

Precalculus



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Intended as a bridge from high school Algebra II and trigonometry to college calculus, Warren Esty's "Precalculus" fills the need for a text that delves deeper into the power of algebra and algebraic notation than the usual texts that emphasize calculation skills. The text includes the usual precalculus material, such as functions, powers, polynomials, logarithms, exponentials, and trigonometry, while placing special emphasis on learning how to read and use mathematical symbolism. As it is not designed for a terminal course, "Precalculus" offers students the tools they need to retain what they learn. For example, in addition to the usual calculation problems for practice, the text has problems that ask for an illustration, explanation, or a statement in mathematical notation, rather than just a computation; in fact, some problems ask for the plan and not the answer. Typically, students do well with algebra if the context is simple and the computation is with numbers; however, they have a harder time at the deeper level required to do word problems and calculus, which ask students to write about operations applied to letters (variables). Thus, texts that duplicate the calculation-oriented algebra of high school without stressing algebraic symbolism-with letters as they appear every day in calculus-fall short in preparing students for higher math. "Precalculus" does not.

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