

Studying Math is Different from Studying Other Subjects!

PREPARATION

- **E-BOOK OR TRADITIONAL TEXTBOOK** Regardless of the format of your text, look ahead to the material to be presented in the next class session. Read these sections **before** going to class. Don't worry if there is information that is not understood while reading—gathering information is the goal. Walking into math class without basic knowledge of new vocabulary and terms is similar to walking into a Spanish class without preparation.
- Be an **active** reader. Work through examples. Take notes regarding important terms and formulas.
- Write down any questions you have during this time of preparation. Ask questions during class as needed.

IMPORTANT NOTE TAKING TIPS

Structure of Three-Column Math Notes		
Problem	Solution	Explanation
The math problem as presented by the instructor	Step 1 Step 2 Step 3 Step 4 Step 5 Etc.	Elaboration to explain steps of the solution

When the instructor presents a problem, write it in the left column. As the instructor demonstrates HOW to solve the problem, write each step in the middle column. In the right-hand column, add any explanation that will assist you in understanding how to solve similar problems. For example, an explanation of each step or changing unfamiliar symbols into words can be added to notes.

LEARN THE VOCABULARY—THINK OF MATH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

- A working vocabulary of terms and formulas is a must.
- Make a “cheat sheet” for information that is used on a regular basis.
- Make flash cards for vocabulary and formulas.

Do Math Every Day

- Math is learned by working problems.
- Schedule study time; do the work.
- A **minimum** of 6-9 hours a week is needed to study math.

LEARNING MATH IS A LINEAR PROCESS

- If Chapter 1 is not easily understood, then Chapter 2 will be an even bigger challenge. If the current topic is difficult, it may mean that a previous skill has not been mastered. Go to the instructor's office hours or use the

Drop-in Math Labs in Vines 202. Check with the Academic Success Center for hours or go to the UAFS website and click on the following link: <http://uafs.edu/success/academic-success-center>

- **Do not miss math class.** Copying notes from another student does not replace attendance.
- **Be an active participant.** Ask questions; more than likely other students have the same questions.
- Review/revise class notes and do homework **right after class** or ASAP.

TEST PREPARATION

- Remember, everyday study is a **BIG** part of test preparation!
- Begin studying at least 5 days before the test. Go over each section, review your notes, and work the homework problems again. (If needed, ask someone in the ASC about the 5 Day Study Plan.)
- When the material becomes familiar, take a practice test, simulating the actual test taking situation as much as possible.
- After taking the test, check answers.
- Make note of careless errors so that these are not repeated on test day.
- If certain problems are taking too much time, work similar problems to improve efficiency.
- If study has been consistent over at least the last five days and there were no problems on the practice test, exam preparation should be complete!
- Do not cram. Get a good night's sleep before exam day.

TEST TAKING TIPS

- Avoid negative chatter by other students before entering the testing room.
- If noises are distracting while testing, use ear plugs. (The ASC gives these out free of charge.)
- If distractions are still an issue, consider sitting where there is a minimum amount of noise and traffic.
- Memory Dump! Quickly write formulas and anything easily forgotten on scrap paper.
- Skim the test, answer easy questions first. Return to the more difficult ones. Do not leave blanks.
- Show all the steps—partial credit is better than no credit.
- When finished, go back over the test and check for careless errors.
- Use all of the time allowed, unless there is absolutely nothing else that can be accomplished on the exam.

“I made 100% on my homework. Why did I flunk the test?”



When doing homework assignments (on My Math Lab specifically), multiple tries are possible. You have options such as **Show Me the Answer** or **I Need Help!** Unfortunately, this option is not available when taking a test.

Solution: Work several “similar problems” to make sure you can do all problems without help.

*Information taken from The Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, St. Louis University