

HOMEWORK TIPS

Tip. I am not a mind reader

Be clear. Be complete. Explain what conclusions you are drawing, and why. Gaps in logic will usually be taken as an absence of logic.

Tip. I am not a computer

This is related to the previous tip. If your answer is a jumble of symbols with no explanation as to what you are doing or why, I will do my best, but I will likely not understand it. I cannot give you credit for something I don't understand, so it is in your best interest to make me understand.

Tip. Justify yourself

If you make a claim, be sure it is justified. If the justification isn't trivial, you should probably include it. Cite some kind of principle or theorem that justifies what you want to do. More often than not, it is **insufficient** to simply state an answer, without stating **why** it is the answer.

Tip. Something is better than nothing

I can't give credit for nothing. If you don't have a solution, you might consider putting down thoughts toward a solution. This is also related to the justification tip - some kind of justification is better than no kind of justification.

Tip. Don't assume what you want to prove

I see this often enough that it warrants its own tip. If you are trying to prove a statement, you cannot start by assuming that statement is true. For instance, if you know that B is true and you want to prove A, it is **incorrect** to state A, then derive B from it, and claim, 'since B is true, A is therefore true'. Do not make use of what you want to prove while trying to prove it. Just don't do it.

Tip. General style comments

Always make sure that your assumptions are clear, and that the conclusions and how you drew those conclusions are readable. If your answers are overly technical with no explanation as to what you are doing, or seem overly complicated and way off the mark, you may lose points. Always always always make sure the thing you conclude is the thing the problem asks you to conclude.

Tip. Petty Issues and Personal Beefs

Organize your work. If your work is sprawled out across the paper with no kind of order, or if you need an excess number of arrows to help guide a reader through your work, or if your work is a splash of symbols smeared haphazardly across the page, you're making my job more difficult. Also, please staple your papers. I am running out of staples, and I don't want to lose any of your work in the mess that is my desk. And please remove the chew that's left when you tear paper out of a spiral notebook. I hate that stuff.

Lastly, a personal appeal. I want you to succeed in this class. Help me help you do that.