

# Student **TIP** Sheet

## How to improve your math skills

*The good news is that you can improve your math scores if you try. It takes hard work, but it's worth it. When you improve your math skills, you may get a better grade in math class, but you're sure to learn skills you'll be able to use all your life. This tip sheet gives you ideas about how to get started.*

### How much you learn is up to you

It's up to you to decide how much and how well you're going to learn—your teachers and your parents can help you, but they can't learn for you. Part of what you're learning in high school is how to take responsibility for your own learning. When you're learning math skills, you're also learning *how to learn*—and that's a skill you'll use for the rest of your life, no matter what career you choose.

### Make good use of school resources

- Read your math textbook. It has a lot of information to help you.
- Start your math homework in class whenever you can. That way, you can get help from your teacher if you don't understand something.
- See your math teacher for help. It's a good idea to ask for help as soon as you are having trouble understanding something—don't wait until you've got a big problem.
- Find out about things happening at school that can help you with math—like a math club or peer tutoring.

- *Counting on You* provides remedial help in math after school, in the evening or on weekends. For more information, speak with your math teacher or the Guidance department.

### Get the most benefit from your homework

Homework is designed to help you learn. Here are some ways you can get the most learning benefit from the time you spend doing homework.

- Keep your homework organized. Use a journal or daytimer to keep track of your homework. Use a binder or folder to keep all your math work together in one place.
- Try to have a regular time of day to do your homework—before you're too tired.
- Do extra work on days when you don't have math homework. For example, review math vocabulary and do practice math questions.
- To practice your math communication skills, each week write a summary of what you learned in math this week. Use correct math vocabulary.

- Make sure you have enough time for your homework. You should spend at least 30 to 60 minutes each day on math homework or on extra math practice.
- Keep a good balance between your studies and your after-school activities—like sports, clubs, friends and part-time job.
- Do all your homework. Try to answer every question. Make sure you answer **all parts** of the question.
- Get a homework buddy. This can make homework more enjoyable and give you another person to help you. Choose a math buddy who you think you can study well with.

### What to do if you're having difficulty

- If you're stuck on a particular question or problem, read the question out loud to yourself.
- Break the problem down into parts.
- Ask yourself, what have I done before that looks like this?
- Go back to your textbook or notebook and re-read explanations and examples.
- Remember, there isn't one "right way" to solve the problem—if one approach isn't working, try to come at the problem in a different way. Go back to your textbook, to the section which explains the math work you're doing. There are usually examples that could help you.
- Try every question. Even if you're not sure whether you're solving a problem correctly, you'll learn from trying to solve it and from showing your work—the problem solving approach you used.

### Involve your family

Your parents can give you a lot of support and encouragement as you try to improve your math skills. Even though they may not be experts in math and may not be too

familiar with the new high school math curriculum—here are some ways you can involve them in your learning:

- Talk with your parents about what you're learning in math. Explaining it to them will help you review and consolidate what you've learned.
- Show them assignments and tests and explain what you did to answer the questions or solve the problems.
- Ask your parents for advice or help in keeping your homework organized.
- Ask your parents to help you prepare for quizzes or tests by asking you questions from the math textbook.

### Look for other sources to get help

In addition to your school and your family, there are other places to get help in learning math. Here are just a few examples:

- The Peel board has **homework help information at [www.peelschools.org/students](http://www.peelschools.org/students)**.

- ~~There are other web sites that offer math homework help—for example, [www.tv0.org/eureka](http://www.tv0.org/eureka) and click on "Ask a Teacher."~~
- Check with your Guidance department.
- There are community agencies that offer homework help and homework clubs. Check with your family, friends or neighbours to find out about ones nearest your home.

### Find more ideas on Peel board web site

Go to [www.peelschools.org](http://www.peelschools.org) and go to the Student Stuff section for "Cool Links to Hot Places" for links to more useful math web sites.