

MATHEMATICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Prompt. Write a mathematical autobiography (in 500–1000 words).

You're welcome to take this prompt in any direction you like, but if you're having trouble getting started, here are some questions you might ponder.

- What early experiences do you remember having related to math?
- What are some memorable (both good and bad) experiences you've had with math teachers, in grade school and in college?
- Have you had any mathematical mentors who weren't teachers in a classroom setting (eg, parents, siblings, friends)?
- How has your attitude towards math changed over the years?
- What is something that feels good and/or exciting about learning math? What do you find scary about it?
- How does this particular math class, and math as a whole, fit into your goals in life?
- Have you found it to be socially acceptable to hate math? If so, why do you think that is?
- Have you noticed any differences in attitudes towards math between here and wherever you grew up?
- What do you think mathematics *is*? How would you define it for an alien who is trying to understand what kinds of things human beings think about and how mathematics fits into the landscape of human inquiry?

But why!? You likely weren't expecting an essay in a math class. One reason that I'm having you do this is just that I would like to get to know you and your history with mathematics. Another reason is that there's research in pedagogy suggesting that reflecting on your experiences and molding a coherent narrative out of your reflections can be very beneficial to the learning process.

Help! Remember that you have access to the Writing Center (<https://www.coloradocollege.edu/offices/colketcenter/writing-center/>) for help with writing assignments.

Grading. I do want to be able to understand what you've written, but I won't be marking you off for your spelling or grammar or anything of the sort. All I'm looking for is evidence that you've genuinely reflected on your relationship with math, and that you've put some effort into organizing your thoughts on paper.