

Learning Tip:

# What Makes Math Challenging

Dr. Gary Au  
[au@math.usask.ca](mailto:au@math.usask.ca)

University of Saskatchewan

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A few reasons why math can be challenging to learn:

- ▶ Math requires developing new cognitive skills that weren't as central to our evolutionary past.
- ▶ Incorrect final answers can mask partial understanding and thus lead to undeservedly harsh self-assessment.
- ▶ Higher-level math relies on a foundation of previously learned concepts. E.g., failure to solve a problem in calculus is not necessarily due to not understanding calculus.
- ▶ Some math concepts can feel abstract and removed from everyday experience.
- ▶ Societal stereotypes about math being difficult can lead to anxiety and avoidance, creating a negative feedback loop that hinders progress.

Understanding these challenges can help us devise specific strategies to overcome them!