

“WHEN WILL I EVER USE THIS IN REAL LIFE?”

Honestly, you may never end up using this again in life.

Almost all the math that most people need in life, they learn before they get to Algebra. But one thing you need to understand is that we don't study upper-level math because we will be using it every day.

You don't study World War II or the Civil War because you will grow up and be in a war. You study the reasons people go to war, and the outcomes of war, to learn how to prevent war.

You learn how to diagram a sentence in English so that you have a better grasp of proper writing skills.

Will you ever dissect a frog again? Probably not, but you do it in school to have a better understanding of the muscular, respiratory, and circulatory systems and how they work. By understanding how they work in a frog, you understand how they work in a human.

You study math to learn how to think. Being able to think through problems and decide on solutions to the problem is what you learn from math.

We use math because we are able to get immediate feedback to determine if our thought process was correct (did you solve the problem correctly?). We continue to study higher levels of math to challenge our thinking and to become more efficient problem solvers.

Will you ever use this again in life? I don't know, and you don't either. Who knows what you will do when you graduate from college, but why limit your options?

One thing is guaranteed: You will have to solve problems your entire life. Not necessarily math problems, but life problems. Some will be simple and some will be difficult.

You may already be prepared to handle simple ones, but my goal is to prepare you for the harder problems you will face in life. I hope to teach you the thinking skills you will need to approach those problems with confidence and solve them.

Now go back to your desk and learn to think.

(Taken from the Star-Telegram, December 24, 2002, Michael Yelvington, Grapevine HS)