

After reading the textbook and before class, you should participate in the online discussion on our Piazza site at <http://piazza.com/upenn/fall2018/math340>. These *must* be posted by 2pm on the day of class (i.e. one hour before the start of class) so I have time to read them before class.

What counts as participation is very open-ended. You could:

- Ask a question that's directly about the material in the reading—for instance, something you didn't understand.
- Ask a question which is related to the material but goes beyond the text—for instance, ask whether the material in the text can be extended in a particular way.
- Answer a question someone else has asked.
- Make an observation related to the text—explain something in a different way that you find more helpful, or point out an example that was useful to you, or something you've seen online or in another class that's related to the material.

A typical contribution should be three to five sentences. They might end up being longer, especially if you're answering someone's question in detail or providing a long example. If your contribution is shorter than that, make sure it's written clearly enough; that's often a sign that you're not giving enough context for other people to get anything out of your contribution.

Keep in mind that this is a *writing* assignment: the purpose is to practice writing about mathematics. Whatever you write, it should be something that other people can understand that contributes to their knowledge. (Yes, that includes questions: good questions definitely help people understand math!) You should be putting some effort into writing it well.

In particular, avoid the two most common mistakes:

- When asking questions, make sure to provide enough context, explain what you've already thought about or tried, and exactly why you're confused. (Avoid things like “In Example 4, where are there five?” or just “I didn't understand Example 4”.)
- When answering questions, keep in mind that your audience is the entire class, not just the person who asked the question. Your goal isn't just to get that one person to get one step further, but to help anyone who has a similar question.

I will read everything in the discussion forum, and may discuss some of the topics raised in class. I will only respond to administrative questions posted online, which should be posted in the **administration** folder.