in advance.
- Make sure you know exactly what topics will be covered on the exam.
- Do problems from each topic you're to be tested on to refresh your memory. Do chapter tests. Review your class notes, and redo the problems that were worked in class. Work on gaining mastery of each

math concept you're studying. Know your information inside and out. Then no matter how the information is presented to you on the exam, you'll recognize it. Remember, the key to success is working problems.

- If questions arise while you are studying, see your instructor, study group or a tutor.
- On the night before the exam do one final review of the material you have already been studying.
- Get a good night's sleep.

TAKING MATH TESTS

- As soon as you receive your test, write down all the formulas, rules, and key information you'll need.
- Skim the test to find out the types of problems and their point value. Adjust your time accordingly, allowing more time for questions with higher point values.
- Write your name on the test and read directions carefully.
- Start with the easiest problems first. This will build confidence and help you avoid getting stuck. Work as quickly and efficiently as you can.

- Be neat and show all of your work.
- When you have finished all of the easier problems, try the problems that seem more difficult to you. Sometimes simply rewriting the problem will trigger a thought that will allow you to solve the problem. Do as much as you can on each problem.
- Use all of the time allowed for the test. If you have extra time, use this time to look for careless errors and to verify your answers.