

Preparing for Math Final Exams

MATH FINAL EXAM PREPARATION STRATEGIES

PREPARE USING PREVIOUS FINAL EXAMS.

Using final exams from previous semesters is the most efficient way to review specific problem types and assess your own readiness for the exam. As you do this, keep track of the following as your measures of readiness:

1. **Identify the problem types that you KNOW WELL.** Review these but focus on reviewing material with which you are less familiar.
Possible examples: solving quadratic equations, finding the equation of a line, completing the square, finding the center and radius of a circle.
2. **Identify the problem types you have NOT QUITE MASTERED.** Review these until you know them well and are confident in your ability to work them.
Possible examples: adding or subtracting rational expressions, solving logarithmic equations, rationalizing a binomial denominator, identifying the vertex of a parabola, work-rate problems.
3. **Identify the problem types you struggle with or DO NOT KNOW** Review these, get help to understand them and work to master them.
Possible examples: work-rate problems, mixture problems, variation, using properties of exponents with rational exponents). It is important that you identify the kinds of problems you struggle with or do not know how to work.



5. **Check your answer if possible.** When solving an equation or factoring, it is important to check for accuracy. Do this whenever possible. Some problems **require** that you check your answer like solving a rational equation, solving a radical equation, or solving a logarithmic equation.
6. **Write down formulas you need immediately** at the top of the exam. Do this while your mind is fresh, and you remember them.
7. **Work the problems first that you know well.** This allows you to give attention to the problems you are most confident with while your mind is the most clear. Save for last the problems you struggle with most.
8. **Follow directions carefully.** Look for specific details such as “*Which of the following is a...*” as opposed to “*Which of the following is not a...*” Emphasis may not be added to the actual directions. Know the difference between being asked to “**solve**” an *equation* versus being asked to “**simplify**” an *expression*.
9. If it helps, **stand up or stretch** if you feel tired or you are getting stressed. Just do not disturb others near you.
10. **Mark your scantron sheet and your exam copy.** This will help your professor to trace your results if a scantron sheet is lost or is not read during the scanning process.

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Edited and formatted by the Academic Resource Center