

# How to be Successful in Math

## PREPARING FOR CLASS

- Become familiar with math vocabulary by reading course material before class.
- Be an active reader by taking notes of important terms and formulas.
- Complete all examples in the textbook.
- Write down any questions to ask during class.
- ALWAYS attend class. Take notes and participate by asking questions.

## TAKING MATH NOTES

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

## SOLVING MATH PROBLEMS

- Complete math assignments within 24 hours of class when information can still be recalled.
- Read the math problem to understand which quantity you need to find.
- Identify which skills and techniques can be applied to the problem.
- Solve the math problem.
- Does the answer seem reasonable?
- Visit with the instructor during office hours to improve understanding of specific formulas.
- Seek a math tutor if you need more clarification as math skills build on previous skills.

## SOLVING APPLIED/WORD PROBLEMS

- Convert the word problem into mathematics.
  1. Draw a picture and label all the quantities mentioned in the problem.
  2. If a quantity in the problem is not a fixed number, use a variable to name it.
  3. Identify the goal of the problem.
  4. Complete the conversion of the word problem into mathematics
- Identify which skills and techniques can be applied to the math problem.
- A great way to check your answer is to convert the answer back into words

The sum of three times a number and 2 less than 4 times that same number is 61. Write an equation and solve to determine the value of the unknown number.

$$3n + 4n - 2 = 61$$

$$7n - 2 = 61$$

$$\begin{array}{r} \cancel{+2} \quad +2 \\ \hline 7n = 63 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} \cancel{+2} \quad +2 \\ \hline 7n = 63 \end{array}$$

$$\frac{7n}{7} = \frac{63}{7}$$

$$n = 9$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 27 \\ +36 \\ \hline 63 \\ -2 \\ \hline 61 \end{array}$$

## STUDYING MATH

- Practice, Practice, Practice
- Review notes or flashcards of terms and formulas.
- Work review problems at the end of the chapter.
- Rework various problems **DAILY**.
- Verbally explain how to solve each problem.
- Spend a minimum of 2 hours studying outside of class for every hour in class.

## PREPARING FOR A MATH TEST

- Remember, studying daily is a **BIG** part of test preparation as Math is learned by doing!
- Begin preparing at least 5 days before the test. Go over each section, review your notes, and rework the homework problems.
- When the material becomes familiar, take a practice test, simulating the actual test taking situation as much as possible.
- After taking the test, check the answers. Note careless errors so that these are not repeated on test day.

Adapted from <https://mathstat.slu.edu/resources/success-in-mathematics> at St. Louis University