

MA 22400: Online Homework Instructions

Intro

This semester, most of your homework will be completed online using a program called MathZone. There is a direct correlation between time spent on homework and success in the course, so it is highly recommended that you take the homework very seriously and spend sufficient time working on it.

A few problems are not available in MathZone. These are noted on the assignment sheet in **bold**, and you must work these problems from the text. (There are copies of the text on reserve in the Hicks Undergraduate Library, should you decide not to purchase a text.) None of these problems will be collected; however, they covered on quizzes and exams, so be sure to work them.

Compatibility

To use MathZone, it is critical that your computer setup is compatible with the program. If you are using software that is not supported by MathZone, you will experience a great deal of frustration due to the problems that will occur. Unsupported software, **or higher versions than listed as supported**, causes difficulties such as no answer box appearing, correct answers being graded as incorrect, scores not being recorded correctly, etc. Further, unsupported software (or higher versions) may work fine for some lessons but not for other lessons. You will suddenly experience difficulties, but not realize that your software is the source.

For this reason, **be absolutely sure to check the supported versions of software and be sure to run the Plug-in Checker** before working any problems. This will help insure that you have all of the correct programs and settings. Once the Plug-in Checker has been run, a link is provided for any changes that need to be made to your system.

If you need any other help with the computer requirements of MathZone, you should call 800-331-5094. The hours telephone support is available are Sunday, 7 pm – 12 am (midnight); Monday through Thursday, 9 am – 12 am (midnight); Friday, 9 am – 7 pm. Note that you should not contact MathZone by email, as it will take more than 24 hours to get a response.

If you are having problems with your computer, you cannot miss a homework deadline. Rather, you will need to use an ITaP computer (running the Plug-in Checker) to complete the homework on time. This means that you will want to be sure to attempt each homework problem before the evening it is due.

Time Zone

All online homeworks are setup using Eastern Standard Time, following daylight savings time. You will want to set your computer to local time, so the homeworks are available and due at the right times.

Registering

If you purchased MathZone previously, you do not need to purchase it again. You should login with your previous email address and password (call the MathZone support line at 800-331-5094, if you do not remember the email address and/or password used). Click on the Course Management tab, enter the Student Section Code for this semester (emailed to you Monday afternoon) in the box in the lower right corner, and click on Go. This will complete your registration.

First time users: Two codes are needed to register. One code is the Student Section Code, and it will be emailed to you Monday afternoon. Additionally, you must purchase a registration code. If you purchase a new text, the registration code is included. If you are unable to buy a text right away, buy a used text, or choose not to buy a text, you can pay for registration using the MathZone site. First, go to the MathZone home page (www.mathzone.com) and choose to register as a student. Next, click on “New

users register here". Enter the Student Section Code exactly as given (it is case sensitive and you will need to type in the dashes). You will then be given the option of entering your registration code (if you have one), or paying for your registration with a credit/debit card. After this, you will fill in information for your account, and your registration will be confirmed.

If you have any problems registering, you must call the MathZone support team at 800-331-5094. **Before the next class meeting**, you must be successfully registered for this semester's MathZone, so you will be ready for the first online assignment. No extensions will be given for students who fail to try to register before Wednesday's class.

Completing an Online Homework

The first online assignment is the homework that accompanies Lesson 5, and it is due by 7:00 pm on Friday, September 2.

In MathZone, after submitting three incorrect answers, the correct answer/solution will be shown to you. You are then given an opportunity to work a similar problem (and still receive credit) by clicking the Try Another button. You will have unlimited attempts, until the deadline, to earn credit for each problem in the assignment.

In isolated cases, entering answers may be an issue. There isn't always agreement as to the most simplified version of an answer. Answers will mirror the answers in the back of the text. So, you can refer to the text for help. Another option is to enter three attempts and, if none of them is correct, look at the format of the answer that appears. You should be able to match this answer format when you Try Another. We apologize in advance for the frustration this will cause. Unfortunately, the problem is common to all online homework systems that have open answer problems.

Each homework is due at 7:00 pm on the evening of the next class session after the lesson. That is, the Monday homework will be due by 7:00 pm on Wednesday, the Wednesday homework will be due by 7:00 pm on Friday, and the Friday homework will be due by 7:00 pm on Monday. **This may not give you time to work the entire assignment after class**, if you wait until the day it is due to start. It may only give you time to finish one or two problems that were difficult for you, for which you had to ask your instructor for help in class. (Note that your instructor will not work your online problem. Instead, he/she will use the text problem that is similar to your problem.)

To save your answers and return later to continue an assignment, **first move to another problem** (to lock in your answer). Next, there are two choices. If you use "Sign out", all of the problems will still appear when you return. So, you will have to keep track of which problems you had correct and which you did not. (Note: a problem turns yellow after you have attempted it; this does not indicate that your answer was correct, only that you entered an answer.) But, the problems themselves will not change. So, you can get help on a problem and return to the same problem. If you use "Submit", only those problems not yet answered correctly will appear when you return. However, they will be different versions of the problems than those that appeared originally. So, be sure of which you want to use, and what it will mean when you return to the assignment, before choosing.

Only when you are completely finished with an assignment and move to another problem (to lock in your last answer) should you use the Submit button. Each time you re-enter an assignment, only the problems that have not been answered correctly will appear. Once you Submit an assignment, you can still re-enter the assignment. However, this time, you will get new versions of the problems that have not yet been answered correctly. At the deadline for the assignment, your assignment will automatically be

submitted, in case you forget to use the Submit button. You should check your scores in the gradebook often, to be sure they have been recorded correctly.

All assignments are homework, not quizzes (as stated on the Submit button).

Viewing Results of the Assignment

Immediately after checking an answer, you will be told if your response is correct or incorrect. Shortly after the due date, your final % correct on the homework, along with the answers to the problems (showing both your answers and the correct answers), will be available.

If you think you have a correct answer but MathZone is grading it as incorrect, here is what you should do. First, enter your “correct” answer and check it. Print the screen that appears, showing your answer and saying that it is wrong. Now, answer the question two more times so that the correct solution and answer appear. If the correct answer is identical to your first answer, print the screen showing the MathZone answer. Next, attach these two screen shots to an email to the MathZone Coordinator (mzcoordinator@math.purdue.edu) so you can be given credit for the problem. **Also**, email the MZ support team (<http://mpss.mhhe.com/products-mathzone.php> and click on Representatives Available link) to report the situation so they can help fix the problem. Be sure to attach the screenshots. You do not want to have to deal with this problem repeatedly.

Extended/Excused Homeworks

Online homework can only be extended or excused by the MathZone coordinator (mzcoordinator@math.purdue.edu). The reasons acceptable for extending/excusing a homework are very limited. This is another reason you should be sure to attempt the entire assignment before the due date.

To request an extended/excused homework, you must contact the coordinator **at the time the problem occurs**. If you have been ill, attach a pdf of your doctor’s note that shows the affected dates. (Note: we do not need any information about your illness, only an idea of the due dates that have been affected.) A PUSH (Purdue University Student Health Center) note is acceptable for missing a single deadline, unless a note is added stating when the student may return to classes.

If you are excused from a homework, your MathZone score will not reflect this, as the system is not currently capable of allowing for excused homeworks. The Course Coordinator will adjust your score at the end of the semester. Those students with fewer than three excused homeworks will have lowest scores dropped for the balance of the three. (**Note:** This is not in addition to your excused absences. It is the balance of the three not needed for excused absences.)

Help and Technical Support

Do not use the Help button on individual problems when you are having difficulties. It will take a couple of days to get a response to questions asked via this link and is intended for the MathZone Coordinator to use. (Sorry, there is currently no way to keep it off the screen.)

Help with your MathZone questions can be divided into math questions (how do I work this type of math problem; where am I making a mistake), entering answers, and software/program issues (I can’t log in; my browser keeps locking up; the answer box does not appear, it says to enter an answer, but I already have, it says my correct answer is incorrect, etc.). You must use the appropriate resource to ask your questions. **Asking the incorrect resource only delays your getting help.** Note that the Course Coordinator (Devi Nichols) does not answer any MathZone questions.

Math Questions:

Math questions can be asked in class (the similar text problem will be worked), during your instructor's office hours, during other MA 22300 instructors' office hours, in the Math Help Room (MATH 205) and at the free evening tutoring sessions.

Entering Answers:

Questions about entering answers can be asked by calling the MZ support team at 800-331-5094.

Software/Program Issues:

Software/program issues are also handled by the MZ support team (800-331-5094). If you are having difficulties using your own computer, remember that you must **use an ITaP computer, rather than miss a deadline**. For help in configuring your own computer, also contact the support team. If the support team is unable to fix your problem before an assignment deadline, you must forward the MZ support team's email you received, or case number if you telephoned, to the MathZone Coordinator to request an extension on the assignment.

There is also a "frequently asked questions" file available at <http://mpss.mhhe.com/products-mathzone.php> which you may find helpful.

Changing Sections

If you change sections of the course, after having registered for this semester, you must also change your section of MathZone. To do this, first get the new Student Section Code from your new instructor. Log into MathZone using your previous email address and password (these will not change). Click on the Course Management tab, enter the new Student Section Code in the box in the lower right corner, and click on Go. You are now registered in the new section. As soon as you have registered in the new section, you must notify the MathZone Coordinator (mzcoordinator@math.purdue.edu), so your previous homework scores can be moved to your new section. Be sure to include your name, previous section (time and instructor), and your new section (time and instructor).

**KEEP THIS HANDOUT TO USE AS A REFERENCE DURING THE SEMESTER.
(IF YOU CANNOT FIND IT, IT IS ALSO AVAILABLE VIA A LINK ON THE
COURSE WEB PAGE.)**