The following suggestions were made by successful math students

- Prepare for each class. Try all homework problems, even if they won't be collected and look over the material to be covered. This will make the lecture easier to understand.

- Attend all classes and try to arrive early. If you come a few minutes before the start of class, you can choose the seat you wish. You can also use this extra time to ask questions, relax, become acquainted with your classmates, and to organize yourself. If you must miss a class, talk to the instructor about missed material and ask a "study buddy" to take notes for you.

- Try not to let the lecture get ahead of you. Attempt both to listen and to copy the work from the board. Keep your text open for easy reference. If the lecture is going too fast, politely ask the instructor to slow down. If the lecture continues to go too fast for you to write and understand at the same time, most successful students opted to just keep writing unless the material was also covered in a textbook or handout. They then used their lecture notes after class to assist with understanding the material.

- Write down both the material on the board and the instructor's comments. Each problem worked on the board, you need to note three things: the source or title of the problem, the work shown on the board, and the verbal explanations provided by the instructor. It is wise to write down the reason for each step and to draw arrows to show substituted quantities. Also note places which are unclear and will require additional thinking. Some students use different colored pens to code their notes. For example, the body of your notes might be in blue, additional comments in black, and important hints in red.

- Be an active listener. Try to think ahead and anticipate what will follow. Contribute to the class by participating in class discussions and asking questions.

- Look for the general concept behind each problem. Recognize that understanding the concept is usually more important than the specific numbers. If you believe that the instructor has made an error, quietly point it out. (Instructors are human—they make errors too.)

- Ask questions when you feel unsure. Don't feel shy. It is quite likely that several other students have the same question you do. If you feel that your question is not immediately relevant, if you feel you are asking more than your share of questions, or if you sense annoyance, arrange to meet the instructor outside of class, preferably during office hours.

- Listen for special statements. Carefully note when the instructor makes comments such as "This is important," "This is a common error," or "You will want to know this for the next exam."

- Review and organize your notes soon after the lecture. This will help reinforce your new knowledge. If there is anything you don't understand, ask a classmate, go to the Math Lab, or ask the instructor. If possible, clear up the matter before the next lecture.

- Don't shut down your learning just because you don't like your instructor. You will likely prefer some instructors to others, but try to separate the course content from the personality or teaching style of your particular teacher. If all else fails, consider other learning techniques such as books or video tapes.

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