

Journal Writing in Math Class

What's this All About?



I've never written in math class before!!

Possibly for the first time in your life, you will be expected to keep a mathematics journal this year. You are to write 1 entry every 2 weeks. Your journal will be collected every other Friday – keep your eye on moodle to see when it is due.

What do you do with a math journal? It should be a place where you write down your **ideas about problems** that we have completed in class (correctly) and write a written commentary about the methods used, new topics learned, theorems proven, extension questions it posed for you, and other entries that are related to the problems and topics we cover **in your own words**. It can also be a place where you question topics or specific problems that you don't understand. This gives the opportunity for you and I to have a little conversation in writing about what is confusing to you.

It is important that you write about your own thought process. Begin by writing down the problem – what page it was on and what the problem asked for. Then think about what questions it raised for you.

1. What was the question actually asking you to do?
2. Did you know how to do it right away?
3. Was this question easy for you or did you have to reach into your prior knowledge and really think about how it connected to other problems you had done?
4. Did you have to wait until we went over it in class to understand it fully?
5. What exactly did the person presenting it in class say that made you understand?
6. How did that conversation in class help you to understand it better?
7. Was it a drawing or diagram that helped or was it seeing another person's perspective or insight that made the difference?
8. Finally, what did you learn from the problem and did that concept connect to any other problem(s) we have done?

In your writing make sure that you go into these details to help you to see your process of learning the idea, problem or concept and this will help you to understand your own learning better.

So what are the big expectations for me?

For the term, the following are the major expectations:

1. Entries will be dated as of the date the topics were discussed.
2. Entries will include written commentary on problems, formulas, class discussion and interpretation of ideas.
3. This will be an ongoing process, not to be done all in one night before the journal is due.
4. You will be able to use your journal as a resource during in-class problem sets.
5. This notebook will NOT be a collection of formulas and problems. If you choose to put a formula in your journal, it must be accompanied by an explanation or proof of the formula, and an example.
6. This will NOT be the same notebook in which you do your homework.
7. Your journal grades will all count as a single assessment grade at the end of the semester/midsemester.

At any time during the term, if you would like feedback on your journal writing, please don't hesitate to ask. It is supposed to serve as a learning tool for you and a communication device for you and I.