

Success in a Math Class

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Your goal in a math class is to learn the material. The professor is there to help, as well as to judge your abilities. Here are some thoughts and my recommendations to help you learn.

How to use class time:

- Class time is an opportunity to interact with the professor. I encourage you to ask questions, and to answer questions that I pose.
- Prepare by reading the material *before* class. Just 10-15 minutes for familiarity can help a lot.
- Review class notes and the relevant material from the book soon after we discuss it so that you solidify your understanding.
- I usually start the class by asking if there are any questions, so if you get stuck on homework, or in your reading, prepare a question for the next class.

How to use my office hours:

- You are very welcome to come to my office hours. If my usual hours are not convenient set up a special time with me.
- Bring specific questions. Show me the the work you have done and where you got stuck.
- I will probably guide you to an answer. So be prepared to think!

How to do homework:

- Concentrate on your work. Eliminate other distractions, no t.v., no radio, no gossiping!
- Start with a few easy (unassigned) problems to build your confidence and your understanding of the basics.
- There are two main steps in doing homework, (1) Solving the problem, and (2) Writing the solution. It is good to work with others when solving the problem so that you can exchange ideas. Writing the solution should be done by yourself. It is your opportunity to present the information in a clear way.
- Copying homework is forbidden and will result in a *zero* for all involved.

How to prepare for exams:

- If you do some math every day, studying for a test will be much easier!
- I tend to build exams around a particular theme, like a single chapter, rather than mixing topics.
- Exams are a great opportunity (!) to consolidate your understanding of the material.
- Think creatively: Solve an exercise in the book. Then change it a bit. Can you still solve it?
- Make up your own examples and problems.