

■ MATH • SOS ■

Studying for a math test is hard.

There are no real narratives to follow if you don't understand something, and very often no fresh problems to tackle. Frustration often sets in. Here, a noted tutor gives some helpful hints on how students can successfully help themselves. Pass these on to your children.

So you aren't sure how to study for a math test? Or maybe you are just anxious about math. Preparing for a math exam and overcoming math anxiety is tricky and somewhat unfamiliar territory. Here are some helpful hints on how to tackle math studying.

TIP #1: START EARLY

Preparation for exams should begin earlier than the day before the test. You cannot cram an entire unit of information into an all-nighter. Get started at a week before the exam.

TIP #2: ORGANIZE

- List all the topics that need to be covered. Take a piece of paper and divide it into three columns. Label each as, "trouble topics," "iffy topics," or "topics I know."
- Look through old homework assignments and write down the topics you had trouble with under the "trouble" category, the topics you aren't sure of in the "iffy" category, and the topics you feel confident with in the "topics I know" category.
- Use a calendar to devote 3 days to your "trouble topics," 2 days to your "iffy topics," and 2 days for general review/practice.

TIP #3: DO

Math is learned by doing problems. Take all your old homework assignments and a clean sheet of paper. Re-write all the problems that you answered incorrectly the first time around. Solve the problems for practice. What do you do with the trouble column? What if you can't solve the problem correctly? How do you know if it is correct? Does it help to study with a buddy?

TIP #4: PRE-TEST

- Grab your textbook and homework assignments. Take a sheet of paper and create a practice test. Use the problems that your teacher assigned and your

textbook by writing down 5 problems from each night of homework.

Now you've got a mock test.

- Have a friend do the same thing but with a different set of questions. Make a copy of the mock test you created and switch with a friend.
- You can also check out these websites for practice problems:

HELP For Grade Levels:

1 — 8	www.dositey.com
7 — 12	www.math.com
9 — 12	www.freemathhelp.com

TIP #5: FLASHCARDS

Once you have decided what you need to study and how much time you need to spend studying it is time to actually study. One of the best ways to actually memorize the information is by making flashcards. Use these transportable study aids to memorize formulas.

TIP #6: GET HELP

If you are having trouble memorizing something or a particular concept is just not sinking in get help before it is too late. Ask your teacher to go over a glitch you might be having.

TIP #7: STAY CALM

Have a positive attitude walking into the exam. Before looking at any problems write down any formulas or hints that you have worked on during your preparation. Once you have written down your hints begin working on the problems.

Do not panic at the exam! Even if at first glance, the test is overwhelming, remember to breathe. If a question seems too hard, answer all the questions you know, then return to the ones you left blank. Remind yourself that you are prepared.

TIP #8: DON'T RUSH

You have spent at least two weeks studying so what's another couple of minutes? Work through the exam slowly and read all the questions before answering them. Make sure to use the checking method, such as plugging the answer back into the question, whenever possible.

—Alexandra Mayzler is a principal with **Thinking Caps Tutoring** in Manhattan.

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