

## Guidelines for Written Work

Students are required to follow the following guidelines when writing written responses. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in a loss of points. Students should go through each of the following requirements before submitting an assignment to make sure all requirements have been satisfied for each problem.

**1)** Remember that the main point of these assignments is to demonstrate your understanding of how to APPLY your algebraic skills to these contextual problems. So *simply submitting algebra without explanations will not earn you many points. It is the ability to APPLY the knowledge that is being assessed.* **So after doing the mathematics, you must write complete sentences that explain the meaning of your answer(s) in context.** The questions you are solving involve applications. So when you get a numerical answer, or a point, you then need to write a complete sentence or two that explains the **meaning** of the answer. This is extremely important!! Do NOT skip this step. Understanding the meaning of the mathematics is one of the main points of this course.

**2)** Always identify the meaning of the variables used in the equation(s). If the equation is not given, find the equation and be sure to show any work involved to get the equation. Please note that there are only two letters you should be defining for each problem: the variables. No other letters should be included to complicate matters (constants should be specific numbers in the problem...not letters). You should NOT assign letters for constants! Constants should be specific values in your equations.

**3)** If you are asked to solve a problem *symbolically*, then you need to show all work. If you think the problem is easy enough to do in your head, then you should still write down a step or two to indicate HOW you did it in your head. If the problem doesn't really require *work*, then you need to *explain* how you arrived at your answer (this may involve a picture, or sentences, or an example). One of the main points of this course is learning how to **clearly articulate mathematical solutions**. You should write answers as if you are teaching someone HOW to do the problem. In this way you will clearly demonstrate your understanding of how to arrive at the answer.

**4)** If you are asked to solve the problem *graphically*, then you need to briefly explain your calculator steps, and include sketches of the graphical solution. Your graph should be labeled with the meaning of the horizontal axis, and the meaning of the vertical axis, and the scales along both axis. Any "solution" point on the graph should be clearly labeled. Any calculator steps (calc intersect, calc value, etc) should be briefly outlined.

**5)** Write all solutions in an articulate, well-thought-out manner. **Use complete sentences.** Use correct mathematical vocabulary. Write professionally. Writing and speaking as a professional is an important skill to master in college, and math classes are no exception to this. Try to impress! If it's worth doing, then it is worth doing well!

**7)** Check your work before handing it in. Most of the things we do in the class we learn how to do in more than one way, so try the problem in more than one way to make sure you get the same answer. It is not required to always include this step on your solution. But it's a good idea to do it...and you are free to include your checking on your assignment.