

STUDY STRATEGIES for Students of Mathematics

- Find out what material is going to be covered the next day, and skim the section *before* it's covered in class. Make note of any questions that you have, and be sure to get those questions answered during lecture.
- Use your text. Mark in it. Highlight important material. You bought the text—get your \$\$ worth from it.
- Ask questions in class! A question that you have is likely to be a question that others have. Be the person brave enough to ask, and your classmates will thank you for it.
- Take complete class notes, and read them over as soon as possible after the lecture (while you still remember what was said). Read actively! This means: have pencil and paper beside you, and use them. In particular, re-work all the problems that were covered in class, *without looking at your notes*. If you get stuck, you have your notes to look back at—see where you went wrong, then *close the notes and try again*. You may need to repeat this process several times, but it's worth it.

In the re-reading process, be sure to fill in any gaps in your understanding. This way you will have a complete set of comprehensible notes when it comes time to study for the exams. Remember that the topics emphasized in class are likely to be those that your instructor feels are most important.

- Read the section in the text again, thoroughly, after the lecture.
- Do some mathematics *almost every day*. In this author's opinion, two hours each day is much better than a Saturday marathon.
- Find someone with similar study habits with whom to work. Mathematics is much more fun when you can *talk* about it with someone.
- Use index cards for important definitions, formulas, key problems; or whenever the instructor says "This is important!" Keep the stack of cards with you and flip through whenever you're waiting in line or 'on hold' on the telephone.
- If you don't understand something, seek help *immediately*. The material builds, and it will be difficult to learn new material with gaps in understanding of previous stuff.