

Maple TA Info for students

Maple TA is a web based system for doing homework. This document describes the requirements for using the system, how to login, and what to do if you are having problems. A separate online tutorial will step you through how to use the system to do homework. Please review all of these documents carefully so you will be able to concentrate on doing homework.

1. Access and System Requirements:

If you do not have computer access from home, then you can use any computer with an internet access. The computers on the first floor of NAC have been tested and fully support the program. Be aware that network use at the College is very heavy between 12 and 2 pm, so those are not optimal hours to use the system. Also, the wireless system in NAC is particularly prone to timeout problems during that period.

A good place to use the program is in the Math Department computer lab in NAC 1511. You can use the lab any day except Friday, usually from 10AM until 5PM. The exact schedule is posted on the math department website on the Resources menu http://math.sci.ccny.cuny.edu/pages?name=artino_lab.

Lab assistants can help you with the program and, time permitting, with your math.

If you are using the program on your home computer please observe the following requirements:

Browser -

For a Windows based system use IE6.x or higher, Firefox 2.x or higher. Chrome is not supported.

You must have java 1.4.2 or higher installed and java script enabled.

For a Mac system you should use Firefox 2.x or higher. The Safari browser seems to give problems with the Flash applications that are part of this course package (see below).

You must have java 1.4.2 or higher installed and java script must be enabled.

For either system, your browser must accept cookies and must allow popups from the server site.

Flash player-

It is necessary to have an up-to-date Flash player installed in your browser. Most browsers have a Flash player, but these are sometimes out-of-date. An out-of-date version may cause your system to freeze when you try to run the graphics problem and you will lose work as a result.

You can see what version of Flash is installed on your computer by going to <http://www.adobe.com/software/flash/about/>. If the version number displayed begins

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with a "10" or higher, your installation is OK. If your version is older than 10 you should click on the link for the free upgrade to the most recent version of the player.

If you have trouble installing the player under Windows, go to http://kb2.adobe.com/cps/191/tn_19166.html for helpful troubleshooting.

2. Maple TA Homepage is

<http://place19.placementtester.com:8080/CUNYCCNY/login>

If you are using a public computer you can find this link on the CCNY math department homepage, <http://math.sci.ccny.cuny.edu>, under the course listing for Math 19500.

Your instructor should also post a link to the Maple TA site on the External Links section of your Blackboard site.

3. Logging in:

Your user **login** is "your first name" + "first two letters of your last name" + "your section ID", **all in lower case**.

For example, if your name is Peter Smith and you are in Math19500CC your user login is petersmcc.

Your **password** has been set initially to be the same as your user login. If you have used Maple TA before, your password has been reset to this default.

4. First time login (IMPORTANT)

The first time you login you will be asked to validate your user profile. Please do the following

- a) Enter an e-mail address that you use. This is needed in case you forget your password. The system can send a new one to the e-mail address you enter. Otherwise you have to contact the system administrator (Prof. E. Grossman) and you will not get a new password so quickly.

To change your password at any time you can go to the My Profile link in the upper right of the screen after you login.

5. How the system works:

When you login you will see three courses in which you have been registered: Math 195(Spring 11 XX), Math 195(Spring 11 XX Practice) and Math 195(Spring11 XX Test), where XX = your section code.

Math 195(Spring 11 XX) is your main class site. When you click on the link to that site you will see a list of assignments with due dates. These are the homework assignments for the course (more will be added as the term progresses). They will be graded and recorded by the system. Each problem corresponds to a problem from the correspondingly numbered section of the text (or supplemental algebra notes). Your instructor will distribute a concordance showing the exact correspondence.

Before the assignment due date, you can attempt an assignment as many times as you wish. Only your highest score will be counted towards your homework grade.

You can only have one active assignment at any time in a given class. If you accidentally open the wrong assignment, just have the system grade it and then start the correct assignment. Even though you will receive a grade of zero in the assignment you accidentally opened, this will not count when you redo the assignment later.

When you first click on an assignment you will be asked whether you want to print it or work online. Printing an assignment provides a written record and space in which to work the problem. You can enter your answers in the system later. On the other hand, you will not get the immediate feedback of knowing whether you are correct. If you chose to work online, you should still keep a written record of your work for review.

When you answer a question you can ask the system to evaluate whether your proposed response is correct. This is done by clicking on the link labeled "How did I do?" The program will evaluate your answer and will inform you if it is right or wrong, without telling you the answer when you are wrong. Some problems have strict requirements about the form of an answer (factored, reduced, simplified in certain ways), so pay attention to such statements in the problem. Otherwise, the program will accept any mathematically correct answer, provided you have entered it correctly (see the online tutorial for practice in doing this.)

If your answer is wrong, you should try to figure out your error. For some of the more difficult problems you will see one or more hints on the question page. If you are not able to resolve your difficulties you should look at the Practice class, as described later and in the FAQ section.

You do not have to complete an assignment at one sitting. If you press the "Quit and Save" link, the program will save the work you have done and will return the same problems the next time you access the assignment. In fact, in a long assignment you may want to "Quit and Save" a few times to ensure that you do not lose work in case of some interruption in the connection.

When you have completed all the problems in an assignment you should click on "Grade" to have all problems evaluated. Hitting "View Details" will display the problems with your answers and the correct answers. You (and your instructor) can view completed assignments using the Gradebook link.

Math 195(Spring 11 XX Practice) contains duplicates of every homework assignment. These are always available; there are no date restrictions. You can do any problems you wish and the results are not recorded. For each problem, you can see the correct answer immediately. If you are having trouble with a homework problem, look at the corresponding practice problem and try to see why you are not getting the answer shown. You can also use the Practice class to work on homework problems after the due date. This is useful for reviewing for exams.

Math 195(Spring 11 XX Test) This is a site that contains diagnostic tests that will be given at the beginning and end of the term. These do not count towards your grade. All testing in the course will be given in-class and graded by your instructor.

6. FAQ

Q1: What should I do if I can't login?

A1: First make sure you are entering your user ID and login in lower case. Make sure you type a letter "l" not a numeral "1". If you still have problems with your login contact Professor E. Grossman at egrossman@ccny.cuny.edu. Please provide your section and name.

Q2: How do I learn to use the system?

A2: There is a very short tutorial (7 questions) on your class homepage. It will take you no more than 15 to 20 minutes to read and complete, but explains everything you need to know to use the system. You will save your self a lot of aggravation later if you do it first thing.

Q3: I was working on an assignment and the system froze and I could not enter anything. The "Quit and Save" link did not work either. What should I do?

A3: If the problem occurred while you were working on a graphics problem, you may not have installed the correct version of Flash. Review the documentation above in section 1 on installing the Flash player.

Otherwise, while uncommon, system freezes can often be fixed by refreshing your browser window. In **Firefox**, right click on the screen and select Reload, then chose Resend from the options. In **IE**, just press F5. You should be able to resume work on the same problem. If not, please record the time of day when the problem occurred and contact Prof. Grossman at egrossman@ccny.cuny.edu with that information, as well as the browser and operating system you are using.

In a long assignment, you should "Quit and Save" before you have completed entering all problems to avoid having to reenter your work should an interruption occur.

Q4: Maple TA says my answer is wrong, but I am sure it is not. What should I do?

A4: Most likely the system is correct and you are making a mistake, though it may not be a serious one by mathematical standards. Here are some troubleshooting ideas to help you diagnose the problem.

- a) Make sure you used the proper case for the letters in your answer, as the system distinguishes between an upper case letter and its lower case version. Unless stated otherwise, in your answer you should use the same case for any variables as appears in the statement of the question.
- b) You can look at the same question in the Practice Class site for which you are registered. Here you will see the answer to a similar problem. Pay attention to the form of the answer. Some problems require a specific structure for the answer (interval notation, an equation, etc.) and if you do not observe that structure the answer will be marked incorrect. There is no partial credit for "almost" getting the answer right.
- c) Follow the method you used and work out the problem in the Practice Class. Compare your answer and the system answer, until you can duplicate the latter. If you are able to do so, you can go back and redo your original problem.
- d) After checking through with suggestions a) to c), if you are still convinced that your answer is correct, contact your instructor. He will be able to examine your work online and adjust your grade on the assignment, if necessary.