

Hello new student!

If you're anything like me, math probably isn't your strongest subject. It's never been mine, so I decided to take Quantitative Reasoning/Math 201 because it seemed less intimidating than the other upper level math options. If that's the case for you, too, just know that while this class may not be as difficult and complicated as statistics or calculus, you should still expect a pretty challenging class. You'll do a lot of work, including online homework problems and quizzes, book homework problems, discussion board assignments, and of course, exams and a final. You'll also encounter lots of formulas (some of which may be brand new to you), lots of word problems, and problems that draw from math classes you've probably already taken before, like algebra and geometry.

A plus side of this class, especially if you're someone who doesn't really like math or finds it boring, is that much of what you'll learn can be applied to the real world. For example, you'll learn about percentages and how you can use them in relation to purchasing things, how to find the area and other measurements of various objects, and how math relates to gambling. I personally found the last few chapters of the book particularly interesting because they dealt with a lot of geometry. Geometry has always been my strongest math subject since I consider myself a visual person and an artist. That's why I felt like some of the content was actually applicable to me, as topics like the golden ratio were covered—I'd learned about it briefly in art classes before, but to learn about it from a true mathematic perspective was very interesting. Other fascinating points include the Fibonacci numbers and other number sequences, and the lessons on voting, which I had never really learned about before.

Another great thing about this class is that you can bring a sheet of notes with you to the exams. That's one 8.5"x11" piece of paper with any formulas you might forget, examples of problems you have trouble with, and any other reminders—on both sides! This was particularly helpful for me because sometimes I'm not a very good test taker. I definitely encourage you to take advantage of the note sheet, as it was something that I believe really helped in my success. Of course, you can't just rely on your notes, so I also encourage you to do your best with the homework. A great feature of the online homework is that you can do most problems an unlimited amount of times. This means that if you get a problem wrong, you can keep requesting a similar problem before the deadline and keep working on them until you get it right and truly understand it. Other great features of the online homework that I utilized include "Help Me Solve This," which will walk you through the problem, and "View an Example," which will show you how to solve a similar problem. These are very helpful features if you're unsure of how to approach a problem. The review feature is great as well, particularly for studying for exams since it lets you view your old homework assignments.

If you've never taken an online class before, something that might be intimidating is the idea of staying organized. What I like to do to stay organized is create a separate folder on my laptop's desktop for all my online math documents. This includes course documents like the syllabus, schedule, and unit checklists. This method would be

particularly helpful if you're taking more than one online class. I also kept written aspects of the course, like written homework from the book or notes while doing the online homework, separate from work from my other classes. I used a three-subject notebook since I took three classes and used one of the sections for my math work. You could also use an entirely separate notebook to keep everything straight.

While it might sound like I was on top of everything, there are definitely some changes I would make if I were to take this class again. For starters, I would be sure to double-check the schedule to make sure I got my online homework in on time every time. I unfortunately forgot about it sometimes and missed a few assignments. I would also try to do all my online homework at least 24 hours in advance—you get extra credit if you do that with 100% on the assignment. I didn't do it for every assignment, and now I wish that I had. I would also try to do the book homework immediately after the online homework. I always found myself overwhelmed with the amount of book homework because I would put it off, but I think it would have been much more helpful to approach it by doing a particular book chapter's homework after doing the matching online homework. I think there was also room to study even harder for exams.

Studying for exams is hardly ever easy. One tip I can share with you is to attend the virtual classroom when it is offered. If you can't, the exam reviews are usually archived, so you can view them on your own time. The virtual classroom sessions usually took place when I couldn't attend due to prior arrangements, but viewing the exam reviews was very helpful. Another study habit that worked well for me was reviewing old online homework assignments and quizzes with the review feature. I could go back and look at any questions I got wrong or struggled with, and it's also helpful to try them out again until you really get them. Another study habit is to get a goodnight's sleep before the exam. It might sound silly, but it really works. All of my exams for this class were on Saturdays, so I was often tempted to stay up late the night before since it was Friday, but I found that I felt much better taking the exams when I slept at a reasonable hour.

This isn't the first online class that I have taken, and it won't be the last, so I have definitely learned a lot about my study habits and the kinds of things I could stand to change along the way. One thing I would change is that I would double-check the schedules every day. Like I said before, I ended up missing a few assignments for this class, and sometimes, homework can be a big part of your grade so that could really hurt you. I would also try to work at more regular hours, if I could help it. Of course, things come up and life happens, so you might not be able to do your homework at the same time every single day, but I feel that having at least a little bit of a routine would be helpful. Lastly, I would try to make sure that I am doing my work in a quiet place, and with no other distractions from the Internet. It can be very tempting to start talking to people on messenger or looking at various websites while doing your homework since it is online, and I'm guilty of doing both sometimes, but it's of course best not to get distracted while doing your work.

Overall, I found this class to be interesting and a good fit for me, so I hope you feel the same way and that you succeed. Good luck!