

MATHOGRAPHY

Whether we like it or not, good or bad, we all have a history with mathematics. In your quest to learn mathematics, I am asking you to reflect on your history with mathematics and experiences in math classes by writing a mathography. A mathography is similar to an autobiography except it is focused on your personal history with mathematics. This is a chance for you to reflect on your personal history with math and also an opportunity to share your mathematical experiences with me. Don't limit yourself to your experiences in math class. Be honest; your writing will only be read by me unless you would like to share. Try to make it interesting; I will be reading a lot of these!

Please write your mathography in a letter format addressed to me. Your letter should address every question below. Please write in complete sentences and use correct grammar. I want to be impressed by your intelligence so don't be lazy.

About you:

- What are your interests, talents, hobbies?
- Who is someone you look up to and admire?
- What are your dreams and goals?
- How many people are in your family?
- Do you like school? What is your favorite class?
- Is there anything I need to know about you that would help you learn better?
- Tell me anything about yourself that you feel I should know or something you are proud of? 😊

About you as a math student:

- How do you feel about math? Do you like or dislike it? Why do you feel that way?
- Are you "good" at mathematics? Explain.
- Do you like some areas of mathematics better than others? If so, which ones do you like or dislike? Why do you like or dislike them?
- What makes math great or horrible to you?
- What experiences in math have you like? Why?
- Describe your most memorable experience in the learning math (good or bad).
- How do you feel about taking the math class you are taking this year? What do you expect to learn?
- What type of things do you think are important to help students learn math?

On the back of this sheet is my own mathography. Please read it as an example of what your letter should look like.

Dear Benson Students,

My interests and hobbies include riding my bike, play drums/guitar/ukulele/glockenspiel/viola, cooking awesome food, growing a vegetable garden, reading, photography, going to the movies, and taking naps in my hammock. My favorite TV shows are *Glee*, *Empire*, *The Mindy Project* and my all-time favorite show is *LOST*. Someone I look up to and admire is Beyonce! I love her music and her dance moves! My dream is to ride my bike along the entire coast of Oregon. I have a goal of one day building a tree house.

I like school but I always haven't. I had a hard time figuring out what I wanted to study in college but through it all, I've always *loved* math. Even if it took me a while to figure out. My favorite class in high school was Algebra and Orchestra. Something that helps me learn is writing down, underlining or highlighting important information, and asking questions. When I read books and I see a word I don't understand, I underline the word, and write it in the back of the book along with its definition. Something about you that you should know is that I'm from Texas (and I say y'all many times) but my parents were born in the Philippines.

I like math because I like to solve puzzles and make things work. Math is like a puzzle to me where I can think about things, move them around, and figure out an answer. I like working on Algebra but I also like Geometry and I think Sacred Geometry looks really cool! What makes math great is that I don't have to memorize things like I do in other classes and I can spend class time trying to figure things out.

I liked all my math classes in high school but when I got to college the math was very difficult. I was too afraid to ask for help from the teacher or join other students in their study groups. Looking back on that, if I had started going to my professors once I began to not understand material, I may have had a better GPA. In college, I had to retake classes because I didn't get a high enough grade to go on to the next class. At one point, I took a break from school to work full time for a few years. Once I went back to school, I worked hard and earned an A in my final math class.

My most memorable experience in learning math was in the first grade. My teacher had three jars in the front of the class: small, medium, and large. We had to guess which one had 100 items in it. Everyone had over-estimated and picked the large one which probably had 500+ black beans in it. She took the small one and counted in front of class 100 cheerios. It blew my mind!

This year I am teaching Geometry and Algebra 3-4 classes. I'm excited to be part of the Benson community! The things I think are important to help students to understand and learn math are to look for patterns, explaining/listening to others, and not giving up on hard problems. Also communicating with your teacher if you do not understand the material is super important. We are here to help you learn!

Love,

Ms. Espineli