

Using WebAssign

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Getting Started with WebAssign

Before You Start: You should be running a current browser with the latest Java version (download from <http://www.java.com/en/download/>).

Registering: Go to <http://www.webassign.net>. Click the red “Log In” button. Then click the red “I have a Class Key” button.

Type in your class key from the syllabus. Verify your class information. If you have never used WebAssign, you will need to create your account. If you’ve previously used WebAssign, then you should already have an account, contact them if you have forgotten your username or password. You need to purchase access only if you’re changing from one textbook to another, for example, changing from the Math 111-113 series to the calculus series.

Write down your login information here so you don’t forget it. You’ll use this to log in on the main WebAssign page from here on out.

Username: _____

Institution: cocc

Password: _____

Paying for Your Access: You will be able to access WebAssign for free during the first two weeks of the term. By the end of that period, you either need to purchase access online from WebAssign with a debit/credit card or purchase an access code from the bookstore. You should have already received an email from me that details your options.

Starting Your Homework: Once you’ve logged in, you should see a list of available assignments in the top left corner of your screen. Click on one of them to access it. For more advice on homework, read the rest of this guide.

Technical Advice

Entering Answers: When you have to answer a question with something other than just a number, an interface called the CalcPad will pop up. Take time to explore this interface as soon as you can, so you know where everything is located. This buttons “Functions”, “Relations”, etc. each open up new sets of buttons. And if a button has a little arrow on its right edge, there are more buttons hidden behind it! However, most answers can be input with just your keyboard. Use shift-6 for exponents. You can also type out any Greek letter and the symbol will appear (e.g., type π to see π).

WARNINGS about Entering Answers:

- **Pay attention to rounding instructions!!!** WebAssign will always indicate the number of places you should round to. If it does not, that means you’ll need to type in an exact answer (i.e., 3π rather than 9.425).
- **Don’t round until the final step.** Rounding earlier in the process can throw your answer off.
- **Capitalization matters!** If the problem represents a quantity with “b”, your answer will be marked incorrect if you type “B”.
- **The variable name matters.** For example, the solution for $t^2 - 4t + 4 = 0$ is $t = 2$, not $x = 2$.



Navigating in WebAssign:

- Use WebAssign’s own buttons for navigation, not the forward and back buttons on your browser.
- Let your page load completely before you click on anything. Be aware that WebAssign’s servers are busiest in the late evening, so load times may be slower then.

Important Note: For each assignment please read the Instructions. You get 5 tries on every part of every question in the homework. That means if you leave part (b) blank while trying part (a) a few times, you still have 5 tries left for part (b). Note, for the Pre-lecture assignments you get 10 tries and for the Quizzes you only get one try. Both the Pre-lecture and Quiz assignments are counted as bonus assignments towards your WebAssign Homework portion of your grade.

Getting Help

Who to Contact:

- **For technical questions, contact WebAssign Student Support.** Reach them at (800) 955-8275, or you can go to the main WebAssign page and click on “Student Support” under the “Support” pull-down menu. Example scenarios: registration or access problems, pages or buttons won’t load, an answer blank won’t let you type into it.
- **For mathematical questions, contact me.** Let me know if you have questions about how to complete a problem, or if you think that the answer you input was correct, but it was marked wrong. Use “Ask Your Teacher”, as detailed below.



Help Tools in WebAssign: Every WebAssign problem has one or more of the following buttons associated with it.

- **Read About It:** This will take you to the relevant section of the textbook, **not** to the page that most closely deals with the problem. There may not be an example exactly like your problem in the text.
- **Chat About It:** This connects you to an online tutor. You can only use this free for a very limited number of times, and I’ve heard mixed reviews about it.
- **Watch It:** This walks you through a similar problem on a whiteboard with voiceover. Students tend to find this tool very helpful, although sometimes they aren’t explicit about every algebraic step.
- **Practice Another Version:** If you click in the answer box for a problem, you’ll be given this option. It allows you to try a very similar problem without using up your submissions.
- **Master It:** This is available for some problems, and breaks a similar problem down into steps. You fill them out and then have WebAssign grade them. This also does not use up your submissions.
- **Ask Your Teacher:** If a particular problem doesn’t have an “Ask Your Teacher” button, you can always use the one in the top left corner of each assignment. Details below.

Using Ask Your Teacher:

- **When to use it:** A good time to use this is after you’ve tried a problem 3 times. Don’t wait until you’ve used up all your 5 submissions! I can see all your previous responses.
- **What to write:** Don’t just say “I don’t get it”—in that case, I’ll just start asking you questions! Tell me what you’ve thought about or tried so far. Write equations the same way you’d type them into a TI-83 calculator (e.g., $\frac{x^2}{3}$ would be written $(x^2)/3$). If you have a lot of written work you want me to look at, it may be better to scan and email it.
- **My response:** I respond to all help requests within 24 hours (48 hours on weekends), though often much sooner, especially during my office hours. You can use “Notifications” in the top left corner of your main WebAssign screen to set it up so that you get emailed when I respond. You can find my response by clicking on “Ask Your Teacher” again.

Advice on Approaching Homework

Keep Your Work Organized: My suggestion is that you use loose-leaf paper and a binder for this class. Then you can insert your homework after the appropriate class notes. Number the problems, write down the questions, and show your work clearly enough that you can come back in a few weeks and still understand what you did.

Submitting Answers:

- You may choose whether to submit the whole assignment at once, or one problem at a time. I *strongly* suggest the second choice.
- Again, if you leave part of a multi-part problem **blank**, that won't count as a submission for that part.
- Click on "Previous Answers" to see what you've tried and make sure you don't submit the same incorrect answer twice, wasting a try.

Multiple Choice Questions: For the multiple choice questions in WebAssign, you should first try to answer them without looking at the choices; that will prepare you for taking exams better, since you will rarely have choices there.

Additional WebAssign Resources

On your main WebAssign screen, there are two more resources that you may find helpful (but are not required to use): **Personal Study Plan** and **Resources**.

Personal Study Plan:

If you click on any chapter, it will open up access to a chapter quiz, as well as quizzes and tutorials on individual sections (the tutorials are actually just lists of “Watch It” videos). The quizzes consist of random problems from the textbook exercise sections. **But beware:** we don’t cover everything in every section, so you’ll likely see unfamiliar material on these quizzes. That means that **a bad quiz grade doesn’t mean you don’t understand the material**, so don’t let it discourage you. The quizzes are a good resource for extra practice, but take the results with a grain of salt.

Resources:

If you click the arrow next to the book title, you’ll see a list of chapters. Click the arrow next to any of them, and you’ll see a list of all the sections that I’ve found to contain useful videos. Feel free to look at any of those videos.

Final Words:

If you have any questions about the way WebAssign works or its use in this class, please ask!

