

Dear potential student,

Welcome to online math! Are you unfamiliar with the online course format? Well let me give you some pointers on what to expect, things you can do to stay on task and just a general overview of my online experience, to help yours be more rewarding! To begin, a few things will be expected of you upon entering the course. You will need a fully functional internet connection because the due dates will unfortunately not wait for you if your internet connection isn't working. I, unfortunately, had experienced this problem during a few of the storms; it's just an issue to be aware of. You will be expected to maintain your own schedule. Assignments still have due dates, like all college assignments but, there will be no teacher breathing down your neck reminding you to hand it in. It is solely up to you. You should take some time to reflect on your abilities to maintain your own schedule, and although it seems great sometimes it can be difficult. Also, be aware that online classes are much more impersonal and can be somewhat intimidating when you first begin, but if you relax and get yourself acquainted with the resources you will find there is still just as much help available as with a regular class, so stay calm and spend some time becoming familiar with the website.

You will need to develop some kind of personal techniques and strategies to stay on top of all the work. Some of these strategies are simple, little things to help remind you. You could create a shortcut to the website and place it on your desktop, or you could print out your semester schedule of due dates and hang it somewhere very visible. What I did, is hang it below one of my light switches that I used daily. I highlighted my completed assignments to not only keep track of what I have accomplished but also because it attracted my eyes to the paper. Keeping track of my schedule was my most difficult problem, using that simple solution was an amazing stress saver. Another strategy that I found helpful was to do multiple assignments when I found myself with nothing to do for a few hours. It kept my stress level low as well, knowing that I wouldn't have to rush to finish an assignment that was due in just a few hours, definitely keeps a good simple "flow" to the class. I couldn't stress more that the best strategy you could have is to get your work done early, especially with the written assignments. It was so easy to forget about them because they weren't due until a test day, but trust me, get them done! Or you will rush and worry and not learn anything if you try to do them all the night before the test. I've been there! It was a nightmare!

My worst enemies in the online course are those four sinister little words that haunt college students, "I'll do it later." Those words caused me a lot of grief and missed assignments. Really, don't "do them later" what I found helpful to combat those words was to keep the website open and take the assignment very slowly when I just DIDN'T want to do any work. (Everyone knows, those days happen) Do one problem, then go play a game for a little bit, then come back and do another problem, then do something else, then do another one until it's all done. It'll feel like you didn't even do it, because you aren't bogged down for an hour with your mind buried deeply in math, that can become very draining on those "I'll do it later" days, so just take it slow!

It's so easy to come rushing into an online course and think "this'll be a breeze, I can sleep in and do my work whenever I want, yup...this is the life." I tried not to think that, but it was a bit hard not to and ended up missing some stuff because of it. If I had to do this class over again I would try and create a

professional environment in my home to maintain some discipline during the semester. It'll really save you the grief of "damn, I really should have paid more attention." Be careful of that train of thought it can be a sneaky nemesis.

Do you have good study habits? You're lucky if you do because I sure don't! I found some study habits that's worked well for me though, if you're a little more like me and fall to the way side when it comes to studying. First, use the "view as an example" button on the online work. It's an amazing tool! I read through the book trying to understand the formulas and the reasons behind "WHY" but the "view as an example" button was the most PRACTICAL study tool I could find. It has step by step instructions on how to solve a problem, following those steps helped me to learn how to solve a problem much faster than understanding the equation behind it (although teachers probably wouldn't want me to tell you that.) Second, take your time with the online quizzes, they may seem like a burden, but they are a great tool in disguise. They make you do similar problems over and over again until you get them right; it'll give you a chance to become even more familiar with the "step by step" of solving it. Lastly, pay attention when you do the written assignments, which is a good tool because it gives you problems in different forms helping you recognize problems that look different but are solved in the same way.

The three worst things you could do are: fall into the "I'll do it later mindset", neglect your written assignments, and DON'T be afraid to ask the teacher for help if you're really stuck and frustrated. Don't be scared off by the online course though! It comes with its own fair share of issues but just go into the course with guns blazing, having confidence and determination to get good marks and be sure to follow the schedule closely and I think anyone will be a good online student. Good luck anyone interested in taking online math, hope I brought you some helpful tips!