

Placement Test Practice Materials

What's here:

1. Placement Exam Topic List—to help you know what types of things might be on the placement test. This list is not comprehensive, but will help you get a handle on what types of topics might be included and what kinds of skills will be expected.
2. Mathematics Placement Practice Test—to help you get a feeling for the terminology and wording of problems that could be posed on the test. None of these are actual test problems, but they have the same flavor as the problems on the test.
 - It is important to note that the practice test has only 15 questions, whereas the actual test has 25 questions that you must complete in half an hour. Therefore, you must complete the 15 practice test questions in 18 minutes if you are trying to get a sense of how fast you must work on the actual test.
 - Calculators and reference books or notes, including formulas, are not allowed on the actual placement exam. If you want to simulate the experience of taking the placement exam, do not use these on the practice exam.
3. Mathematics Placement Practice Test Answers—to help you score your practice test.
4. Mathematics Placement Practice Test Solutions—to help you understand the answers to the Practice Test. Full solutions are provided for each problem. Further, each problem is identified with the corresponding topics it covers from the Placement Exam Topic list.

Recommendation on how to use the materials:

If you are mainly concerned about language, but not mathematics.

- Read through the Placement Exam Topic List. Try to learn the American English words for the mathematics that you know by looking at the diagrams and formulas.
- Do not hesitate to look up mathematical terms on www.wikipedia.org/ or mathworld.wolfram.com/. Both are fine for most mathematics.
- Take the Placement Practice Test.
- Score your practice test, noting which problems you missed because of the math and which problems you missed because of the wording.
- For all problems that you missed, be sure to examine the Practice Test solutions. Think about the problems that you missed because of wording separately. Now that you can see the solutions, do you better understand the meaning? Would you understand the meaning in another similar situation? Why or why not? Try to pose similarly worded mathematical questions.

If you are mainly concerned with brushing up on mathematics, but not with understanding English.

- Read through the Placement Exam Topic List. Mark the topics that you do not recall how to do and/or the formulas and identities that you do not recall.
- Write all formulas and identities you need to memorize on a small piece of paper or an index card. Carry this around with you, looking at it every 5 minutes or so to quiz yourself on what is written there. You should be working towards being able to recall everything on the card verbatim with your eyes closed. (You may wish to make flash cards instead.) By the way, you want this in long-term memory storage, not just in “until after I take the placement test” storage, as you will be expected to know these formulas and identities in subsequent courses.
- For the topics you do not remember how to do, you have a number of options.
 - Go to your local library and check out the appropriate level math book for self-study,
 - Try to buy a book at a book store to help you,
 - Use targeted mini-lectures on the web, one popular website is: <https://www.khanacademy.org>, or
 - Use pre-made courseware on the web, one such website is: <http://www.saylor.org/majors/math/> .

If you don't know the mathematics, you should take the appropriate course rather than trying to learn it on your own and place into an inappropriately high course. Knowingly placing yourself too high or too low will undercut your ability to thrive in your mathematics course and will waste your semester. Help yourself have a great mathematical experience in the Mercer Math Department with our committed faculty by placing yourself correctly. We look forward to getting to know you!