

THE JOURNAL

As part of this course, as well as part of your portfolio, you will be asked to keep a process journal. Students who use this tool properly will find that they can participate better in class and will have a study guide for exams during the course. Students develop a “self-dialog” which aides them in problem-solving that allows them to be more successful in mathematics. It also is an opportunity for a student who may struggle in other aspects in this course to earn a higher overall grade for completing this assignment.

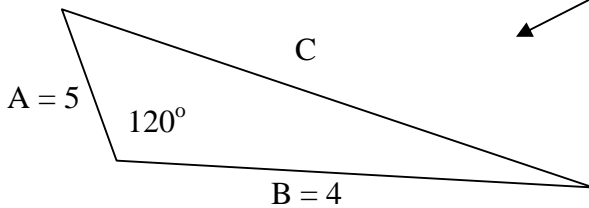
To do this properly, students will be keeping track of problems or types of problems with which they have difficulty. This will be done following the structure shown in the example below.

SAMPLE:

4/12/08

Section 6.2 p. 241 #7

Be sure to indicate the problem, both where it is in the book and the problem written out.



Find the measure of C .

First show an example of a problem that you could not finish or could not complete correctly.

This gives you a topic to bring up in class.

I used the Law of Cosines to do this problem.

$$C^2 = A^2 + B^2 - 2AB \cos(120^\circ)$$

$$C^2 = 5^2 + 4^2 - 2(5)(4) \cos(120^\circ)$$

$$C^2 = 41 - 40(-0.5)$$

$$C^2 = 1 \cdot (-0.5) = -0.5$$

How can $C^2 = -0.5$? Shouldn't C^2 be positive?

UPDATE (4/14/05): *I set up everything well, but forgot to use the order of operations correctly. I was correct up to this step...*

$$C^2 = 41 - 40(-0.5)$$

$$C^2 = 41 - (-20)$$

What I should have done was... $C^2 = 61$

$$C = \sqrt{61} \approx 7.8102$$

Once you have found out the issue you had with the problem, update your entry with the correct solution and compare the solutions.

(OVER)

You are required to make at least one entry per week. However, note the following points.

1. The entries should often contain multiple problems.
2. To take full advantage of this process, you may need to make more than one entry per week.
3. YOU are responsible for getting the assistance you need to obtain the information for your updates by asking questions in class, seeking extra assistance, etc. Do not leave the entries un-updated expecting your teacher to answer your questions in the journal.

Journals are checked periodically (about 1-2 times) during a quarter. The grade is counted as part of the students' portfolio grade for each quarter. The grade is determined in the following way.

TOTAL VALUE: 100 points

- 20 – Student meets “once-a-week” minimum expectation.
- 50 – Follows structure shown on the other side of this page.
- 30 – Updates ALL entries as directed.

You will then be given a letter grade based on the point total you earn.

***NOTE: When the journals are checked, I write comments on your entries when I feel that improvements need to be made. Part of your “structure” grade relies on whether or not you make the improvements you were asked to make.

The Journal also counts as part of the Final Portfolio and needs to be submitted, in total, with the Final Portfolio at the end of the school year.