**Homework**

**Understand the Purpose of Homework.**  Instructors do not give you homework assignments to make your life miserable (well some might, but most don’t!).  Homework assignments are given to help you to learn the material in the class and to develop good reasoning and problems solving skills.

Mathematics is just not a subject that most people will instantly understand every single topic after hearing the instructors lecture.  Most people need to work on some problems in order to really start to understand the topic.  That is the point of the homework.  It gives you a set of problems that will help you to understand the topics.

Remember that it almost always seems easier to watch an instructor doing problems on the board than it actually is.  You won’t know if you truly understand the material and can do the problem if you don’t attempt the homework.

* **Have The Actual Assignment.**   This may seem like a silly tip, but make sure that you accurately write down the assignment and due date.  This is one of the more common mistakes that students make with homework.
* **Do the Assignment Promptly.**  You should always do the assignment as soon after the lecture as possible while the lecture is still fresh in your mind.  Do not wait until the last minute to do the whole assignment when comments made by the instructor are no longer fresh in your mind.  Often these little asides that an instructor makes won’t seem important at the time, but when it comes time to doing the homework the reason for making the comment will become clear.
* **Be Organized.**  When you start working on homework make sure that you’ve got all the materials that you’ll need to do the homework such as notes and textbook.
* **Review.**  Go back over the lecture for each section and review any examples that the instructor worked to make sure that you understand the ideas from that section.  Make note of any common errors that your instructor may have mentioned.  Do the same with the text book.  Read the section and note examples worked and common errors mentioned in the text book.
One of the biggest roadblocks in doing homework that I’ve seen in many students is that they completely ignore the notes and/or text.  They look at a problem and if they can’t see how to do it they give up and go to the next problem.  Often there will be a similar problem in the notes and/or text that can help you to get started!
* **Read/Follow the Directions.**  Make sure that you read and follow all the directions for both the homework set and the individual problems.
* **Be Neat.**  Make sure that you write neatly.  This will help the instructor as he/she is grading the assignment and you when you are going over the assignment in preparation for an exam.
* **Show All Work.**  Make sure that you show all your work.  Do not just give the answer.  Many instructors will not accept homework that consists only of answers and no work.  Also, do not skip large chunks of the work.  Instructors aren’t mind readers and so they won’t know how you got from Step 1 to Step 3 unless you also show Step 2.  This is also important if you made a mistake in Step 2.  If the instructor can’t determine how you got from Step 1 to Step 3 you’re liable to lose far more points than you would have lost for the error in Step 2 had you shown it.
Showing your work will also help you when you are reviewing for the exam.
* **Check Your Work.**  Always go back over your work and make sure that you’ve not made any simple arithmetic/sign errors.