

Math Success Tips

Contrary to popular belief, success in any mathematics course is not purely dependent upon inborn skill; rather, it is dependent on a student's motivation, ability to asset one's self (i.e. ask questions), and incorporating the following tips into their class routine:

❑ **Attend Class Regularly**

What to do in Class:

- ✓ Write down all definitions, problems, theorems and axioms in your class notes
- ✓ Listen carefully to instructions and discussions.
- ✓ Always be sure you understand what is being said. If you don't understand, ASK
- ✓ Begin each day's notes and homework assignments on a new sheet of paper; write legibly and clearly (or recopy each day's notes clearly immediately following class)

❑ **Complete ALL Assignment Routinely**

Make it a habit to complete assignments as soon as possible after class. When minimal time has elapsed, it is much easier to remember class discussions and specific instructions related to the assignment. Further, attending class without completing the previous assignment severely handicaps the student on the present topic and future dependent topics.

How to do Homework:

- ✓ Check the supplied assignment sheet following each class and note any changes made to that day's assigned work
- ✓ Read the instructions carefully; be sure you understand exactly what you should be doing
- ✓ COMPLETE YOUR WORK IN PENCIL. We ALL make mistakes, but they are easily corrected in pencil, and it's neater
- ✓ Complete each separate assignment on a new sheet of paper
- ✓ Students are responsible for each of their own homework assignments. Note that answers are provided for the student at the end of the textbook. Students are expected to correct each day's work, rework all missed problems, and ask questions during the next class regarding missed problems (note that time is set aside at the beginning of each class for this purpose)
- ✓ Write your name, the date, and any specific instructions on the front of worksheets. Be sure to keep all worksheets together in a binder/folder

Rework All Missed Problems from the Previous Night's Homework

- ✓ Math is cumulative as one skill depends on the mastery of another preceding skill.

Math is like a boomerang, just when you think you can toss out a concept, it comes around to hit you in the back of the head.

□ **Be Prepared for Class each Day**

In addition to completing and reworking homework, be sure to have your text, notebook, a supply of clean paper, the required calculator, and a supply of pencils with erasers to class each day. Students are expected to be ready at the beginning of each class by having these supplies ready on their desks, books and notebooks opened to the proper pages, and ready with pertinent questions.

Use free time wisely

- ✓ Make an attempt to review your notes and homework before each class.

Take Notes and Keep an Organized Notebook

- ✓ An organized notebook is crucial when preparing for exams in a sequential math course. It is best to use loose-leaf as it is more flexible than a spiral bound.

Taking Notes in Class

- ✓ Label and date your notes
- ✓ Use color to emphasize important ideas or points (colored pencils or highlighter pens)
- ✓ Use abbreviations, and use them properly
- ✓ Review and revise your notes as soon as possible after you write them
- ✓ With definitions and theorems, be sure to copy them accurately; set off the new term(s) by underlining or using color
- ✓ Include a drawing, table or sketch when appropriate; when sketching from the TI-83 be sure to include the viewing window
- ✓ Copy all sample problems completed in class as they will help you complete homework assignments and to study for exams
- ✓ Feel free to use any accurate method of solving a given problem, but in the end, it is your responsibility to ensure that the method is accurate

□ **Prepare Systematically for Exams**

Preparing for exams begins the first day of class. The following are guidelines for appropriate exam preparation throughout the semester:

- ✓ Prepare a list of specific objectives to be included on the test
- ✓ Work several examples and problems related to each objective (the best source of these respective test-related objectives and problems is the respective practice chapter exam provided during class)
- ✓ Learn definitions of new words. Repeating definitions orally is a good way to find out if it has been mastered
- ✓ Begin a review several days prior to the test, tackling a few problems each day
- ✓ Look for general patterns; study previous exams and problems that have been worked incorrectly
- ✓ Don't just look over the problems on previous homework assignments and exams, **WORK THE PROBLEMS AGAIN**

Be Psychologically Prepared for Exams

Psychologically prepared for an exam means being mentally and emotionally confident before and during the exam. One of the best ways to achieve this is to be academically prepared. That is, you should master each concept AS IT IS PRESENTED. While a few students experience excessive nervousness during exams (even though they have studied extensively beforehand) the majority of test-anxiety is caused by inadequate study preparation.

□ Take Advantage of Special Services

There are many services available FREE OF CHARGE to Clinton Community College students.

- ✓ take advantage of my presence after class
 - ✓ see me during scheduled office hours or appointments
 - ✓ visit the Tutoring Center on the fourth floor of the main building regularly
 - ✓ attend campus-wide workshops
 - ✓ utilize counseling services
-
- ✓ The Tutoring Center offers small group and individual tutoring from professional tutors, college success seminars and topic-specific workshops at numerous dates and times, a computer lab with tutors on hand, and assistance in finding appropriate services and accommodations. More information on the Tutoring Center visit them on the fourth floor of the main building (north side) or call 562-4250.
 - ✓ If you have, or suspect you may have, any type of disability or learning problem that may require extra assistance or special accommodations, please speak to me privately after class or during my office hours as soon as possible so I can help you obtain any assistance you may need to successfully complete this course. You should also contact Laurie Bethka, Room 420M in Accommodative Services, for further assistance.

Some excerpts are taken from lectures from Davis R. Johnson's Every Minute Counts series