

# Ten Tips for a Successful AP Calculus Class

1. **Attendance! Attendance! Attendance!**  
Attend every class. Not only will you keep your exemptions, but also you will not have to learn the material on your own.
2. **Do Your Homework Every Night!**  
Remember that the goal of an assignment is to understand the material – not just to get the problems done. When you can do a problem by yourself with no outside help, you understand that problem. There is absolutely nothing wrong with asking questions or seeking help from your fellow students or me. Everyone will need help sooner or later in this course. Also, make sure to show work for each problem and if you use a calculator, make sure to show the set up. It is exceedingly rare to earn points on the Free Response section for “bald answers” (answers that have no work backing them up.)
3. **Be Honest!**  
Please don't copy answers from the back of the book or from a friend – that is considered cheating. Every assignment, quiz, log, etc. that I assign is designed to help you develop your understanding of a topic and your critical thinking skills. Without practice, you will never achieve your full potential. Work with another student or me on problems that are difficult for you, but make sure that you come away with a complete understanding of the processes and skills used in each problem. Believe me, you will need to call upon them every day in this course!
4. **Form a Study Group!**  
One of the best ways to learn something is to have to explain it to someone else. I encourage each of you to find a study group that you feel comfortable with and set up regular meeting times.
5. **Be a Risk-Taker!**  
You must try each problem that is given and never leave a problem blank. Even if you are unsure of what the correct solution is, you could earn points for partial solutions. Also, your brain is not actively engaged in the problem until the pencil hits the paper and you start writing things down. Some of the problems will require some serious thinking. Take time with them, talk about them, take breaks if you are getting frustrated (which you will) and then ask questions if you are stuck. Enjoy the process; you are learning!
6. **Review Constantly!**  
Lucky for you, every test is cumulative, and we will review extensively in the class; therefore, review is somewhat automatic. Do not hesitate to go back and review your Algebra, Geometry and Trigonometry skills. Many of the errors that students make on tests and quizzes in this class are not calculus errors – they are algebra, geometry, and trig mistakes!
7. **Organize!**  
Your success depends on your ability to recall (or find, relearn, and then remember) concepts and techniques that were introduced earlier. If your notes and assignments are scattered about, folded inside the covers of your book, and on the floorboard of your car, you are sunk.
8. **Learn Time Management!**  
I assign many things in this class and calculus requires that you make a substantial investment of TIME. Most things have an extended amount of time to complete them, but if you wait until the night before things are due, you will feel like I am being unreasonable in the amount of work I assign. Logs are due on Friday so start working on them on Monday. If you have two weeks to complete a packet, try to do 10 – 15 problems a night. This will make the workload more reasonable, and I will not seem quite so mean!
9. **Become as Self-Sufficient as Possible.**  
There are many of you and just one of me. Your time is too valuable to just sit and wait – stuck in neutral – for help from me. Look in your textbook and notes for sample problems that might help. Find another teacher that is not busy or consult with your study group.
10. **Remain Positive!**  
Do not let this class or any class get you down. Please keep things in perspective and prioritize when necessary. I believe that every one of you can be successful in this course and you must believe that too.