

Algebra 1 Course Guide 2009—2010

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Welcome!

Welcome to Algebra. The subject of algebra is the foundation for nearly all the math and science you will need to use in high school and in life. Some students find it challenging to learn, but I am confident that with a good effort, everyone in our class will be able to succeed.

This course emphasizes algebraic language, structure, concepts and skills. Major topics include algebraic properties and the real number system, functions and their graphs, linear equations and inequalities, linear regression and modeling, systems of linear equations and inequalities, polynomial and factoring, algebraic fractions and real world applications. (From *LHS Program of Studies 2003-2004*: <http://lhs.lexingtonma.org/Program/index.html>) A detailed list of the topics we will cover is on the Math Department Web Site: <http://lhs.lexingtonma.org/Dept/Math/22x/outlinea1b.html>.

Course Materials

The text for the course is *Algebra 1* by Larson, Boswell, Kanold and Stiff (McDougal Littell). We will also make extensive use of handouts. In addition to these materials, you will need:

- A 3-ring binder (for organizing handouts, tests, etc.),
- A notebook (this can be either the 3-ring binder or a separate wire-bound notebook) The notebook should allow sheets to be neatly removed for handing in.
- Graph paper. This can be either separate sheets for your 3-ring binder, or a wire-bound notebook of graph paper.
- A TI-83 or TI-84 graphing calculator.

Work done in class and for homework should be done in your math notebook. Since homework may be collected in class, you should do homework on a separate sheet of paper (not the same sheet as notes) that can be removed from the notebook.

I will expect you to bring your math notebook, any current handouts, your calculator, and several pens or pre-sharpened pencils to class every day.

Classroom Behavior and Attendance

I expect your classroom behavior will be characterized by *respect*. Respect for yourself, your classmates, your teacher, and your school. Detailed rules are in your Student Handbook.

I strictly adhere to the attendance policy for class tardiness. There is no “grace” time for first-period classes; you are expected to be in your seat when the bell rings at 7:45 (8:35 on Wednesday). I will grant a brief (2 minutes) grace at other times. If you are tardy, I expect you will enter the room and take your seat quietly.

Teacher Absence

The following, quoted from the Student/Parent Handbook, applies if I should be unexpectedly absent from class:

There is no “10 minute rule” after which students may dismiss themselves. If no teacher appears, one student should go to the nearest office to report the absence of the teacher and await instructions.

Grading

Your quarter grade will be based on a combination of class participation (approximately 15—25%) and tests and quizzes (75—85%)

Class Participation includes the following components:

- Daily homework assignments (more details below)
- Coming to class prepared, with pens or pencils, notebook, calculator, and any current handouts
- Taking notes (see my web site for some guidelines on effective note-taking)
- Working diligently on any in-class assignments, such as warm-up problems.
- Keeping handouts, homework, and notes well-organized in your binder and notebook

Tests and Quizzes will include:

- “Homework quizzes”, consisting of 1 to 3 problems similar (or even identical) to recent homework problems.
- Longer tests and quizzes, which will be given every 2 to 3 weeks.

No make-ups will be given unless you are absent-excused from class on the day of the test or quiz. Make-ups may or may not be the same test/quiz as the original. You may take a make-up in the math testing center during any of your free blocks, or with me after school by appointment.

Extra time will not be allowed on tests and quizzes unless you have an individualized education plan that specifies extra time.

Cheating will not be tolerated and will result in an automatic zero.

Homework

Diligent completion of daily homework is essential for success in this course. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, homework assignments are due at the beginning of the next class. I may collect or inspect homework on any day. I may also call on you to present your work in class at any time. I will accept late homework at the next class meeting after the due date (that is, 1 class late) for ½ credit. I will grant no credit after that.

Since homework is primarily for student practice, you will be given full credit for a good faith effort to complete *all* of the assigned problems. A good faith effort means you must do one of two things for every assigned problem:

- Copy the problem into your notebook, and give a worked-out solution (*not* just the answer). If the problem is odd-numbered, check your answer in the back of the text.
- If you cannot solve the problem, you must still copy the problem into your notebook. You must also identify (by page and number) the example problem in the text that is most like the problem you can’t solve, or write a statement or question that explains where you got stuck.

Any problem that involves graphing must be done on graph paper.

Making up missed assignments

You are responsible for learning of and making up assignments missed due to any absence. You must also learn if homework was checked or collected on any day you were absent, and show me that homework. Assignments originally due on the first day of an excused absence are due when you return. Per LHS policy, for assignments given on days you were absent, you will have the same number of days as you were absent to make up the assignment. I will grant extensions for unusual circumstances, but you must speak with me on your return to class and agree to a revised due date.

My Web Site

My web site includes an assignment blog where I post daily assignments and announcements such as upcoming test dates. There are also copies of my schedule, this course guide, and links to other useful math-oriented web sites. The assignment blog is primarily for the convenience of absent students and parents.

If you are in class, copy the assignment from the board—you are responsible for the assignment even if the web site is not updated or not accessible for any reason

Extra Help and Outside Web Sites

If you need extra help, please seek it as early as possible. DO NOT wait until just before a test or quiz. You have at least four options for extra help:

- A meeting with me. My schedule will be posted in the classroom and on my web site. You can drop by during any of my free blocks, although I recommend you make an appointment. You can usually find me either in the Math Teacher Office (room 713) or my classroom (room 810).
- The Math Tutoring Center. The center is staffed by community volunteers, and is open during the school day (not after school). I will announce in class when the center reopens for the 08-09 year.
- The National Honor Society Peer Tutoring Program. Information is on flyers posted around the school and in the library.
- Paid tutors. The Math Department secretary has a list of paid tutors. The department maintains this list as a convenience for students and parents. The department HAS NOT screened or qualified these tutors, and DOES NOT recommend or endorse any tutor. *Caveat emptor*.

My web site includes a document with links to useful mathematics web sites. These include both content-oriented sites, as well as several sites with good summaries of math study and test-taking skills, including dealing with test anxiety.

Dear student and parent(s)/guardian(s):

Please sign below to confirm that you have reviewed this Algebra 1 course guide. Return the signed form by Thursday, September 3. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions (see the top of the guide for contact information).

Thank you.

Student signature: _____

Student name (print): _____

Parent/guardian signature: _____

Parent/guardian name (print): _____