

Math Practice #5: Use appropriate tools strategically

I have many tools in my tool belt. I know my tools, and I have practiced using them. I choose the best tool for the job, and if it doesn't work, I can use another tool instead. When I'm having trouble, I know where to go for help.



WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Being resourceful and using tools wisely helps us be better, faster, and more productive in our day-to-day lives. Using appropriate tools strategically in life means:

- knowing what tools and resources are available
- being skilled at using various tools
- understanding the usefulness and limitations of tools
- choosing the right (or best) tool for the job
- being ready to learn about new tools that might be helpful for future tasks

WHAT TO EXPECT IN MATH CLASS

Mathematical tools are anything that can be helpful in solving a math problem: books, notes, computers, calculators, classmates, teachers, formulas, definitions, tables, charts, graphs, sample problems, YOUR BRAIN, etc.

Lots of practice using a variety of tools in order to become skilled with each tool.

Deciding what tools are most helpful for solving a problem.

WHAT TO DO IN MATH CLASS

- Always use your mind as your primary tool for solving any problem.
- Practice using new or difficult tools in order to get more comfortable and skilled with them
- Think about what resources are available and brainstorm which resources might be helpful for a problem
- Be proactive. Don't depend on your teacher to tell you what tools to use.
- Be flexible. Use variety and don't become dependent on any one tool.

HOW TO SUPPORT

"What are you trying to accomplish? What tools might be helpful for that?"

"What resources do you have that you could use right now? (For example, books, notes, sample problems, definitions, formulas)"

"What strategies can you use to get yourself organized and try to make sense of the problem? (For example, draw a picture, make a table/chart/diagram/graph)"

"How is this related to what you've learned before? How can you use what you already know to help you now?"