

TIPS ON USING YOUR MATH TEXTBOOK

Your math textbook is a very valuable tool. Used wisely, it can help you build strong mathematical skills. Here are some suggestions of things you can do that will help you get the maximum benefit out of your book:

- (1) SKIM. Each time your instructor assigns you a new section of material, begin your study by skimming through that section in your book to get a feel for what is being presented.
- (2) READ. Then read the section slowly, concentrating on understanding the material.
- (3) REREAD. Reread the section one or more times until you have mastered it.
- (4) LIST QUESTIONS. As you read, make a list of questions about things that are not clear to you. If you seek assistance from a teacher or tutor, having a list of specific trouble items will greatly aid that person in knowing how to help you.
- (5) USE CARDS. On 3"x5" cards record new terms and definitions, formulas, points emphasized in the text, sample problems, and anything that you find difficult and need to work on more. You may want to put on cards one example for each type of problem you study. Regular review of the cards will aid your mastery of the material. The cards can be reviewed during your odd moments of time such as while you are waiting for a class to begin. Reviewing the cards is an excellent way to prepare for a quiz or an exam.
- (6) WORK SAMPLE PROBLEMS. Work through sample problems for yourself. Simply reading them will not give you the depth of comprehension that actually doing them will.
- (7) WORK EXERCISE PROBLEMS. Work through the exercise problems. When you have finished the problems, check your answers against those which the book provides. This will give you feedback on whether you are doing the problems correctly. Avoid looking at the answers until you have finished the problems. If you have a problem you can't solve, work it out as much as you can, then look up the correct answer. The answer may give you a clue as to what is missing in your problem-solving process. Attempt to rework the problem, making whatever changes are necessary. Work problems until you understand them.
- (8) READ AHEAD. Read ahead in your text. Become familiar with each section of material before your teacher presents it in class. By doing this, it will be easier for you to follow your teacher's instruction. You will also be prepared to ask questions which otherwise might not arise until you start to do your homework.
- (9) KNOW YOUR TEXT. Review the table of contents and thumb through your text to find out what's in it. Many texts include a glossary and/or tables of numbers which may be very useful to you.