

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 it is not recommended that you contact MathZone by email, as it may 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) and enter the Student Section Code for this semester. This will complete your registration.

First time users: Once you go to the MathZone home page (www.mathzone.com), you will choose to register as a student. Two codes are needed to register. Your instructor will supply one code. This code is the Student Section Code. 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 purchase just the registration code using the MathZone site (a credit or debit card will be needed) or at the bookstore. Note that it will be less expensive to purchase the

registration code online than at the bookstore. As you register, be sure you enter the Student Section Code exactly as given (it is case sensitive and you will need to type in the dashes). If you have any problems registering, you must call the MathZone support team at 800-331-5094.

Before the next class meeting, you must register for this semester's MathZone, so you will be ready for the first online assignment.

Completing an Online Homework

The first online assignment is the homework that accompanies Lesson 5, and it is due by 7:00 pm on Monday, January 24.

In MathZone, after submitting three incorrect answers, the correct answer 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 past semesters, a Hint button was available. Clicking on the button provided a step-by-step solution to a problem similar to yours. Further, instead of just the answer appearing after three attempts, a step-by-step solution was provided. Unfortunately, there were many complaints by instructors that students were merely mimicking these to complete the homework. As a result, student performance on quizzes and exams actually declined. The homework was no longer helping students succeed. For this reason, both have been discontinued. Instead, you will have to use the Math Help resources for assistance.

In isolated cases, entering answers may be an issue. There isn't always agreement as to the most simplified version of an answer. When this happens, you can either contact the MathZone support team at 800-331-5094 for assistance, or you can enter three attempts so that the answer 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 classes.** 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 to demonstrate 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, do not use the Submit button. Instead, be sure to check the last answer you enter, **move to another problem (to lock in your answer)** and log out at the top of the page. You will notice that problems, which are correct, will turn yellow when you move to another question and those that are not correct will stay blue.

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 may want to check your scores for the first couple of homeworks, to be sure you are submitting them 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 score on the homework, along with the answers to the problems (showing both your answers and the correct answers), will be available. All homework assignments are worth 10 points, although the number of problems on each assignment will vary.

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 the same as 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 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. Emailing her will not receive a response.

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 22400 instructors' office hours, in the Math Help Room (MATH 205) and at the WISP/Wiley 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 (will include the case number) to the MathZone Coordinator to request an extension on the assignment.

Changing Sections

If you change sections of the course, after having registered for this semester, you must also change your sections of MathZone. To do this, 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 new section (time and instructor). When you go to the MathZone site, login with your previous email address and password. You will automatically be in your new course, once the MathZone Coordinator has made the switch for you.

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.)