

How to get the most out of office hours

As your TA, part of my job is to help you learn the material for Math 220. Additionally as a TA for an introductory course, part of my job is to help you gain skills that will help you be successful in future college classes. I find that one of the most important things to do to be successful in college, especially in math classes, is to attend office hours regularly. Here are some suggestions for how to best take advantage of office hours. Note that following this advice requires starting your work ahead of time.

Things you can do before going to office hours:

- Read through your notes from lecture. Mark any definitions or examples that you do not understand.
- Look at the homework problems. Think about what tools from lecture you will use to solve them.
- Read Paul's Online Notes (<http://tutorial.math.lamar.edu/>)
- Watch a video explaining the concept (<https://www.youtube.com/user/patrickJMT> is a good place to start)
- Talk to other students in the class.

Things to do in office hours:

- Work on your homework for Math 220.
- Work through other problems from class, the textbook, or discussion.
- Ask me questions (See list of suggestions).
- Create a study group with other students.
- Ask for my help coming up with a plan to manage your workload.

You should ask me for help before you do any of the following things:

- Look up the solution online. In general, I can give you a hint that will allow you to solve more of the problem yourself.
- Give up on an assignment.
- Decide that you aren't "good at math".
- Drop the class.

Items to bring to office hours:

- Class notes
- Homework

Questions to ask me:

- I do not understand this example from class, can you explain it?
- I cannot find where I made a mistake in this problem, can you help?
- I do not understand this topic at all, can you explain it a different way?
- I do not know where to start this problem, can you give me a hint?

Questions I might ask you:

- What have you tried?
- Can you connect your question to a topic from lecture?
- Have you reread your lecture notes on this topic?
- Can you explain to me how you understand this concept?
- How is the problem you are working on similar to this example? How is it different from the example?