

Class Presentations and Participation in Foundations*

Though the atmosphere in this class will be informal and friendly, what we do in the class is serious business. In order for everybody to benefit from the class as much as possible, there are a few things we all need to pay attention to.

- Everybody needs to thoroughly study the sections to be discussed, and do the exercises along the way. When a section is assigned for “reading”, it is understood that you do exercises along the way (have paper and pencil handy). We call this kind of reading “active reading”.
- In order to make presentations go smoothly, **the presenter needs to have written out the proof in detail and gone over the major ideas and transitions**, so that they can make clear the path of the proof to the others.
- The purpose of class presentations is not to prove to the instructor that the presenter has done the problem. It is to make the ideas of the proof clear to the other students.
- Presenters are to write in complete sentences, using proper English and mathematical grammar.
- Presenters should explain their reasoning as they go along, not simply write everything down and then turn to explain.
- Fellow students are allowed to, actually should ask questions at any point and it is the responsibility of the person making the presentation to answer those questions to the best of their ability.
- Questions and comments need not only come from students who don’t understand the problem. Part of the purpose of class presentations is to help the person who is presenting work explain things as clearly as possible. Another student who has done the problem and understands it well can often make suggestions that help clarify the wording or the structure of a presentation.
- Since the presentation is directed at the students, the presenter should frequently make eye-contact with the students in order to address questions when they arise and also be able to see how well the other students are following the presentation.
- Students will be graded both on the content and the quality of the presentation. The quality will be graded more strictly as the semester wears on (since students’ presentation skills are expected to improve with practice)

* These remarks are mostly from the author of our textbook, Professor Schumacher.