



Seven Ways to Succeed in ALEKS

1. A little extra effort can bring big gains.

The students who earn the grades they want in ALEKS put in the time and put in effort for the course on a regular basis, several times a week. The students who do not get the grades they want do not put in the time and take longer breaks from logging in and working.

More than 75% of last year's students would have earned a B- or better if they had just one more hour a week in ALEKS. Fewer than 10% of students would have failed the course if they had worked one more hour a week in ALEKS.

According to data from the Math Department, students who are not on track for an A or a B could move up one letter grade if they spent just one additional hour per week working in the Math Emporium. There are always people to help there. When you go there to work, *ask questions*. The instructors and teaching assistants spend a lot of time waiting for students to ask questions. If you are get stuck on a topic, they are ready and willing to help!

2. Put in the time.

You are expected to log at least 20 ALEKS hours at the Math Emporium and a total of 30-40 hours unless you finish the course early. This means you will need to work at least 3 additional hours at home per week.

Spread out your work and learning. This will help you retain the information you learn, and you'll need this information to do well on assessments and in future math courses. In the 6 hours you spend on ALEKS, you should focus on learning the material rather than trying to get through it quickly.

Data shows that students who work regularly in ALEKS several times a week are more likely to pass the course and get a desirable grade. Working consistently and putting in the time is the best predictor for success.

3. Earn points to reach your objectives.

If you participate in class and do the assignments, you will earn three percentage points toward your final grade. If you do not attend class or do the assignments, you will lose up to three percent, after you score a 73% on the final assessments. Plan to work hard on and prepare for the four assessments.

By going to class, you are able to earn a participation point most weeks. You can do this by logging 3 ALEKS Hours in the Math Emporium on the second floor of the Library. The Math Emporium is open from 7:45am-9pm Monday through Thursday; 9am-6pm on Friday; 12:30pm-6pm on Saturday; and 2pm-9pm on Sunday.

4. Don't Procrastinate!

Never rush and never cram. Records show cramming is a waste of time and does not work. Space out your learning.

Create deadlines for yourself. Turn off your cell phone and close Facebook and Twitter so you can focus. Learn to say "no!" You need to be committed to putting in the time for ALEKS if you want to make a good grade.

One great study cycle involves setting a goal (1-2 minutes), studying with focus (30-50 minutes), rewarding yourself (10-15 minutes), and reviewing the information (5 minutes).

You cannot wait until the second half of the semester to start working on ALEKS. By then, you will have forgotten what you learned and you will have to cram all the new material in the last two weeks. This is rarely successful in the short term, and bad for longer-term learning.

5. Know how to take the assessments.

You will periodically take a progress assessment (normally after 5 hours of work and 20 topics gained) to reassess what you know and confirm recent learning. You should aim to do at least one assessment per week.

Give all assessments your best effort. Don't guess answers. If you guess wrong, ALEKS may direct you to learn topics you already know, and this will waste your time. If you guess right, you will likely to be directed to learn topics you are not ready to learn, and this will slow your progress. Never select "I don't know" unless you have no idea how to do the problem.

ALEKS also probes to see whether you have remembered more, so don't be surprised to see a topic you have not studied. After each progress assessment, ALEKS redraws your pie to include all topics you know well. You may need to work some more on topics you studied before but didn't completely master.

6. Know the consequences for low grades.

You have to pass this class to earn your degree. If you let your grade point average fall below a certain point, you will be placed on academic probation. Most colleges require that students on probation improve their grades by the end of the following term or else you won't be a Kent State student anymore.

Do not aim to get a C and do not stop working when you are at a C. Research shows that if you do this, you will not learn as much as you need to and you will not remember what you need to remember to take the final assessment and do well in your future math courses. Aim to get at least a B for the best chance of success in the next course.

7. Know where to get help.

ALEKS is NOT an online course! Your instructor is there to help and wants to help. Ask for help when you feel you need it. According to the Math Department, the average response time for a question is 19 seconds. You can always get help from the ALEKS explanations or from the e-book.

Even if you do not feel you need to, go to Tutoring. There are tutoring locations across campus. Visit www.kent.edu/asc for more information.