

How to Be Successful In Math

Make sure you are appropriately placed.

Do not take Math:

111 if you have had no algebra.

153 if you have only had basic algebra - start with 111.

151 unless you are good at math.

If you are not good at math, do not take it in summer school or at night.

Schedule courses back-to-back. Don't let time pass between sequential courses.

You must read the textbook!

Don't think you can read 5 pages of math as quickly as you can read 5 pages of other text.

Be an active reader.

Work through examples.

Mark important terms, formulas.

Read sections before you go to class.

Don't worry if you don't understand all of it - the material will sound more familiar in lecture.

Put ?? by things you don't understand.

Ask questions in class if the ?? have not been answered in lecture.

Buy the student solution manual.

Look at solutions of odd-numbered problems to see how to do the even-numbered problems.

Important Note Taking Tips

Copy down all steps to problems done in class.

Use abbreviations whenever possible.

Put ?? by things you don't understand in notes.

As soon as possible after class, go back and tidy up your notes - fill in unfinished phrases, examples, etc.

Mark important items with *, highlighting, boxes, circles, rows, etc.

If the instructor goes through examples that are in the text, don't copy them down. Follow along in the text and add to what's in the book.

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Learn and practice good time management

Math requires daily practice and study.

Make sure you have set aside time each day to study math.

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Form a study group

It is true that several heads are better than one.

Talking to others about the lecture and the homework can make it more clear to you as well as help others.

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Adapt your study techniques to fit your learning style

You can change sections if you find an instructor who better fits your learning needs.

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Learn the vocabulary; think of math as a foreign language

You must have a working vocabulary of terms and formulas.

Make flash cards for vocabulary and formulas.

Make a "cheat sheet" for things you need to know and use all the time.

Memorize key terms and formulas.

use mnemonics such as FOIL, PEMDAS.

Think of what words mean in the real world - associative, commutative, etc.

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Math skills build on each other; it is sequential learning.

If you don't understand Chapter 1, you won't understand Chapter 2.

Do not fall in behind!

You must practice math skills to be good at them.

be an active participant - you can't learn by simply watching.

Go over class notes and do homework right after class.

Test-taking tips

Practice with old tests; they are available from the copy center in Stewart (G).

Predict test questions - play "what if ..."

Ask how old questions could be rewritten.

Save one old test to take in a "test" setting.

Read directions carefully. Be sure you understand what the question is asking.

Look over the entire test before answering any questions.

Answer the easy questions first.

Don't spend too much time on any single problem.

Be careful of "stupid" mistakes.

Look at your errors on previous tests.

Is there a pattern to your mistakes?

Check your answers.

Have you answered the question that was asked?

Does your answer make sense? Is it reasonable?

Use relaxation techniques to calm yourself.

Be comfortable - wear clothes that make you feel good, confident.

Use positive self-talk.

Visualize yourself in the testing situation until it is no longer a paralyzing time.

Ask for a new seat assignment if you have a problem with the seat you've been assigned.

Maggie Selo
Academic Success Center
BRNG 3268
Purdue University
494-0457



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