

HOW TO SUCCEED IN MATH

Start with the Right Attitude

Keep your thoughts about math constructive.

Instead of "I hate math," say "I'm challenged by math." Challenges are good.

Congratulate yourself on even small successes.

Give yourself permission to fail. Some of the greatest learning occurs while figuring out what you did wrong.

Master All the Material

Mastery brings confidence. Confidence improves grades.

You cannot study too much. If you still are confused after studying, you do not understand the material.

Do memorize formulas, definitions, theorems and similar information.

Don't try to memorize how to set up every possible type of problem. It's impossible.

Mathematics is the science of patterns. Look for the underlying patterns.

Prepare for Class

Preview the lecture material before class. What questions will you ask? What do you need clarified?

Bring your textbook, homework, pencil and calculator (if allowed) with you.

Get Organized and Stay Organized

Write neatly. You want your notes and calculations to make sense when you come back to study them.

Keep all work for a problem together. Label things. Define variables. Working down instead of across is usually best.

Organize your papers. Keep returned tests and quizzes together. Keep your notes separate from your homework.

Actively Participate in Class

Be on time—but come even if you are late.

Pay attention!

Be courteous to your fellow students and the instructor.

Ask questions. Someone else will be grateful you did. (Don't assume you are the only one that doesn't understand.)

Look for connections between new and previously learned material, like similarities, differences and when it is used.

Review and clarify your notes as soon as possible after class. This will move concepts from short to long-term memory.

You are responsible for all material covered in class, whether you are there or not. Get a copy of someone's notes if you are absent.

Practice, Practice, Practice

Do assigned problems every day. Even better, do more problems than are assigned.

Make up a practice test. Work it under test conditions – such as using only a pencil and calculator.

Manage Your Time

Do not get behind! That is the number one rule when taking a math class. Catching up can be torture.

Plan to study (do homework, review notes, preview new material, etc.) at least 2 hours for every hour spent in class.

Use 5 and 10 minute time segments to review and also memorize formulas.

Use All Available Resources

Attend all class sessions.

Ask your instructor questions – before, during and after class. Use the instructor's office hours to get help.

Work with a tutor.

Join a study group. One of the best ways to improve your understanding of a concept is to explain it to someone else.