

How to Study for Math

By Sonia Burns

The best way to utilize these is to use frequent, short study sessions to maximize productivity and allow plenty of time to get help on more challenging topics.

Before you start

1. Decide the maximum amount of time you are willing to spend studying each night. I recommend 30 to 40 minutes. This helps set a boundary so that you can balance math with other subjects, even the night before the test.
2. Make sure your binder is organized. This strategy requires lots of going back through notes and homework, so make sure it is easily accessible.
3. This strategy should supplement homework, not replace it. If you are pressed for time, do the homework first.

The Reviewing Routine

1. Count up how many days you have had since the beginning of the unit.
2. Write down a plan for how long you want to review each lesson. If you are just starting the unit, I recommend doing 10 to 15 minute sessions for each lesson. However, spending this much time on each lesson exceeds the maximum amount of time you are willing to spend, I recommend that one of two plans:
 - a. Break up the lessons. Do review every other lesson on Monday, then look at the other half of the material on Tuesday.
 - b. Spend less time on easier lessons that you already understand. However, it is hard to adequately review material in less than 5 minutes, so be cautious of how much time you cut.
3. For every lesson, do the following:
 - a. Set a timer for [x] minutes.
 - b. Review the lesson for [x] minutes. This can include reviewing problems from the homework that you missed earlier, re-doing difficult problems classwork, or reviewing notes. Make sure to focus on what you are doing though--the point of shorter sessions is that they are more intense and productive.

Notes

If you have a module:

- The module-structure helps because it gets you out of actually taking notes, but if you want extra help understanding a concept or strategy, getting a separate piece of paper to diagram out how the different parts work together can be helpful. Notes also condenses how much you need to review.
- Make sure to label which lesson (1.1, 1.2, etc.) it notes came from so you can go back and fact check if you have a contradiction

If you do not have a module:

- Make sure to keep all of your notes in the same place. If that place is a binder, reinforces paper is recommended so that they will stay in better condition longer.
- If having messy notes bothers you, rewrite them in a different place, perhaps in a different color to make it more interesting.
- Highlighting or coloring your notes a few days after jotting them down helps make the task seem more interesting.

Memorization Strategies

1. Notecards
 - If you have many formulas, try color coding the formulas by unit or topic
 - If you have a final, I recommend reviewing previous units' notecards constantly
2. Write it out
 - Writing out the formulas *from memory* can be very helpful
 - This works well if you are learning how to write a proof or prove a formula