

Mr. McDonald's Math Update

Math Philosophy

Math really has two parts; the how and the why. Typically the how of math is easier than the why and often a true understanding of math concepts does not come until the skill has been mastered. I believe that students should be taught both the how and the why. However, this can often lead to confusion, especially when a new concept is first taught. At times your student may come home frustrated as they try to sort out the conceptual side of the math they are learning. If this happens, please remind them that I will direct them towards the skills that they need to master in the days ahead.



Online Resources

Hopefully by now your student has shown you how they can access their textbook online. The website for that access is www.pearsonsuccessnet.com. Your student has an individualized username and password for the website. Along with the textbook access the website has video tutors for each topic. While they are not exciting videos, they can be helpful. Please encourage your student to use these resources when they find themselves confused. The website also has lesson quizzes and chapter tests which the students can use for extra practice. One nice thing about these is that students are able to see if their answers are correct. This gives them immediate feedback regarding their understanding of the material. The quizzes and tutorials can be accessed through the online text or directly at www.phschool.com.

On my website there are links to several websites which have reviews of concepts, printable worksheets, and online games. These can be great resources if a student is struggling with a concept or just needs extra practice

My website is accessible at: <http://mmcdonal.d41teachers.org/teachers/>.

On the website you will find a calendar with homework assignments as well as downloadable worksheets and notes, when applicable.

Homework

Math is a very sequential subject which involves both conceptual knowledge and skill. As a result homework and regular practice are keys to a student's success. If your student is not bringing home work on a regular basis please ask them what they are learning in class. Since your student is in an ad-

vanced math course they should be doing additional review of the material learned in class that day and telling you what they learned is a great way to do that. If your child struggles with the homework on a particular day have them look over their notes, look at the examples in the textbook, and try the video tu-

tor. If they are still having difficulty have them do the assignment to the best of their ability and we will address the confusion the next day in class. You can always keep up with the homework by referencing the homework section of my website.

If you have any questions or need other information please do not hesitate to contact me. If you email me, my goal is to respond within four school days.

I hope this update will be beneficial to your student's progress at school. Thank you for

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Extra Help

If a student need extra help I am available many mornings before school (at 8:00), at lunch depending upon a student's lunch time, and after school (due to coaching this is only on practice or home game days). The main thing is that students should ask me a day in advance if they can come in for extra help. If they ask me on the day they are looking for help I may or may not be available. In addition, there will typically be a study session or two in the days leading up to a test. **Starting next week I am going to try to have a weekly "extra help" time set aside for Thursdays at 8:00 AM.** In order to come to this, students will need to have me sign their passport, or print a pass off my website.

Grades

Academic grades are based upon quizzes and tests. Quizzes count for 40% of a student's academic grade while test count for 60%. Your child will be keeping track of their overall academic grade in their binder beginning next week. They should be able to show you their academic grade at any point. Students will receive occasional (every 2-3 weeks) grade printouts from me which show both their academic grade and all of their assignments. At times I will require these to be signed and returned so that I know you are aware of your child's progress. I will note on my calendar when these are sent home.

Homework assignments are recorded as follows:

Full – on time and complete for full credit

Late – no credit until turned in

Incomplete – no credit until completed and turned in

Half – late or incomplete but has been turned in for partial credit

** – absent, needs to be turned in for full credit

If a student has 3 or more late or incomplete assignments they will be assigned lunch detentions in order to complete them.

Occasionally students may need to retake a test. I am including the school's retake policy.

Studying For Tests

Students need to take tests seriously and begin preparing for them several days in advance. The best way to prepare is to review notes and to practice problems which cover the ideas which will be tested. The textbook has good chapter reviews, a sample test, and extra practice at the back of the book.

This week your child will be bringing home their first test as well as a grade report. They will be required to complete test corrections and return the test with a parent signature.

What is a Retake Test? A retake test is an alternate version of a test. It provides students with a second opportunity to demonstrate what they know and are able to do.

When? A student may retake a test only when his/her score falls in Progressing or Not Meeting. A student may only retake a test at an 84% or below. (Does not apply to quizzes.)

How Often? Only three retakes are allowed per course per year, with only one retake opportunity per test. For Exploratory and Core Extension classes, only one retake opportunity per course is permitted.

Time limits for the retake? Students must commit to retaking the test within two days and retake the actual test within two weeks of receiving the returned test. A student may need up to two days to finish the retake test due to time constraints.

Requirements for retakes:

- A score of 84% and below.
- Only 3 retakes per course per year and for tests only. For Exploratory and Core Extension classes, only one retake opportunity per course is permitted.
- A student must independently secure and complete a retake obligation form, which includes a student and parent signature, dates for retake, and statement of retake plan (corrective).
- The Test Retake Obligation Form must be returned within two days of receiving the returned test.
- Department Retake Obligation Forms will be available in all classrooms and online at the Hadley website.

If the student misses the retake opportunity for any reason other than an excused absence s/he will forfeit his or her retake opportunity for that test and consequently lose one of the three retake opportunities.

How? A student must secure and complete the Test Retake Obligation Form, which requires a student and parent signature, a retake plan, and the obligation to return the form to his/her teacher within two days of the returned test.

How will the final grade be determined? For the 2009/2010 school year – the highest score a student can receive following a retake is an 85%. If the student's score does not improve on the retake, s/he will receive his or her original score.

Where? Retakes will be administered at the Hadley Testing Center (Room 307) before and after school Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. No make up tests are given at the HTC.

- **Students must have their Hadley lanyard with ID for admission to the testing center.**
- AM Testing Session: 8:00 – 8:25 AM – students should arrive at 7:55 AM, check in at the office and report directly to the Testing Center which is located in Room 307. There will be no early morning locker privileges.
- PM Testing Session: 3:30 – 4:00 PM – students should go to their locker immediately after school to secure backpack, homework, etc. Students will be dismissed directly from the Testing Center.