

## Improving Your Math-Reading and Homework Skills

### Using Your Textbook

A textbook is useful to complement your daily math lessons. Reading a section in the textbook requires your full concentration. Skimming or skipping lines can invite confusion.

It is a good idea to read the appropriate lesson in the textbook either before or after math class. The approach you take will depend on your learning style.

Be aware that your textbook may come with supplementary resources, such as an online edition, a CD, and an online learning centre, to support multiple learning styles.

#### *Personal Reflection*

- How is your textbook organized to help you learn?
- Which textbook resources can you use to improve your mathematics learning?

### Steps to Completing Your Homework

**Step 1** It is important to reread your notes. Look over the worked examples that your teacher presented during the lesson. They will help you with your homework. Highlight terms, formulas, and steps that you feel are important. You may wish to use a colour-coding system, or some other method of highlighting the key ideas. Make note of anything that you need your teacher to clarify.

#### *Activity*

Create a vocabulary and formula sheet for the unit you are currently working on. Highlight these new terms and formulas in your notes as well. Check the sections in the textbook for items you may be missing. Be sure to update this vocabulary and formula sheet after each lesson.

**Step 2** Follow these steps for each of the teacher's worked examples in your notes. Cover up each solution and try each example on your own. If you have trouble, you can always peek at the solution. Complete each example from the lesson until you are confident enough to be able to teach it to a friend.

#### *Activity*

Teach one example from a lesson to a partner.

**Step 3** Practice is important. In music class, you cannot expect to learn how to play the trumpet by watching your teacher play it. This is also the case in math class. Just watching the teacher do problems on the board will not help you to learn math.

#### *Personal Reflection*

- How many minutes of math homework do you complete per day?
- Do you feel that the time you spend practising math is sufficient to achieve your goals?



**Step 4** It is critical for you to use your class time wisely. Do as many as these homework steps in class as possible, since your teacher is there if you have any difficulties.

***Personal Reflection***

- Do you concentrate on math throughout the whole math class?
- What could you do to stay more focused?

**Step 5** Manage your time at home as well. Studies have shown that it is best to do your homework at the same time each day, and in a positive study environment. Use your daily planner to write down the assigned work and due dates. Do all of your homework.

***Personal Reflection***

- What do you consider to be a positive study environment?
- What percentage of your math homework do you complete each day?

**Step 6** When you complete each math homework problem, show all of the work. Write down each question in addition to each step of the solution. This will come be useful when you are studying your notes before a test.

***Personal Reflection***

- Would someone else be able to look through your completed work and understand each question and solution?
- In what areas could you be more thorough?

**Step 7** Network with other students in your math class and form a study group. If you have questions or problems with your homework, you can phone a friend. You may also wish to refer to **BLM SS-8 Why and How to Seek Help**. Make note of which homework questions you wish the teacher to take up the next day.

***Activity***

Get the names and phone numbers of two students in your class who may be able to help you with homework questions.

**Step 8** If time permits, review a lesson and one or two homework questions from three days ago. This will help to minimize the amount of time you will need to study for your next test.

***Personal Reflection***

- Does the lesson from three days ago relate to today's lesson? How?
- Why are they both part of the same unit?

