

Study Skills in Action

Making the Most of Class Time

Have you ever slumped at your desk while in class and thought, “I’ll just get the notes down and study later—I’m too tired”?

Learning math in college is a team effort, between instructor and student. The more you understand in class, the more you will be able to learn while studying outside of class.

Approach math class with the intensity of a navy pilot during a mission briefing. The pilot has strategic plans to learn during the briefing. He or she listens intently, takes notes, and memorizes important information. The goal is for the pilot to leave the briefing with a clear picture of the mission. It is the same with a student in a math class.



These students are sitting in the front row, where they are more likely to pay attention.

Smart Study Strategy

Take Control of Your Class Time

- 1 ▶ **Sit where you can easily see and hear the instructor, and the instructor can see you.** The instructor may be able to tell when you are confused just by the look on your face, and may adjust the lesson accordingly. In addition, sitting in this strategic place will keep your mind from wandering.
- 2 ▶ **Pay attention to what the instructor says about the math, not just what is written on the board.** Write problems on the left side of your notes and what the instructor says about the problems on the right side.
- 3 ▶ **If the instructor is moving through the material too fast, ask a question.** Questions help to slow the pace for a few minutes and also to clarify what is confusing to you.
- 4 ▶ **Try to memorize new information while learning it.** Repeat in your head what you are writing in your notes. That way you are reviewing the information twice.
- 5 ▶ **Ask for clarification.** If you don’t understand something at all and don’t even know how to phrase a question, just ask for clarification. You might say something like, “Could you please explain the steps in this problem one more time?”
- 6 ▶ **Think as intensely as if you were going to take a quiz on the material at the end of class.** This kind of mindset will help you to process new information.
- 7 ▶ **If the instructor asks for someone to go up to the board, volunteer.** The student at the board often receives additional attention and instruction to complete the problem.
- 8 ▶ **At the end of class, identify concepts or problems on which you still need clarification.** Make sure you see the instructor or a tutor as soon as possible.