



This Review Packet Packs a Learning Punch

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One of the secrets of our successful math program has been the making of the “Test Preparation Review Packet” for each test.



This Packet contains five different activities and it’s worth about 10 percent of the final grade. Three of the activities are put on 3 x 5” cards and are designed to be used like flashcards. All of the activities help the students to understand the material and prepare/ review for the tests in an organized way.

Examples and homework

The first activity is to write on 3 x 5” cards each of the math examples in the sections studied. Even though students come with the desire to learn, they often don’t have a clear understanding of how to study effectively. Students who don’t complete homework assignments and miss a lot of classes further complicate matters. When math examples are given in the text, the weak students just look over the examples (if at all), and then rush to do the real homework.

But, because these students don’t understand the examples, they don’t understand the homework. To encourage students to learn from the examples, I require the examples to be written on one side of a 3 x 5” card, and the work and solutions written on the back. The students use these cards to study portions of material at a time when the book would be too cumbersome.

Vocabulary words

Secondly, the students must choose five vocabulary words. Weak or ill-prepared math students are often low-skill reading students as well. Like many of us, students skip words they don't know and assume that understanding will just come. The vocabulary word is written on one side of the card and the definition on the other side. "Variables," "inequality," and "reciprocal" are just three examples of words our students have chosen to put on these cards.

Find the main idea

Thirdly, finding the main idea is as important in math as it is in reading. Our math classes allow the students to use a 3 x 5" card on the test, so in this class, each student must make a test card. This card may contain any information students might need on the test. By constructing this card, the students must summarize, synthesize and personalize important information for the test.

Review sheet

Lastly, the math classes also give a review sheet before each test that must be correctly completed. The review sheet contains about 50-60 problems with their answers. If the student can do the review sheet, she or he probably understands the material and is ready for the test. If the student has problems with the review sheet, he or she can seek the appropriate help before the test.