

# Math Anxiety

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Coping, Growing, Unleashing Your Inner Mathematician

By Professor Prime

# What is Math Anxiety ?

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- Math anxiety is a feeling of anxiety that people have about their ability to understand and do mathematics. It can be minor but often elicits a powerful emotional and sometimes physical response to math.
- People who suffer from math anxiety often feel that they are incapable of doing math or feel as though they are not good enough at it. There is often a fear of math that is associated with this anxiety.
- It may feel different to each person and they may have their own definition of math anxiety, based on their experiences.
- Myths about math and mind games we play on ourselves can be the cause of or enhance math anxiety.

# What are some Math Myths?

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- Myth: There is one correct way to do a math problem. Counter: Most math problems can be solved a number of ways. There is actually an art to it.
- Myth: Some people have a math mind and others don't. Counter: Most people are much more capable in math than they believe that are and many have had negative experiences that make them think otherwise or they were told this.
- Myth: Those good in math do problems quickly in their heads. Counter: People work at different paces. Background in mathematics is also a factor. Taking your time can increase accuracy. The speed at which you solve a problem is not necessarily an indicator of mathematical prowess.

# Math Mind Games

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- Claim: I don't learn or do math fast enough. Counter: People learn at different rates. People process things at different speeds.
- Claim: I don't have a mathematical/logical mind. Counter: What does this really mean though? People can do more than they think and math involves just as much creativity as it does logic.
- Claim: I got the wrong answer so I don't know what I'm doing. Counter: Why was it wrong? Was it a conceptual mistake? An algebraic one? An arithmetic one? Was it not reading the question right? Getting something wrong is not necessarily a bad thing. Ask yourself what you learned from your mistake.
- Claim : If I get it right, it's too simple. Counter: This is not true. If you answered the question and provided proof the right way, then you're right.
- Claim: Math is unrelated to my life. Counter: Math is in everything.

# Causes of Math Anxiety

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- There can be many factors that contribute to math anxiety and it will vary from person to person.
- For a lot of people it stems from having a negative experience with math when they were younger.
- Sometimes this comes from being reprimanded by a teacher or embarrassed by a situation.
- This can also come from taking a long break from math.
- Math Anxiety can also be a vicious cycle. You could have a situation where you developed it, and then because it impacts your performance, it can lead to further math anxiety which further impacts your performance, and so on, and so forth.

# Options

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- Understand concepts on their basic levels and build up.
- To do this, it may be helpful to ask yourself some questions. For instance, how are your arithmetic skills? How are your algebra skills? Can you talk about what you learned? Do you know the appropriate vocabulary?
- Being aware of your thoughts as you study and how you encounter math. Figure out what causes this anxiety and think of plan. You don't have to do that alone though.
- Keep a positive attitude, build yourself up, not down.
- Use your resources.
- Going deeper once you have the basics. Learning nuance.
- Seek out strategies for dealing with anxiety and stress.

# Reading and Writing Math Better

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- Part of the struggle that lies with math is actually reading and writing.
- If you can write a paper you can do math. If you had to improve your writing, you could and would, the same sort of thing can be applied to math.
- Math is a language. When you're writing a paper, you have some point you are trying to show or somewhere you are taking the audience. You also have to know the language you are writing the paper, it's rules, and nuances. It's the same for math.
- Reading is just as important. You have to be able to translate between the language you are familiar with and math, and be able to do so fluidly.
- You'll have to make sure you comprehend what you read in order to be effective.

# Resources

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- Official Math Time With Professor Prime Site:  
<https://www.mathtimewithprofessorprime.com/>
- Online Math Resources:  
<https://www.mathtimewithprofessorprime.com/online-math-resources>
- Math Time With Professor Prime YouTube:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRyNBE4-joAVYIYbNUaZ2Kw>
- Math Anxiety Playlist Videos for Math Time with Professor Prime:  
[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLEdBh6aRWf2Ql3MaayxvfDp\\_c69PclVrx](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLEdBh6aRWf2Ql3MaayxvfDp_c69PclVrx)