

### **General Rules of Thumb**

1. When Dr. Otts is trying to help me, I WILL let him!
2. When Dr. Otts promises to tell me something later, I need to hold him to it.
3. College is a full time job when you're attending full time (12 or more hours per semester).
4. There is a difference between being physically present and being attentively present.
5. Whatever course you're taking or job you have, the most important thing you can do is learn the vocabulary earlier rather than later.
6. Don't cause others to wait on you by being late to class or meetings; don't step out and back-in during the meeting; don't leave before the ending time. You DO miss something important.
7. Finish with your cell phone BEFORE you enter the classroom.
8. Anything you turn in for credit needs to have your name on it. If not, it gets thrown away. Why?
9. If it's shown on the screen, repeated, or given in a handout, it's important and you'll see it again.
10. You learn the best way for you to accomplish a task by first, accomplish the task; then, second, reflect on the process you used: ask questions about how you did it, what was effective, what was a dead end, and how you could improve.
11. Always have a backup plan.
12. Get in the habit of doing things the way they are meant to be done.
13. If it helps, do it; if it doesn't help, don't do it.
14. When you mess up, fess up, fix it, and learn from it.
15. When you do it right it works better, so you tend to have better results.
16. If something is worth doing, is it not worth doing well?
17. The better you prepare, the easier it is to perform well.
18. You are known by what you do; so, when you put your name on something, what are you telling people?
19. Think first, think again, then speak.
20. Your actions show what is important to you.
21. When your actions show that something is not important to you, why should anyone else think that it is important?
22. Little things matter, such as being on time, filling out forms correctly, having your work ready, and saying "please" and "thank you."
23. When you share with others (friends, family, colleagues, classmates), the results are always positive: the task is lessened and the rewards are multiplied.
24. When you let selfishness rule your thoughts and actions, the results are always negative.
25. Steps are never skipped, whether in tasks or on stairs. The same work must still be done.
26. Well organized notes and well organized thoughts lead to better retention and understanding.

27. Life is a never-ending series of applications (math speak for word problems, work speak for opportunities). Become proficient at problem solving.
28. When solving a problem, know where to start AND where to stop.
29. Read the directions FIRST; then follow them.
30. Different does not mean wrong.
31. When you know what to do and how to do it, then JUST DO IT.
32. Answer the question that is asked. Do NOT assume.
33. Be sure that you understand what question is being asked.
34. As a habit of success, do what is actually meant.
35. The more you know about how to perform a task, the easier it is to get the correct result.
36. On a multiple-choice test with four answer choices, don't pick E.
37. Things are only as hard as they are. Don't make them harder or easier than they have to be.
38. When you come back after missing a class, don't even try to ask the professor if you missed something important! ALWAYS consult your Class Buddies first.
39. Read problems all the way through before you ask questions: listen, think, and filter before speaking.
40. It is easier to take a grade down than to bring a grade up.
41. It is easier to lower a GPA than to bring it up.
42. We learn new information better inductively, and we use what we've learned better deductively.
43. Concentrate on what you can control. DO NOT waste time on what you cannot control.
44. Your ears work better when your eyes are open and your mouth is closed.
45. To compete successfully, you MUST cooperate (collaborate) successfully.
46. Do NOT put words in Dr. O's mouth (or anyone else's).
47. We are slaves to our habits; therefore, we need to make sure we have good habits.
48. We eat a watermelon by cutting it into pieces, then eating a piece one bite at a time. We solve big problems the same way.
49. Thinking about a task before you begin, while you are working, and after you have completed it is an excellent habit when you learn from it and act upon what you learn.
50. Come to class with questions, leave with answers. ALERT: Answers generally lead to more questions.
51. Never let someone else take your happy face. (9/21/2015: C. Anderson)

### **Math Rules of Thumb**

1. It doesn't matter how fast Dr. O wants to go, what matters is that I understand. I will ask questions when I need to because it matters that I understand.
2. There is a difference between being physically present in class and being attentively participating in class.

3. If it's shown on the screen, repeated, or given in a handout, its important and you'll see it again.
4. Anything you turn in for credit needs to have your name on it. If not, it gets thrown away.
5. Minus a negative means plus a positive.
6. Always pick on the smaller variable term when gathering variable terms on the same side of the equation.
7. Simply fractions before you multiply.
8. If it helps, do it; if it doesn't help, don't do it. The last step in solving a linear equation is to multiply both sides by the reciprocal of the coefficient.
9. In inequalities, horizontal lines (greater than or equal to or less than or equal to) call for horizontal lines: [ or ].
10. A negative numbers are always smaller than a positive number, but when both numbers are negative, the smaller number has the greater absolute value.
11. It doesn't matter how fast Dr. O wants to go, what matters is that I understand. I will ask questions when I need to because it matters that I understand.
12. When you multiply or divide 2 numbers with the same signs, the results are always positive.
13. When you multiply or divide 2 numbers with the opposite signs, the results are always negative.
14. When the run (bottom of slope fraction) is 0, the slope is **undefined** and the line is vertical.
15. When the rise (top of slope fraction) is 0, the slope is **zero** and the line is horizontal.
16. An intersection generally produces a set smaller than either original while a union usually produces a set larger than either original set.
17. In similar triangles when you're looking for length of a side, put the variable on top.
18. When you put the x on top, the other number from the same triangle goes on top of the fraction on the other side of the equals sign.
19. Calculator batteries ALWAYS die at the worst time. Bring extra!
20. Take care of the sign first, then everything else will be easier.
21. Only circle one choice for each item on the test.
22. Guys: Don't forget to read the directions FIRST. Everyone: Follow the directions once you've read them.
23. The inequality sign always points to the smaller number.
24. To divide by a fraction, flip it then multiply.
25. The negative sign goes with the number immediately following it.
26. In a find the length of a ladder problem, the ladder is always the hypotenuse.
27. Read the entire item on a test: Directions, question, and ALL answer choices.
28. Answer the question that is asked. Do NOT assume.
29. Be sure that you understand what question is being asked.
30. On a multiple-choice test with four answer choices, don't pick E.
31. If you don't have any parts, you don't have anything (when the top number in a fraction is 0, then the whole fraction is 0).
32. If you draw a vertical line through a graph and it hits more than once, then it is not the graph of a function.

33. If you are good with the parentheses, then the parentheses will be good to you.
34. When using your calculator, check twice before pushing ENTER.
35. Read problems all the way through before you ask questions; listen, think, and filter before speaking.
36. It is easier to take a grade down than to bring a grade up.
37. It is easier to lower a GPA than to bring it up.
38. We learn better inductively, and we apply better deductively.
39. Your ears work better when your eyes are open and your mouth is closed.
40. To compete successfully, you **MUST** cooperate successfully.
41. Do **NOT** put words in Dr. O's mouth (or anyone else's).