

TOPIC D: USING A CALCULATOR

Things to keep in mind when using calculator...

A calculator is a tool to do calculations. So are the human mind and paper & pencil. You should know when to use calculator and when mental computing (or even paper & pencil) are more effective or appropriate. Choosing the right 'tool' is part of effective problem-solving. It is very important you learn how to estimate the result before doing the calculation. It is very easy to make mistakes when punching in numbers and you must not learn to 'rely' on the calculator without checking the accuracy of the answer.

Learn the symbols associated with math. Basic calculators are dominated by a few standard symbols including a plus sign (+) for addition problems, a minus sign (-) for subtraction, a multiplication symbol (\times or *), a division sign (\div) and an equal sign (=). Understand the processes that go along with the signs. If you don't understand the process of division, it's useless to know the sign because you won't be able to successfully put it to use. By learning basic math principles, you can then use a calculator to put those processes to work.

Acquaint yourself with the layout of a calculator. Most calculators have numbers in the middle, beginning with zero at the bottom of the layout and working upwards, in rows of three, to the number nine. Basic math symbols are generally placed to the right of the numbers. You'll find the percentage button (%) and square root button with the math symbols.

Try a graphing or scientific calculator when you learn more math processes. These calculators perform more difficult mathematical processes and can handle longer strings of numbers. When you learn various formulas and do longer problems, graphing and scientific calculators can do much of the work for you.

