

Ms. Wethington's Tips to Help You
Take Charge of Your Learning!

Sometimes math students feel overwhelmed and one step behind. Sometimes the information the teacher gives just doesn't seem to make sense. Some math students find themselves getting a lower grade than they want. Here are some ideas to help you take charge of your learning.

Come in for Help

See me at recess, lunch, or after school. Ask questions! Diagnose errors on tests and homework.

Get a Study Partner

Reviewing with a partner can help you to do homework and study for tests. A study partner can help you to talk about math on a regular basis. Your learning will be deeper if you take time to talk out loud about a math lesson to another person. Your skills will also improve as you teach another person or learn new ways of approaching a problem.

Pre-Reading

Take just five minutes each day and look at the section of the book you will cover in tomorrow's class. The point to this activity is to come away with questions about the new material. Look for new vocabulary. Look at the problems you will have for homework the next day. What is keeping you from doing them now? What new information do you need to understand this section?

As you listen to your teacher the next day, your pre-reading will help you focus your listening on key concepts. You will have some questions ready to ask. All of a sudden the lesson will seem familiar and you will be more comfortable.

Ask Specific Questions

When you don't understand, take a minute and backtrack until you find where you lost the understanding. Sometimes you might not understand the directions. Ask your teacher specific questions. Don't claim that you "don't get" any of it.

Examples of specific questions:

- What were the directions for this problem?
- How else could those directions be stated?
- How would I know when to factor?
- Why don't we multiply both members of the equation by that value?
- What happened to the negative in the second line?
- Where did you get the $-15x$?

Do the Homework!

Homework is a time to practice new skills, so mistakes are expected. For this reason, assignments are not graded on the number of correct answers you produce. Rather, you are graded on your mathematical thinking. Your written, step-by-step procedures are evidence of your thinking.

It is very important to correct mistakes on homework problems in order to acquire the skills that you did not pick up on your first try. If you are unable to understand or complete a problem with the corrections provided, please see me.

Homework Standards

- All work is complete at the beginning of class on the due date.
- All assigned problems have complete solutions that show your work. Any problems that remain unsolved by class time must include an *explanation of the strategy* you tried that did not produce the desired result, or a *specific question* that you believe will allow you to finish.
- All work for assigned problems is shown in pencil, and then corrected in ink.