

What is Algebra Anyway ?

Algebra ... is the process of turning something that is unknown into something that is known.

Why are people afraid of Algebra ? ... Algebra can be scary because it deals with abstract ideas rather than concrete things.

Why should we study Algebra ? ...

- ✓ It increases your chances of going to college and making it in today's world by finding a good-paying job.
- ✓ It helps you survive as a consumer. (Comparison shopping, interest rates, percent, discounts, etc.)
- ✓ It teaches you about the way you think and helps you develop problem solving and abstract thinking skills that can later be used in life to solve everyday problems.
- ✓ It is a stepping stone to higher level mathematics.

When will I use Algebra ? ... People use algebra everyday without realizing it. Granted, they may not be specifically writing an equation and solving for the unknown variable; however, they are using the problem solving skills they acquired in Algebra. A few examples include:

- ☆ Preparing the master soccer game schedule after the seeding tournaments.
- ☆ Coordinating the weekly carpool schedule and after school activities pick-up and drop-off schedules.
- ☆ Calculating whether you can afford the payments for a new car or house.
- ☆ Preparing estimates/bills for a business.
- ☆ Shopping, shopping, shopping!

Why do we have to show our work ?

In elementary school ... the emphasis in Math is on quick, accurate answers. Students are expected to memorize and quickly recall the facts of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. They are taught to solve simple problems using these operations using mental math.

In middle school ... the focus of math changes to practicing the steps necessary in solving problems. At the beginning of the year, steps are simple - perhaps only 1 or 2 steps. These simple steps must be practiced first in order to successfully perform complex multiple-step processes in as the year progresses.

Barrett Math Department Policy

NO WORK = NO CREDIT

Students must show their work (the process) even if they can "do it in their head."