

9 Ways to Actually Get Math DONE This Year!

You know, when you get into the upper grades for math, it can seem to take FOREVER to get a math lesson done. In fact, sometimes it's so overwhelming it's even tempting to skip math from time to time... and then you find yourself WAY behind in the book. Has that ever happened to you?

Here are 9 ways to make sure you get math done this year!

1. Teach Short Lessons

Charlotte Mason advocates know that short lessons are the best way to increase learning. Did you know that is proven with science? Yup! And that's why schools limit high school classes to about 50 minutes each day! After 50 minutes your brain starts going slower... and slower... and slooowwwerrrr, until you hardly make progress at all! So a great way to get math done is to work on it in intervals of 50 minutes at a time. In other words, do 50 minutes in the morning, then do something else and come back to finish up the lesson in the evening.

2. Put Weak Areas First

If you have trouble getting a math level done in a year, chances are it's not your favorite subject - or the favorite subject of your child. So remember to put weak areas first. That means math is the first subject you do in the morning. After breakfast, dressing, and shower, so they are ready to go, do math for no more than 50 minutes. Later in the day, you can come back to math if needed, to finish up the lesson. Put your weak area first in your priority list too. In other words, don't let anything come between you and math. No matter what else happens, do math before you leave your home for the day - no matter what! And with your weak area, that's the one area where it's OK to re-purchase another curriculum if what you have isn't using. If you find out a month or two into it, that it's just not working, buy something else! Your weak area is the one area where it's always worth the money to re-purchase curriculum.

3. Have a Morning Meeting

9 Ways to Actually Get #Homeschool Math Done This Year @TheHomeScholar Each morning, have a meeting with your child to discuss math. This is where you ask how it's going, check their lessons, tell them about a test, or set them up with their video tutorials. Having a daily check-in says "I'm watching" and "I care that you do this stuff!" and conveys that you are prioritizing this. A daily check in can help you with many subjects - try it, you'll like it!

4. Reward Good Performance

You can reward their good performance with fewer problems. You see, textbook manufacturers can only guess at how many problems your child will need to understand the concepts. Maybe you don't need them all! So here is what I suggest. Do alternate problems first, and correct their work. If they get almost all of them right, they may not need to do any more problems. You can reward them by saying "That's it! No more!" That can give them the number of problems they need, but not so many that they feel overwhelmed, like math never ends. I know, I know.... homeschool moms like to get their dollars-worth out of a textbook by doing every single problem. That's awesome - I was like that too! But take a step back, and focus on learning. Is doing one entire lesson in one day the goal? Nope! Learning is the goal. You don't want all those problems, and the concern for the almighty buck, to stand in the way of finishing one math level each year.

5. Chose Curriculum Carefully

Choose a curriculum that fits your child. If what you have is using keep with it! But if it's not working, consider making a change. In the early years, parents often choose a curriculum that's easy for them to teach and use, and that's great! But in high school, it becomes less and less about us, and more and more about the preferences of the child. So allow the student to choose a curriculum that fits them well. That means showing them the video tutorial for each curriculum, and having them choose the one that works the best for them. Think of it this way, if they have the perfectly-reviewed math but they hate it, they may only learn 50% of the subject because the curriculum drives them crazy. On the other hand, if you have a moderately-reviewed math program that they like and use without complaining, perhaps they will learn 80% of the subject, and will ultimately be more successful. You can learn more about choosing curriculum in this article, High School Math without the Moaning.

6. Avoid Over-Supplementing

When you don't get math done in a year, it can be tempting to think the child just isn't getting it, when often it's simply a matter of priorities and organization. So if you think, or know, that your child just isn't getting it, avoid over-supplementing to the point where you are working for hours and hours a day on the most-hated subject they wish to avoid. That can truly cause some burnout for everyone in the family! It's tempting to supplement, add, re-review, and re-re-re-review concepts. Here is what I suggest. If they just aren't getting it, it's probably a curriculum mismatch. Choose a different curriculum.

7. Expect Mastery Not Perfection

I think I have mastery over add, subtract, multiply, and divide. But I promise you, I'm not perfect, even with those basic skills. Sometimes my checkbook, bank accounts, or shopping trip will prove just how not-perfect I really am. Here is the thing you need to remember. Nobody is perfect. Don't expect perfection in math, or you'll never finish a math level. Instead, see mastery of the concepts. Maybe that means they get 80% on tests before moving on, but that's OK. Your goal is mastery, not the unattainable perfection.

8. Adjust Expectations

Make sure to do one level of math every year in high school. State requirements, college requirements, and employers will all want to see math every year of high school. But colleges and states do not require calculus! So adjust your expectations. Teach them at their level in math each year, so they can be successful, and work to complete one math level each year. That's how they will learn, and even be more successful in the SAT or ACT. Pushing them too fast, too hard, can make those test scores worse, if they don't understand the concepts because it's overwhelming to them. Make sure they do math every year, even senior year, even if they already have complete four math credits. Colleges want to see that students take math during senior year. And fair warning, the orientation in college will usually include a spontaneous math test, standardized, so incoming freshman are placed into the correct math classes. When possible, keep moving forward with math, even if that means your child is taking pre-calculus and you don't even know what pre-calculus means! If that isn't possible, consider statistics or business math as a senior. Keep math challenging, but not overwhelming. Just remember that taking math senior year is important.

9. Embrace Hard Work

Math is the gateway to college and career success. It's not an easy subject, but it does teach children how to work hard. Sometimes people ask me how to teach a child a strong work ethic. This is how - teach math every year in high school. It's not easy, it's a challenge, and it teaches children to rise to the challenge. Math is hard work. That's not why you should avoid it, that's why you should embrace it. That's why it's good for you. While it's tempting to flippantly say "When will we ever use this stuff?" The truth is, you will use it often. If you learn upper math, simple daily math challenges you face as an adult become easier. The other day I had to adjust a photo to a different size, and used algebra. Sure you could do it the hard way, and guess and guesstimate your way to the proper dimensions, but using my algebra saved me time. And daily I work hard at some things I just don't like to do. I use the same work ethic and problem solving skills I used when I didn't like my math, but I did it anyway. Math is hard work. That's not why you should avoid it, that's why you should embrace it. That's why it's good for you.

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