

Math is deeply important for all

Math, the subject that many students dread above others, is so much more important than people seem to realize. "Oh god," people say. "I just got the hang of numbers, and now there are letters! How can this ever be of any use?"

A survey conducted by a market research group called Wakefield Research at the behest of the Nintendo Company Ltd., however, indicates that the policy of ignoring math education leads to later regrets. Four hundred adults were interviewed in the course of the telephone survey, with 86 percent of them reporting that math was important to their careers. More than half reported having believed that they would never need the math they had learned in school.

The Dallas School District in Texas was forced to lay off hundreds of teachers last October as a result of a simple math error. The successful functioning of any budgeted organization relies on the calculations concerning the distribution of the budget being accurate.

A good grounding in mathematics is necessary in many fields. A nurse needs to be able to deliver the correct amount of a medication to patients of varying body types and health levels.

An epidemiologist tracking the spread of bird flu throughout Asia and Africa may need to use mathematical equations to model the progression of the

Commentary



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disease.

In business, you increasingly need to be able to both understand and use mathematics. Calculus, which studies the mathematics of change, can be used to model fluctuations in the economy. Equations are also necessary to calculate interest. This skill is also relevant to economists.

Anyone pursuing a degree in a social science will also require knowledge of mathematics, particularly statistics. Someone interested in psychology, or sociology will need to be able to understand the methodologies behind the statistical results of studies, and to be able to critically analyze the results. Lawyers also need to be able to understand statistical data presented in court, and to be able to point out flaws in reasoning.

A political scientist might study game theory as well as calculus and statistics, so as to have a deeper understanding of the logic behind political and military maneuvers.

Physics, computer science and biology are all scientific fields that frequently involve mathematics. The National Weather Service enters meteorological data collected from around the world into computerized mathematical models in order to attempt to predict weather. Depending on the amount and accuracy of the data provided, the output from the programs may be more or less accurate.

Engineering also requires a large amount of mathematics. A building, depending on its location, may have to be designed to be resistant to earthquakes, high wind speeds, or other natural phenomena.

In order to support the weight of its structure and contents, a building requires a certain number of support posts or beams. Mathematical calculations can be used to indicate how many support posts the structure will need not to cause flaming horrible death to its occupants.

Paying attention in math class is important for everyone.

You want your nurse to give you the right amount of insulin, and to not kill you; your nurse wants their child's school to remain open. Simple.

Nick wants to date math.