

RE-CALCULATE SUCCESS

During Mathematics Tests

There are people who love math and pick it up easily. But what about the rest of us? Can we achieve such a great level of success with math? The answer is an unequivocal yes. With the right preparation, appropriate studying, and a little help like tutoring when we need it, it's not impossible for anyone to become a great mathematician. But we're getting ahead of ourselves—what about that exam next week? Let's take a look at some tips to help you prepare for it and re-calculate success one step at a time.



TRANSLATE PROBLEMS INTO PLAIN ENGLISH



What does that mean? It means asking yourself what the problem is asking, rather than just memorizing formulas. When you give meaning to anything, you're much more likely to remember it because of how our brains work. So read $a^2+b^2=c^2$ as "squaring the triangle's longest side (hypotenuse) is the same thing as adding the squares of both of the other sides together."

ANALYZE BEFORE YOU COMPUTE



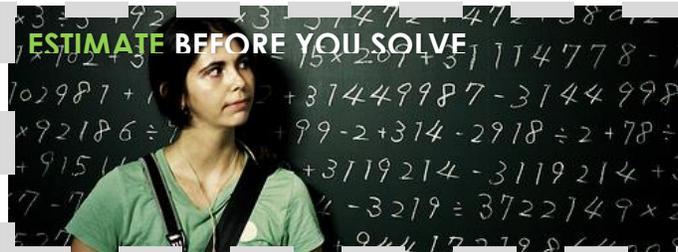
Set the problem up before you solve it. When you're working on a problem that's worth a lot of points, read it slowly. Read it twice. Make a checklist of each thing that the question is asking for so you don't miss any parts. Write the operations and/or formulas you need for each of those parts next to them. When you take the time to break the problem down, you're more likely to answer it correctly.

MAKE IT VISUAL



There are many math problems that come with a graph or diagram, sometimes those very images can be part of the problem. Figure out before your test how to make the problem real to you with visuals. Using color can also help stimulate your brain. Draw what you can do with that math to help you understand how it's being used and it may remind you what the next logical step is.

ESTIMATE BEFORE YOU SOLVE



If you understand what it is you're trying to do, you should be able to study the problem and come up with a ballpark guess for the solution. If the numbers are all low numbers, you shouldn't end up with a number in the thousands. If you're only working with whole numbers, maybe question your answer if you got a really complex mixed fraction. You can catch mistakes by being aware of what to expect.

TIME DRILLS AND FORMULA REVIEW



There are a couple of techniques that are most effective when done before the exam alongside or after regular studying. One is time drills: practicing working problems with a timer or study partner who can time you will help you increase your speed and efficiency with problems. Try making sticky notes with formulas on them and posting them where you will frequently see them to help you remember them.