**Actual prompt from Summer 2016 syllabi:**

7. Almost all CSU San Marcos have a Writing Requirement. ESM 05 has a shortened version of this requirement. As you are working through ALEKS, keep two questions in the back of your mind:

a. Where could this type of problem show up and be useful to me in the real-world, and

b. How does one mathematical skill that you are learning build upon something else that you have already learned?

At the end of the course you will be required to write a mini-essay answering one of these two questions. (You can choose which one you want to answer.)

The essay must make it clear whether you are responding to prompt a or b (or both), and it should refer to mathematical topics by the name that ALEKS gives them. Your essay should be at least 200 words long (which is just a little longer than the description of this requirement) and may be submitted to Dr. Barsky either at class in hard-copy format (**legible** handwriting/printing is acceptable) or electronically as part of an ALEKS message.

**Tentatively planned prompt for Summer 2017 syllabi:**

7. Almost all CSU San Marcos have a Writing Requirement. ESM 05 has a shortened version of this requirement in which you will write about mathematical connections: either connections from mathematics to the ‘real world’ or connections within mathematics. As you are learning topics in ALEKS, keep two questions in the back of your mind:

a. Where could the type of problem in this topic show up and be useful to you in the real-world, or

b. How does the mathematical skill that you are developing in one ALEKS topic build upon something you learned in some earlier ALEKS topic?

At the end of the course you will be required to write a mini-essay answering one of these two questions. (You can choose which one you want to answer.)

The essay must make it clear whether you are responding to prompt a or b (or both), and it should refer to mathematical topics by the name that ALEKS gives them. Your essay should be approximately 250 words long, and it should be submitted electronically as part of an ALEKS message. There are three ways in which you may do this:

* You can type your essay directly into the ALEKS email. Note, however, that if you do this, the time that you spend typing your email will not count toward the 21-hour productive time requirement. Also, be aware that your Message Center can lose its connection to the ALEKS server if you work too long on your email, so it is recommended that you use one of the next two methods.
* You can prepare your essay in some other word processor, and then attach it to the ALEKS email.
* You can prepare your essay in some other word processor, and then just copy and paste it into the email once it's done.
* Do **not** send a link to a document hosted on some other server (e.g., Google Docs).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Essay Evaluation Rubric** | Yes or No |
| 1. Prompt:Does the essay respond to either of the two prompts? |  |
| 2. Topic Identification:Does the essay clearly identify (by the name that ALEKS gives them) the topic(s) that are being connected to the real world or to one another? |  |
| 3. Example:Does the essay give an example (or examples) that illustrates the topics being discussed? |  |
| 4. Mathematical Correctness:Are the examples correct? |  |

Essays that do not earn YES answers to all four rubric criteria will need to be revised and resubmitted.

**The first 35 essays and responses follow immediately below.**

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Student 001; Section 03; 06/29/2016 at 06:34:47 PM PDT

One mathematical skill I have been learning is using problem solving to find answers to word problems. Throughout the ESM 05 course I was challenged with problem solving that appears in the real world. The advantaged I have with learning more problem solving is it has appeared before in my life almost everyday. For example, when I’m trying to calculate gas prices and find the cheapest option closest to me. I am not only figuring out the cheapest price, but adding or subtracting the amount of gas it will require me to get to the gas station. Using the skills I already use daily, I was able to figure out the equations, like the ones involving finding how many student tickets were sold vs. how many adult tickets were sold. Also, the advantage to having this skills already from using them in daily life, I was able to build off of them during more challenging topics. My skills and prior knowledge was a building block for this course. Now, I will be able to take my more advanced skills to help with college courses and even more challenging equations in the classroom, and also in more challenging situations in life.

You're right. If you know how many miles per gallon your car takes, there’s an equation that you can solve to determine the distance at which it doesn't pay to travel to buy cheaper gas.

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Student 002; Section 03; 07/04/2016 at 11:04:43 PM PDT

Prompt B

I have always been pretty good in math in high school; I took Geometry, Algebra 2, Pre-Calculus, and AP Statistics. I’m glad I got the opportunity to take ESM 05 because I got to develop a deeper understanding of university entry level mathematics, as well as review on mathematical concepts.

Math is different compared to other subjects because math builds on itself. If you don't understand a book in Language Arts class, it's fine because after you take the test you get a fresh new start with a new book. However, in math it doesn't work like that. In math, you need to understand every lesson fairly well since the next lesson will build onto the previous lesson. An example of this would be algebra. You first learn the basics such as recognizing patterns and this sets the groundwork for more complicated lessons such as working with algebraic variables and solving for "x". I enjoy math because mathematical concepts interconnect and what you learn one day builds onto what you have already learned in previous lessons. You need to understand past lessons since they are required to support future chapters. Therefore you know when you have a good foundation because you will be able to apply it into new concept.

Having a solid foundation in math is important because you will be able to successfully build upon what you have already learned. However, without a solid foundation you will be lost in future chapters.

Right! For instance, once you recognize the basic difference of squares pattern

$a^{2}-b^{2}=(a+b)(a-b)$, you can apply this to factor more complicated expressions like $4x^{2}-9y^{2}$. (Think of  $a=2x$ and $b=3y$.)

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Student 003; Section 01; 07/07/2016 at 06:31:19 PM PDT

I've learned new ways to solve mathematical problems. In the future and in the real world these are skills I will be able to apply in my life. I am now able to figure out how far I can travel with the gas in my car. Not only that but if I were to become an architect I could use my math skills that I learned with ALEKS to build a home. The topics I learned through ALEKS were very helpful. I had previously learned those topics, but with the be from ALEKS I was able to not only relearn these topics, but master them.

I like this essay, but could you add a sentence giving an example of where some of the math skills that you've learned could be useful in designing or building a home?

In the geometry section I learned how to find the circumference of a circle. Along with that I was able to learn how to find the perimeter and area of any shape. With this being learned I could as a architect, plan and measure out everything accordingly to build the perfect home.

Very nice. You have met this requirement.

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Student 004; Section 03; 07/08/2016 at 11:42:34 PM PDT

Throughout this course many of the topics you can see how they go into each other and makes some things a little bit easier in my opinion. For example, if you see how being able to graph a line using using its x and y-intercepts really helps when you are told to find the slope of a line. To me this really helped due to the fact that I always seemed to mess up the points making it very difficult to find the slope since you kind of need to know the points correctly to really do anything. If you wanted to see another example then you can look in the numbers and data section where it talks about how to convert fractions to decimals and vice versa. This becomes critical when you get the lesson on having to order fractions from least to greatest or just in general due to having to do one of these conversions to make the numbers have the same format. If you look any deeper than you can see just how important each topic is because some how it goes into another and being able to do one makes the other one way easier to learn in my own opinion.

Very nice. Yes to both of your main points!

1. To find a slope from a graph, you need to pick two points, and the x- and y-intercepts are especially nice because each one of these has a zero coordinate.

2. And to compare a decimal to a fraction, you need to be able convert from one of these forms to the other.

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Student 005; Section 03; 07/09/2016 at 07:22:39 PM PDT

Prompt: where could this type of problem show up and be useful to me in real world?

Math in general is not just equations that we have to solve. It is much more than that. It teaches us how to think about any problem in life how to break it down and how to start approaching the problem. It also teaches us how every little thing in life requires some type of math in it. For example, working as a cashier in a fast food restaurant requires the ability to count money and orders. So we should not take math as something we have to do otherwise we will fail because we are going to get bored of it and give up on it. Personally I like doing math a lot. it is true sometimes it gets hard and I hate I, it makes me feel like giving up on everything but after all I like challenging myself by trying my best I do not like to quit. I have seen many of my friends just quit college after high school and sometimes I feel bad about it because I wish them the best but it is their decision. I have helped a lot of my friends doing math and I taught them and walked them through many assignments and they graduated from high school I felt so happy because I did my best and I made someone happy as well. After all it was a fun course and a lot of experience I really enjoyed it.

Can you revise your essay for me to make it clearer exactly which type(s) of problem in ALEKS you are discussing?

Revised Essay!

We see math in many different ways in our world in fact our life is made out of numbers. Mathematical equations are very important in our daily life because we use it all the time, for example the cashier at the liquor store need math to calculate how much the items worth and how much should he give back (change) it is also a good way to help us think differently and think outside the box. We use math a lot because it is a global language that everyone understands. We use math in our money and in our time. Without math I don’t think we live the same as we do right now it will be a lot different. We wouldn’t have computers or this very advance technology that everyone is so attach to it. In other word math made life much way easier it’s a whole different language that we need to know to live now days. We also use math in saving and credits cards personally I use it for my credit scores and my credit card. They also use it for population growth this is a very important one because everyone want to know about it. Math have such an impact in our lives that we do not even notice but it is there and we have to accept it.

This is nice, but you are still not addressing the writing prompt. There were two prompts, and it looks to me as if you are using the first one:

"Where could some type of problem that you have learned how to solve in MAPS show up and be useful to me in the real-world?"

The point of this essay is to connect something that you've personally learned in this course to the real world, and I'm still not certain after reading your revised essay which of the problems that you've been learning to solve in ALEKS correspond to making change at a store or using a credit card.

You might it useful to review the problems that you've learned so far. To find them: [Deleted: Instructions on how to find the topics learned in ALEKS.]

We see math in our real world a lot because our life is made out of numbers. For example, one of the many useful equations I learned from ALEKS is how to divide or multiply fractions I used to struggle a lot but it is very useful to know this type of problems because we use it in money for example when we divide sometimes we have to use fractions like (2/5\*5/5) because personally I do not like using decimals because sometimes it gets very complicated so fractions are a lot easier. Another problem that I learned is to converting fractions to a decimals and decimals to fractions one day I had to know the percentage of $35 out of $90 and I had to ask my dad for help so he told me but he never taught me how to figure out the answer till now I mastered it and I feel confident finding the percentage of any number. In other word math is very useful and it makes life a lot easier we just have to learn how to use it correctly and thanks to ALEKS I have learned as much topics that I had no idea how to solve.

That's more like what I was looking for. Here's how I would calculate what percent 35 is out of 90. First to simplify matters, I would simplify the fraction 35/90 by factoring a 5 out of both the numerator and denominator, and then canceling these to get that 35/90 = 7/18. That allows me to do a division using smaller numbers (7 and 18) instead of larger numbers (35 and 90). If I do the division by hand, I notice that I get a repeating pattern: .388888.... This means that 35 is 38.88888....% of 90.

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Student 006; Section 01; 07/10/2016 at 10:51:23 AM PDT

Throughout my experiences with ALEKS I encountered several topics that to me, seemed as if they would have some use in my life. A topic that comes to mind as I reflect is solving word problems with two unknowns using linear equations. When I was volunteering at an event for school circa three years ago I remember one of my classmates posing a question along the lines of how many tickets were sold at a concession stand; children's tickets were cheaper than that of an adult, hence we lost track of how many adult tickets were sold in comparison to that of the children. I remember not being able to process the question as well as I could now; of course, I had no answer at the time. After revisiting not only this topic, but several others that I forgot how to approach or did not learn well enough in the first place, I am more confident that I am no longer missing as many fundamental components to mathematics as I was before entering this course. Furthermore, this is not the only topic that I believe can help me in the "real world", as i found out there were several useful topics to me personally. Hopefully, when prompted with something in the future I can help solve the problem and have this course be responsible for my successes in the future.

Nice essay. You'd be surprised at the number of different times and places where mathematical problems how up in the real world. It's just a matter of (a) recognizing that this is a situation where mathematics can be used, and (b) having mastered the right mathematical tools to be able to solve the problem. You've done both!

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Student 007; Section 03; 07/10/2016 at 01:28:13 PM PDT

Knowing how to do math is an important essential. People do math in their everyday lives without even knowing it. From the Numbers and Data section of ALEKS, fraction division is useful in sharing food. For example, person A is eating a burrito. What is leftover is 1/2 of the burrito. Person B would like half of the eaten burrito. Person A needs to cut the burrito in half evenly. Fraction division is used to cut the burrito evenly so that both person A and person B have the same quantity of food. From the Algebra section of ALEKS, word problems on direct variation can be useful for traveling. You can figure out how long it takes to get to a destination depending on the distance travelled. From the Algebra section, finding the slope is very useful in construction work. All disabled people on wheelchairs need access to buildings that use stairs. They cannot walk or ride their wheelchair up stairs because that is dangerous. Stairs are meant for people to walk on and is not wheelchair accessible. The solution to that would be creating a ramp. You would need to find out the slope of the ramp in order for the ramp to be easy to use. If the ramp is too steep, a person in a wheelchair would have a difficult time using the ramp.

Very nice essay. Since you wrote about slopes of ramps and how it is important to check that their slopes aren't too great, I'll let you in on a CSUSM story that is not very widely known (it's almost a secret). As you walk from the Student Union to the Library and look to your right, you'll see a set of stairs leading down to Campus View Drive. There also are three small circular buildings down their and a ramp that switchbacks its way up from those structures up the hillside. Those structures were supposed to be a transit center (i.e., bus stop) but apparently the slope of the ramps was steeper than the regulations on access allow. So buses stop instead out in Craven Circle where there is an elevator that people using wheelchairs can use instead to get up to the level of the plaza between the Library and the Student Union.

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Student 008; Section 01; 07/10/2016 at 03:40:09 PM PDT

How math helps a sociologist.

Graphs, tables and percentages are problems that will show up and be useful to me in the real world as a sociologist. A sociologist job is to study the lives of humans. There are thousands of humans in the world; therefore we are all separated by ethnic, religion or gender. And when studying the behavior of a group graphs can be useful for this type of organization.

Graphs such as line, bar pie and histograms, summarize and display information in an easy way to understand data. Just like graphs tables can be useful too. For example, when comparing two groups with two different activities and comparing the results is a way table cans give you a better understanding of their similarities and differences. Also, knowing how to convert a number into a percent is very useful. Being that percentages give you a better understanding and can be compared more easily than fractions or decimals. Percentages are also important because they can show you the decrement or incensement in a study, how you're being paid and how your company is doing.

Math is important in our everyday life. And as a sociologist graphs, tables and percentages are problems that will show up and be useful to me in the real world.

It is not necessary for you to resubmit your essay, but I believe that you meant "increment" instead of "incensement" in the last sentence of your second paragraph.

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Student 009; Section 01; 07/11/2016 at 06:29:48 PM PDT

Math is the conceptual science of numbers that has been an withstanding basis of jobs, inventions, and the ability to function in society. There is math everywhere and because of this we are taught how to figure out this abstract science at a very early age, beginning quite possibly with simply learning how to count. Learning the concept of numbers, amounts, and quantities gives us the ability to understand the value of certain things. With this little piece of knowledge, humans everywhere begin to build their education on this foundation. You then learn how to add, multiply, divide, graph, find the standard deviation of numbers, etc. However, it all begins with a solid foundation. Now, for me, I have never seen myself as a mathematician, but I do know how to count, do arithmetic, and graph. I have accomplished so much through the ALEKS program in regards to my increased level of education and the extent my abilities have reached so far.

Upon this previous knowledge, I was able to learn how to construct a histogram for numerical data, find the value for a new score that will yield a given mean and much more. Like any good building, the structure of one’s mathematical abilities lies within a solid base for its foundation, I have simply learned how to build on what I already know to comprehend whatever I am currently learning, only to further my skills to prepare me for whatever I will learn in the future.

I'm not entirely certain which prompt you are using. If it's the one about connecting what you've learned in ALEKS to the real world, then I'd like to see a sentence about where either of the topics you mentioned (constructing histograms and/or finding the missing value) might show up in the real world. If it's the prompt about connections between topics that you've learned, then add a sentence telling me about what other topics you learned in ALEKS that made it possible for you learn these two.

You should be able to copy your original essay from either this email or the one you sent in your Sent folder so that you don't need to retype the whole thing for your revision.

Math is the conceptual science of numbers that has been an withstanding basis of jobs, inventions, and the ability to function in society. There is math everywhere and because of this we are taught how to figure out this abstract science at a very early age, beginning quite possibly with simply learning how to count. Learning the concept of numbers, amounts, and quantities gives us the ability to understand the value of certain things. With this little piece of knowledge, humans everywhere begin to build their education on this foundation. You then learn how to add, multiply, divide, graph, find the standard deviation of numbers, etc. However, it all begins with a solid foundation. Now, for me, I have never seen myself as a mathematician, but I do know how to count, do arithmetic, and graph. I have accomplished so much through the ALEKS program in regards to my increased level of education and the extent my abilities have reached so far. Upon this previous knowledge, I learned how to find the product of a fraction and a whole number, I was then able to learn how to convert a decimal into a proper fraction. I only continued to learn how to build on information from there like, converting a percentage into a fraction in it’s simplest form and I was finally able to comprehend how to solve multi-step word problems involving fractions and multiplication, something that was always hard for me to learn. Like any good building, the structure of one’s mathematical abilities lies within a solid base for its foundation, I have simply learned how to build on what I already know to comprehend whatever I am currently learning, only to further my skills to prepare me for whatever I will learn in the future.

Good! I see now that you learned a number of things about fractions, and this allowed you to be able to solve those pesky word problems involving fractions. Real problems just like those (except usually phrased in terms of percentages) show up in the real world all of the time. For example, if a town has x residents and only y% of them are registered to vote, and only z% of the registered voters turn out to vote in an election, how many people actually voted?

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Student 010; Section 01; 07/11/2016 at 06:42:52 PM PDT

Working on this math course made me realize that math is important and that I will need it in my future. My major is criminal justice and i'm minoring in business. I will need math in both departments. Math is useful because it honestly makes your life easier and I can see it now. If you know math it makes some courses go by easier like chemistry or physics. In chemistry I struggled because i didn't understand the basic algebra to comprehend some of the lessons and that really effected my grade. I feel as if now I took chemistry again like in college I will be more confident because of this ALEKS course. ALEKS explained the topics so much more simple for me that it motivated me to keep going and learn more topics. While doing the ALEKS course i also realize that some topics get easier and easier because you already have an idea based on what you learned in the past topics. It's like they build ontop of eachother. Further more i'm very thrilled I took this course because not only did it expand my knowledge on basic math but it made me realize that math isn't only use in class enviroment but also in the real world. For example math is useful for any job from a cashier to a business person. Also I find myself using math when I try to figure out discount prices or when there are sales.

This is a nice essay. Calculating discounts is a nice example of where the mathematics that you were learning this summer can show up in your everyday life. You also will continue building on the foundation that you've been firming up this summer as you work on your minor in Business Administration; you will want to take MATH 115 as soon as you can after clearing the Mathematics proficiency requirement, and then you'll want to take MATH 132 as soon as you pass MATH 115.

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Student 011; Section 01; 07/11/2016 at 08:38:49 PM PDT

 Throughout my high school career I always heard people rant after taking a math class saying that they had no idea why they were taking that class or why they even need to learn this stuff because they apparently knew they would never use it in the real world. With that being said I was one that totally agreed with the ranters. But I soon came to realize that that wasn't the case at all. Certain problems like the ones in those math classes, or in this case ALEKS, could pop up anytime in your career or even if your just out doing normal things like shopping.

 Math and numbers are everywhere and you'll encounter it all the time in the real world, and knowing the math will prove to be a pretty good advantage. Especially for your job if it requires it obviously. Even if your job doesn't have a lot of math involved, basic things like shopping, taxi fare, or the dreadful doing of the taxes will come up and knowing the basic math taught to you in high school or college will make sure you're paying the right amount and aren't getting ripped off a few bucks. For example, if you go to a store in the mall and see that they're having a sale for 15%, 20%, And 35% off merchandise, you're maybe going to want and check and make sure the prices are right if it seems a bit suspicious. Well good thing you learned those finding the original price problems on ALEKS right? Or maybe you're at home and just want to build a fence around your oddly shaped rectangle half circle garden, you'd just use that formula for finding the perimeter involving rectangles and circles, C =  πd. Using this you can figure out how much fence to put up to keep those pesky rabbits from eating your veggie. These are just some real world situations where these types of math problems can pop up and be used to your advantage.

Loved your essay! Nice examples!!

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Student 012; Section 01; 07/11/2016 at 10:02:23 PM PDT

I believe that finding the volume of shapes, specifically cylinders, is necessary in the real world. The section I chose was titled “ finding the volume of cylinders”, but I think that finding the volume of any prism will be useful later in life. Whether you are trying to find out how much soda you will need for a container at a party, or you need to know how much space you can find in one dresser compared to other. Problems like these can be found in everyday life. You may also find a problem like this while buying pipes for your broken sprinkler. You would need to find a pipe that was able to hope the correct amount of water without breaking the pipe. Or If you are moving to a new house, and need to pack your belongings into boxes. You may need to buy the box with a larger amount of volume, and by comparing two different box’s volumes, you can pack the most efficiently. I think that no matter what you need to fill, in the real world, you may need to know how to find the volume of a prism. Finding volume of cylinders, and any prism, is necessary in the real world.

I like your essay. Here's a question that you should be able to solve that combines both kings of volume problems. If you take a cylindrical can and put it in the smallest rectangular box (prism) that contains it. What is the volume of the remaining air in the box? Your answer should depend on the diameter and height of the can. Clearly, the box and the can will have the same height. You'll need to decide how the diameter of the can and the side length of the box are related.

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Student 013; Section 03; 07/11/2016 at 11:02:56 PM PDT

Over the course of relearning algebra, geometry, and numbers and data on Aleks, I effectively remembered how to work out many problems and equations. One of the most important topics that I relearned was "Finding a percentage of a whole number without a calculator." I found this to be one of the most effective and useful topics because there are many ways in which I may find it useful in my real life. This includes situations such as when a grocery store or mall has a sale or discount. Now, I can automatically determine that if a shirt is originally priced at $27, but is 25% off, it's sale price is $20.25.Before Aleks, I would have had to take out my calculator just to complete this simple mathematical. Now, I’m confident that I can take the percentage of a number using mental math. I will also find it useful later in life when I need to look into interest on things such as loans and investments. Another example where knowing how to find percentages could be useful, is jobs that pay employers on commission. Although this specific example may not directly apply to me, it is definitely an example of a situation that is important to know how to find percentage.

Nice essay. And, who knows? Your last situation might not apply to you right now, but it might at some point in the future. And now you're prepared for it!

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Student 014; Section 01; 07/11/2016 at 11:39:17 PM PDT

In this class along with the use of Aleks, I have expanded my knowledge and realized much of what I learned I see within the real world. Solving word problems, converting decimals into fractions or percent’s, and finding the sale price and percent discount are all topics I use on a daily basis and see often. For me, I am majoring in nursing and know I will need to use simple skills that Aleks has taught me such as simple multiplication, division, addition, and subtraction everyday. Within the medical field, mathematics is a crucial part of treatment. Aleks gave problems that can be seen in the hospitals or even at a grocery store, and trying to figure out how much to tip the waiter. Everyday there are scenarios that require from simple to complicated math equations and solutions. There are many other fields that require a good foundation of math knowledge in order to complete the work needed. I am confident that with people use simple math skills everyday even without realizing it. Whether it be calculating how much oil goes into the pan or the discount on your favorite shirt, these skills are extremely useful. Out of the skills I have mastered within Aleks, I believe that everyday problems can be solved easier now than ever, even without a calculator.

This is a nice essay. I am wondering, though, if you might tell me if the example about measuring how much oil goes into a pan was something that you saw directly in ALEKS, of (if it wasn't) how you would use something that you learned in ALEKS to help with this kind of measurement.

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Student 015; Section 01; 07/12/2016 at 01:01:41 AM PDT

Throughout Aleks, I encountered many problems that could be used in the real world. There were topics such as “Finding the original price given the sale price and percent discount.” For example, I would use this type of problem when I purchase a pair of shoes and were are on sale. If the shoes were originally $80 and its 30% I would need to find the final price. Many of the problems I encountered are going to be very useful in the future. At this moment, I may think that many of this information is irrelevant but I never know when I am going to encounter some of those problems. Many of the problems that come up on Aleks can be encountered when dealing with money and money plays a big role in the lives of people. Another topic that I may find myself using in the real world is “Word problem with division of whole numbers and rounding.” If I were to ever run a business this type of information would be really useful. Aleks has been a really useful and great program because I can keep track of what I learn and the information is very useful.

This is a nice essay, Alma, and it meets the essay requirement. You want to be aware, though, that the example you gave (shoes originally cost $80 on sale for 30% off) is actually an example of "Finding the sale price given the original price and the discount"). Here's a problem for you to think about that compares the two different kinds of problems. In Store A, shoes that were originally being sold for $80 are on sale at 30% off. In Store B, shows that have been marked off by 30% are now on sale for $80. How much has the price been lowered in Store A, and how much in Store B?

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Student 016; Section 01; 07/12/2016 at 08:09:53 AM PDT

Working through ALEKS, I found it interesting how mastering one topic helps you master the others. Mathematical problems are often built into levels; you need to have previous knowledge in order to be able to solveit. The first level consists of knowing how to add, subtract, divide and multiply; these topics are our basic tools to solve a mathematical problem. After mastering these topics, we need to learn how to work with positive andnegative integers, and the rules we need to follow when adding or subtracting. I used to find negative and positive integers tricky, and one of my teacherstaught me a little rhyme, positive plus a positive is a positive and you add, negative plus a negative is a negative and you add, positive plus a negative,negative plus a positive take the sign of the largest number and subtract. This helped me through Aleks as the material kept on building from that so somethingelse. Then came fractions and decimals with negative exponents, as all the topics kept on building up I didn’t see it as the problems getting more difficult but the programs was trying to give me more knowledge to be able tosolve all the topics I had mastered all at the same time in just one problems.

The basic idea of the essay is fine, but it needs to be supported by specific examples of where you first worked on a basic topic and then later extended the ideas that you learned there to a more advanced topic. You might it useful to review the problems that you've learned so far. [Deleted: Instructions on how to find the topics learned in ALEKS.]

Working through ALEKS, I found it interesting how mastering one topic helps you master the others. Mathematical problems are often built into levels; you need to have previous knowledge in order to be able to solve it. The first level consists of knowing how to add, subtract, divide and multiply; these topics are our basic tools to solve a mathematical problem. After mastering these topics, we need to learn how to work with positive and negative integers, and the rules we need to follow when adding or subtracting. I used to find negative and positive integers tricky, and one of my teachers taught me a little rhyme, positive plus a positive is a positive and you add, negative plus a negative is a negative and you add, positive plus a negative, negative plus a positive take the sign of the largest number and subtract. This helped me through Aleks as the material kept on building from that so something else, specifically on topics such as Combining like terms: Advanced. Then came fraction divisions and decimals with negative exponents, and even though the rules for multiplying and dividing exponents are different, like Word problem with decimal subtraction and division. All the topics kept on building up I didn’t see it as the problems getting more difficult but the programs was trying to give me more knowledge to be able to solve all the topics since they had a relationship to eachother.

I am accepting your essay.

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Student 017; Section 03; 07/12/2016 at 10:32:49 AM PDT

In ALEKS I learned a lot of material in particular I learned how to “solve a word problem with two unknowns using a linear equation” and how it will help me out in the real world. In that type of problem, it shows you how to find out unknown variables. So for example (this is the example they give in ALEKS) “we are looking for the cost of a bench. Cost of bench = x. We are given the cost of the garden table is two times the cost of the bench. So cost of the garden table = 2x. The total cost is $750 so we get the following. Cost of garden table + cost of bench = $750. 2x + x = $750. 3x = $750. So in the end x = $250.” We got the answer $250 because 3 goes into 750, 250 times. To check that answer I would just do 3 times 250 which equals 750. This will help me in real life problems, one example it will help me in is when I have a garage sale. If I sell T-shirts and sweatshirts and those all sold combined gave me 90 items sold total, but I don’t know how many sweatshirts I sold individually but I do know that I sold two times the amount of T-shirts than I did of sweatshirts, that means I would just have to do 2x + x = 90 from that I get 3x = 90. So I just do 90 divided by 3 which gives me 30. So I sold a total of 30 sweatshirts and 60 T-shirts, giving me a total of 90 items sold all together. In the end to check that answer I can do 3 times 30 which equals 90. That kind of problem will help me a lot in the future and is also very beneficial to me. It took me a while to learn how to do that topic but I kept trying at it because I know that I will definitely see problems like that in the real world.

This is a nice explanation, in your own words, of not only a situation in which this kind of problem might show up, but also how to solve it. Good job!

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Student 018; Section 01; 07/12/2016 at 11:14:39 AM PDT

After using Aleks, I realized that this online program helped me improve when it came to the basics of mathematics. As I continued to use Aleks, I noticed that some of the problems I previously practiced helped me for this new problem I had to solve. For example, re-learning how to do some division without a calculator actually made me feel confident when it came to doing problems like “Division of a decimal by a whole number” and “converting a fraction to a terminating decimal”. Another way Aleks helped me learn and build is when I started practicing adding and subtracting negative numbers. Coming into this course, I simply could not do those problems without a calculator, but now I feel confident that I can do them without a calculator in hand. I definitely needed to learn this skill for future lessons learned on Aleks and on the ELM Exam. I’m not the best math student but I really enjoyed using Aleks because it was like a second chance for me to improve on math basics and improve in Algebra, a class in which i struggled, and Geometry. I will continue to work with Aleks until my license expires, and I hope to get the most out of it and prepare myself more for the mathematics that will be ahead of me in my four years at CSU San Marcos.

Excellent! This was a nice example of showing how something a mathematical skill (doing division by hand) is the basis for more advanced kinds of calculations involving fractions and decimals, And being able to division without a calculator is empowering. Once you realize you can do this, it becomes easier to figure out all sorts of things like which brand of some product in the grocery store is a better buy (you divide the price by the volume). That's an example of something that I regularly do in order to keep myself arithmetically sharp.

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Student 019; Section 04; 07/12/2016 at 02:05:13 PM PDT

Taking this course has taught me a variety of topics under the categories, Geometry, Numbers & Data, and Algebra. As I have been taking this class over the three week period, I have came to realize that many of the topics build upon each other. The questions build up by starting off with as basic as they can get, then they go into more challenging problems and then for some topics, you will notice that you will find a piece of what you just learned in another form in that problem. The skills build up one by one and are not in order. Although they are not in order, they are in the order in which is best for you. I thought I was very clever that this website is personalized to fit you, which is very important in the process of learning or reviewing topics and skills. The way that this course is laid out, in the form of building upon skills one by one has been an extremely helpful experience by refreshing my brain on a variety of different topics. By taking this class I now am ready to go to the ELM workshops feeling confident that I know all the skills I need for Geometry, Numbers & Data, and Geometry.

The basic structure of your essay is fine, but it needs to be supported by specific examples of where you first worked on a basic topic and then later extended the ideas that you learned there to a more advanced topic. You might it useful to review the problems that you've learned so far. [Deleted: Instructions on how to find the topics learned in ALEKS.]

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Student 020; Section 01; 07/12/2016 at 11:00:01 PM PDT

Every skill you learn will add up to another set of problem. For example, how to find the area of a circle and area of a rectangle. After you master these skills, you could use them to solve area involving rectangles and circles. Another example is learning the skill the rules of exponents, you could use this skill with the topic product rule with positive and negative exponents. Also, you mastered the topic product rule with positive and negative exponents, you could use this skill when you are dividing fractions that has positive and negative exponents.  Another example will be absolute value, when you master this skill you could use it on the topic order of operations. When you learn a simple or small skill, it will later help you master other topics. You will always need to master the small skills because then later you will need them when you have to use them an equations or other complicated problems. The small skills are like step one, without step one you can go on step two or three.

Nice essay! Good examples!!

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Student 021; Section 01; 07/12/2016 at 08:53:48 PM PDT

Throughout the experience I have had while attending Cal State San Marcos for my Early-Start class, i have allowed myself to socialize even the smallest bit with other future students. Yet, alongside this, I have also learned particular skills that will benefit me and significantly help me in my future, whether or not I will be a landscaper, carpenter, contractor, or even a skilled creative copywriter. Being a person that is honest, I can indefinitely admit that mathematics is not my preferred major or class, yet the realizations comes to me that certain topics will be exceptionally useful in any career path or job. Most recently, I have learned how to identify and area that involves both rectangles and circles, which may seen counterproductive to some people, but you never truly know when you will need this skill in your future. The practice problems I have encountered while learning this skill mostly had to do with rectangular garden areas that have either one or two rounded ends. ALEKS provided me with constructive and significantly helpful lesson instructions that guaranteed I would eventually become familiar with a possible real-life problem that I could encounter. When finding the area of the rectangle that has a semicircle connected to it, you first calculate the diameter of the semicircles, continuing on to multiple the diameter by the rectangle length. For the area of the semicircle however, the radius is needed. For example, a 20-inch diameter would have a 10-inch radius, which you would scare and multiply by 3.14, pi. You would have 314 feet squared, which you must divide by two to get an accurate answer. 314 divided by two is 157, which you would add on to the rectangle area, in this case, 20 multiplied by 32. Your answer would be 797 feet squared, which I see as very important for everyone's future to know. Not only a rectangular garden with one semicircle form, but also one with two semicircles on each side. Nonetheless, this is only one skill I have learned that I actually appreciate for its real-world application.

Very nice essay. I like the way that you not only gave a real application, but also walked me through the solution process in your own words. Great job!

I did get a bit of a chuckle, though, at one typo when you wrote that you need to "scare" the radius, instead of square it. Don't worry. The auto-correct feature in ALEKS sometimes leads to some interesting word choices, and I have cringed many times when I've gone back and re-read one of my emails and seen what it's done to me.)

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Student 022; Section 03; 07/12/2016 at 09:01:17 PM PDT

Many students question the need for math because they feel it is not used past high school. However, as I always tell them, learn it because you will need it later in life. The first example I came across in ALEKS was a problem about computing a percentage from a table of values. It could show up in a survey form in an article in a newspaper or magazine, and would help me in the real world because if I were looking at a survey and wanted to know what percentage of pet owners owns cats versus dogs, then I would be able to do the math and figure it out.

The second example that I came across was a word problem on inverse proportions. This would help me in the real world because if I were to run a company and had to figure out how many workers would be needed to complete a task in 16 days, given that 8 workers could complete the same task in 12 days, I could easily do so.

The last example I found was solving a word problem involving rates and time conversion. This would be useful in the real world because it would help me figure out how many miles I have driven in 6 hours and 15 minutes (about the time it takes in order for me to get to Fresno, California to my grandparent's house) at an average speed of 60 miles per hour.

In conclusion, we use math everyday in all aspects of our daily lives and don’t realize it. This is the advice I tell my friends!

I liked your essay. Let me tell you a short story about your example in the second paragraph, and how it's related to a real-world situation that I just faced. A long stretch fence between my property and my neighbor's is 20 years old and it has rotted enough that it's almost fallen down. We were talking with a contractor this past weekend who told us that removing the old fence and putting up a new one would take a three-person crew three days to do this. I immediately thought of this problem and calculated that if my neighbor I were to do it ourselves (and if we were just as capable as the contractor's crew, which probably isn't true), then it would take the two of us 4.5 days (because this is a 9 person-day job). Neither one us has a spare 4.5 days to do this, so we agreed to hire the contractor.

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Student 023; Section 02; 07/12/2016 at 09:57:16 PM PDT

Many math problems are building blocks based on skills that you have learned before. Simple tools grow and build into more sophisticated problems. One skill that I have learned is PEMDAS. It is an important skill to know because it explains an order of operation. This skill helps you solve equations, evaluate algebraic expressions and formulas as well as simplifying things like monomials and polynomials. Without knowing this skill you would be unable to solve the question correctly because there is a certain order needed to find the correct answer. By understanding the basics of PEMDAS you will easily be able to understand and solve many equations. If you added before you multiplied something you would get a completely different answer than you should. PEMDAS teaches you that order does matter. When evaluating expressions and formulas pemdas must be used because without it the equation will be solved incorrectly. There could be many answers due to different combinations but only one will be right using the correct order. Many Math skills can be used in the real world such as a carpenter, scientist and a doctor. Math can be found in almost any job, whether it be simple math or very complex. Math is all around us in everyday life and is one of the most useful things someone can know.

I can't tell from your essay whether you're trying to give me an example of where you would use order of operations in the real world (the first essay prompt) or if you are trying to tell me about how you needed to know about this topic in order to learn some more advanced topic (or, the other way around: how you were only ready to work on this topic after you had learned some earlier topics). Please revise your essay to make this clear, and then I'll go ahead and finish checking your records.

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Student 024; Section 01; 07/12/2016 at 10:26:23 PM PDT

In first grade I started my struggle with learning the multiplication tables. This endeavor has been on going since then. It was discovered later on in my life that I was dysgraphic do to an illness I had when I was young thatinhibited the connection of certain synapses to occur, causing me to have a handful of learning disabilities. I have spent the majority of my life trying my absolute hardest to overcome these “disabilities.” I am not a person to give up easily, multiplication has been the only thing I stopped trying to learn because a woman named Dr. Kathy Lee from the Diagnostic Center of SouthernCalifornia told me it was one of a few things that I will never master do to the way my brain has developed. Subsequently I found ways around it like usinga calculator. I don’t feel that this is a crutch that I am using to be lazy, when I see a person in a wheelchair I don’t think they are lazy for not trying harder to walk. There is a disconnect with learning disabilities. Being someone that has struggled with math I truly understand how important and useful it is in real life because I am not able to use it as easily as most. My major is Human Development so I will need to learn statistics and data analysis. This class was helpful and I enjoyed it but there are parts of math that I will never be able to fully grasp.

Thank you send me your essay, and for sharing your personal story. I am assuming that you have been in contact with our Office of Disable Student Services; if not, there is information about this on the last page of the syllabus.

Unfortunately, your essay doesn't really address either of the two possible prompts that I gave. I've copied the instructions for the essay out of the syllabus and am pasting them into this reply. [Deleted]

You'll need to go back and look through your notes on the topics you've learned in order to write this essay. Alternatively, if you want to see the topics that you've learned, here is a way that you can find (at least some of) them. [Deleted: Instructions on how to find the topics learned in ALEKS.]

Question 2:

Many math problems are building blocks based on skills that you have learned before. Simple tools grow and build into more sophisticated problems. One skill that I have learned is PEMDAS. It is an important skill to know because it explains an order of operation. This skill helps you solve equations, evaluate algebraic expressions and formulas as well as simplifying things like monomials and polynomials. Without knowing this skill you would be unable to solve the question correctly because there is a certain order needed to find the correct answer. By understanding the basics of PEMDAS you will easily be able to understand and solve many equations. If you added before you multiplied something you would get a completely different answer than you should. PEMDAS teaches you that order does matter. When evaluating expressions and formulas pemdas must be used because without it the equation will be solved incorrectly. There could be many answers due to different combinations but only one will be right using the correct order. Without the knowledge of pemdas I would be unable to understand and solve polynomials and expressions. The building blocks of order of operations are the arithmetic operations: addition, subtraction, division and multiplication. Once that skill is mastered it becomes a building block to solving more advanced equations and expressions. Having the basic knowledge of Pemdas is important because without it all algebraic expressions would be almost impossible to solve. That is why without learning the order of operations a person would not be ready to learn how to solve algebraic expressions. Once I mastered order of operations I was able to move on and learn how to simplify expressions and polynomials. Math is all around us in everyday life and is one of the most useful things someone can know.

I like your revision. You've identified a really important point: when we want to make sense of a polynomial (even something as simple as *ax*+*b*) we need to make certain that everyone who read this understand that first *a* and *x* are multiplied, and only then is *b* added to that product.

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Student 025; Section 01; 07/13/2016 at 01:09:31 AM PDT

In the real world math problems can show up at any time and be very useful to solve everyday problems. One type of math problem that may show up to me in the real world may be when if half of a carpet needs to be replaced and one forth of the carpet is replaced one day, how much carpet will be left to be replaced the next day? This problem could show up when the carpet in my house is damaged or can only be replaced in segments, like days, based upon the workers or my own personal schedule.

This math problem is useful to be to be able to know how much of the carpet I need to originally get replaced as well as knowing how much carpet needs to be put in each day and the ability to schedule for the job to get done. In any house or apartment that contains not only carpet, but any type of flooring this type of math problem could show up and be very useful in insuring that the flooring is maintained.

In the real world this type of math problem that deals with fractions could occur with any situation. These situations could include not only carpet, but food, flooring, clothes, toys, grocery stores and practically anywhere. Fractions are everywhere and to solve to get whole pieces this math problem is very useful to ensure the problem is solved.

Nice essay. I hope that if you every have to experience a situation using this topic, it ends up being in a more pleasant situation. Maybe you'll get a bonus in your job that is paid out over several months. You get half of it right way, and one-quarter in the next pay period, and want to know how much remains to be repaid.

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Student 026; Section 03; 07/13/2016 at 03:33:26 AM PDT

Aleks taught me how to solve problems from numbers and data, algebra, and geometry. Aleks has shown me that the types of problems I have been solving for the last 3 weeks will be useful to me in the real world, especially when I want to know if I am making the right investment or spending my money right.

Ever since Aleks taught me how to find the sale price without a calculator given the original price and percent discount my life has become much easier when it comes to shopping. I now know what an item is going to cost me once I do the math all by myself. First I turn the percentage discount into a decimal and multiply it by the original price. The number that I get I subtract it from the original price and that shows me how much the item will cost me after the percentage discount is subtracted. This type of problem is useful to me in the real world because I get to know if I am spending my money right by seeing how much am I saving up. Another problem that I will find useful in the real world is multiplying a decimal by a whole number. The reason being is because if I want to have a successful future I need to invest my money right. Before investing my money I will first do the math which includes multiplying, adding, dividing, and subtracting to see if my outcome will turn out to be good.

Aleks taught me many mathematical topics but I mention that finding the sale price and multiplying a decimal by a whole number are the type of problems to show up most frequently to me in the real world. These type of problems are most useful to me because I shop a lot and I need to save more money now that I am in college.

I enjoyed reading your essays. You probably realized it, but the two topics you mentioned are related. if the original price is a whole number, then the calculation that you do when you find the sales price is multiplication of a whole number and a decimal!

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Student 027; Section 03; 07/13/2016 at 10:30:34 AM PDT

There are many instances where math is used in everyday life. Whether it is as simple as trying to split a check equally among three people or figuring out how much a piece of clothing would cost with a 25% discount at a store. The one lesson that stood out to me the most was Computations from a circle graph in the section of Numbers and Data. It teaches you how to calculate a certain total based on the given percentages. This is a good example of something that I will be doing, especially to determine how much I spend annually. This reminds me of my senior year in high school. I had to do the budget project in my economics class. We were given the set total of how much we earned that month and our goal was to find an apartment and basically survive off the set total for that month without going over. This made us calculate everything just like the lesson of computations from a circle graph. Its incredible how math is unknowingly incorporated into everyday life. It made me realize that regardless of what you do, or where you go, you will somehow use math.

I liked your essay. I'm curious... In connection with some of the statewide work I've been doing, I've been going over the Common Core standards in mathematics very carefully. Since you specifically mentioned circle graphs in our essay (and because this is an ELM topic, and it's not part of the Common Core standards) I'm wondering if this was something that you remember having seen in any of your high school (or even earlier) **math** courses, and if so, which one(s). It sounds like you may have seen this in your economics class, but I'm not certain if you're telling me that the calculations were similar or if you're saying that the data was presented in a circle graph (also called a pie chart).

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 Student 028; Section 02; 07/13/2016 at 10:04:11 PM PDT

 Percentages are an important part of everyday life, whether it is purchasing groceries or even buying new clothes that are on sale, using percentages is an easier way to write fractions in daily living when a calculator is not present. Every type of store that sells normal priced goods advertise discounts in some type of way, and these discounts are generally called percentages, for example "Up to 50% off marked prices." When we are on the road, we should be able to calculate gas in our head without a calculator (well, we shouldn't have our phone out). Life is the law of averages, and all things are based on percentages, so if I am one for two, I am 50%. If I am playing baseball and I am two for ten, I am 20% or batting 200. If I am surfing, and there are 100 waves that morning and only 30 are surfable, that means that 30% of those waves are good, and if I only caught three of those thirty waves I caught ten percent of the thirty percent or 3% of the 100 total waves. One of the things I have learned in my young adult life is that I need to allow for sales tax when purchasing products or goods, if I lived in Los Angeles and I spent 100 dollars on groceries I now need to know that I need to allow 9% sales tax in my budget, so in reality my 100 dollar purchase actually costed me 109 dollars. In these next couple months, I am looking to make my own website to sell my art prints on, if it costs me 2 dollars to get the painting printed onto paper and 3 dollars to ship but I am selling it for 10 each, I make a total of 50% of the product's total.

Nice essay. I can see that you translated this topic into settings and contexts that interest you, and that's exactly what I was hoping that you'd do!

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Student 029; Section 01; 07/13/2016 at 10:53:48 AM PDT

Prompt B

A skill that I found helpful was my Algebra skills. Algebra helped me manipulate equations according to the variable. The majority of the problems I received involved a variable even when it was not Algebra. For example, Geometry at times involved variables and I was able to manipulate those questions to where it would become a 2 step equation or something like that. This skill made life a whole lot easier for me. Without Algebra, I feel I would struggle a whole lot more with other topics. Through High School, Algebra 1 and 2 were my strongest math classes. I really learned to make complex problems manageable in a quick fashion. I can apply this skill for any problem that may involve a variable and I believe it helps me make sure I am getting the correct final result. I never really struggled with math throughout my high school career but this Aleks program has helped me clarify the subjects or topics I was never really clear on. Going into college this will help me because I have now learned the material two times so I take that as an advantage.

This is almost it. What you need to do is go to your fourth sentence (the one where you talk about using algebra in a geometry problem) and give me a specific example of a geometry topic where you needed to use some skills from algebra.

To find this example, you'll probably need to go back and look through your notes on the topics you've learned in order to write this essay. Alternatively, if you want to see the topics that you've learned, here is a way that you can find (at least some of) them. [Deleted: Instructions on how to find the topics learned in ALEKS.]

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Student 030; Section 02; 07/13/2016 at 10:54:48 AM PDT

While working with ALEKS I came across many problems that may occur, but I came across one specific problem I could relate to using in the real world. The topic of the question was solving a word problem on proportions using a unit rate, meaning that we are to find one unit while another one is included. The question asked was to find how many inches of wire can be bought for 64 cents, given that 19 inches costs 76 cents. This question caught my attention because I figured this seemed like a real world question. If you were going to buy an item depending on a unit rate, you could either increase or decrease the unit depending on the quantity you need and can calculate the cost by using the different unit rates. Depending on the quantity of the product you can determine how much the item will cost according to the other unit whether it be money, time, area and etc. Another example of using this problem in the real world would be if you were trying to determine how much money you make depending on the time you work. You can apply one unit to another to another depending on the variable you are trying to find. For this example we are trying to figure out how much money is made depending on time worked. This specific question can be used in the real world depending on what units you want to find. ALEKS has aided me in determining how certain questions can assist me in the real world, by providing realistic questions.

Nice essay. If you think about it, one situation where unit rates come in handy are at grocery stores. Many items are often sold in different sizes, and to figure our whether you really save money by buying the larger size, you need to calculate the unit rate (which might be, of resample, in dollars per fluid ounce). Fortunately for us, stories usually calculate the unit rates for us and post that information on the shelves, but now you know what goes into those calculations.

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Student 031; Section 03; 07/13/2016 at 11:12:17 AM PDT

One problem or subject I have gone over during my time on Aleks that I believed would somehow help me or anyone in the real world would have to the conversion from decimals to percentages. The ability to use that skill to find discounts on items and determine before and after prices is something absolutely necessary to know as we enter the "real" world. This will be most useful when at grocery, clothing, and electronic stores. We pass by sale advertisements every day but not a lot of us know exactly how to find the actual discount price. We usually wait until were at the register ready to hand over our cash. To be able to know ahead of time the kind of discounts you'll get is something very important. Another topic I learned that I believe to be of importance would be finding the area of yards, pools and parks. This is very crucial for construction workers to be able to verify how much cement, grass, sand or rocks they need to fill a certain lot or area. In both of these problems there is more often than not a "x" that were looking to solve for. When someone can point out the X and know how to solve to find it out, that's when I believe is the start of being able to figure out real every day problems.

Nice essay! You need to convert from decimals to percentages when you are trying to find the (percentage) discount from the before and after prices, since you first do a division to get the answer in decimal form. If you are trying to find the before or after price from the other one (and the percentage discount), then you are actually converting percentages into decimals, and then multiplying.

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Student 032; Section 02; 07/13/2016 at 11:34:01 AM PDT

Math, with all of its different topics, is like a map. If you learn one topic, it’ll be easier for you to learn a few others and if you know those other topics you can continue on in the map a lot easier. One mathematical skill that is being learned builds upon something that has already been learned before. For example, in order to be able to divide fractions, you need to have already learned how to multiply fractions. For most math skills that are learned there are certain steps that you must follow. Many times, like in the case of dividing fractions, you must have already learned a skill, like multiplying fractions, because it is one of the steps for the next mathematical skill that you are learning. For example, if you know how to plot a point on a graph, or find the y-intercept and slope, you’ll be able to find the slope and y-intercept from the equation y=mx+b and plot the line on a graph. This is why it is important to make sure that you fully understand a topic and how to do it before moving on to the next thing, otherwise it might show up in another topic later and it will be harder to learn it since you did not fully understand the first topic.

Nice examples, Stephanie!

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Student 033; Section 07; 07/13/2016 at 01:27:50 PM PDT

While looking through the different math problems ALEKS had to offer, I was thinking, would anything here be useful? Doing algebra and geometry work seemed to be useful to people who work as engineers or carpenters. But what about for me? I was looking for something that would benefit my major, wildlife biology. But still I could not find anything. Until I thought about the time before I start my wildlife career. During my college time, there has to be something. I was practicing under the numbers and data section of ALEKS and I stumbled upon "Finding the value for a new score that will yield a given mean". Looking through the description, I realized it was perfect for aiding me in college. The word problem given stated "Yoko has scored 74, 65, 83, 71, and 86 on her previous five tests. What score does she need on her next test so that her average is 74?" I realized how this could help me. I could apply this to my own studies in any subject in college. I could figure out what I need to get on a test in order to get the desired grade. With figuring out this information, I now feel even more ready for college. Since I will be able to calculate essentially what my grade can be if I do well enough, I think I have what it takes to succeed in college.

YES!!! This is an application that I think all college students end up using as Final Week approaches (and I don't remember for certain, but I probably did this as well).

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Student 034; Section 03; 07/13/2016 at 02:42:20 PM PDT

One of the type of problems that could show up in the real world is finding the perimeter of a piecewise rectangular figure. This could be useful to me if I wanted to know specific measurements,length and width, to build an outdoor pond for example. Finding the area of a parallelogram is also a problem that could show up in the real world. This type of problem could be useful to me if I wanted to find how many square feet I am looking for when I invest into a house. Another type of problem is the mean of a data set. I could apply this to the real world by finding the average of multiple things. Finding the volume of a rectangular prism could be applied in the real world if you wanted to find out how much could fill up a specific object. For example, how much water could fill up a fish tank or a swimming pool when given the length, width and height. Another problem that is also useful is computations from a circle graph. This type of problem could show up when you are keeping track of your total annual income. For example: housing, food, clothing, auto, entertainment, insurance and savings. Lastly, finding the sale price without calculator given the original price could also be applied to the real world. If I wanted to go to the furniture store and look for some furniture, I could apply this method into the real world.

Great essay! I like the varied examples (although the shape whose area you are most likely to want to compute when buying a house is probably a rectangle, but then again, rectangles are a kind of parallelogram). I especially liked the fish tank/swimming pool application. I'm curious... In connection with some of the statewide work I've been doing, I've been going over the Common Core standards in mathematics very carefully. Since you specifically mentioned circle graphs in your essay (and because this is an ELM topic, and it's not part of the Common Core standards) I'm wondering if this was something that you remember having seen in any of your high school (or even earlier) math courses, and if so, which one(s). It sounds like you may have seen this in your economics class, but I'm not certain if you're telling me that the calculations were similar or if you're saying that the data was presented in a circle graph (also called a pie chart).

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Student 035; Section 02; 07/13/2016 at 04:32:58 PM PDT

Math is used in everyday life. We might not even realize it but we use math for the littlest things. When we go to the grocery store we can calculate how much we will be paying depending on the things that we buy. Math can also be used at work especially if you are a cashier. When working the cashier register you need to insert the amount of money the customer gives you and it tells you how much change to give. There are times when you already insert the amount given but the customer decides to give you the change so you have to calculate what the new change will be.

Going out can be so much fun especially if you are going out with your friends. Most of the time it's best if you order all together and split the payment. One might just order a drink and the rest can be ordering a whole meal. You will need to find how much the drink cost and how much one meal cost so you know how each one needs to pay.

Having specials can be a good thing because you save a little more money. If it's 20% off you need to find 20% of it original price to see how much the new total will be. There can also be sales where it says buy one get the other half off. All we have to do is calculate the percentage of the total cost.

Another way we use math in our everyday life is when we have to share. Sharing isn’t always an easy thing especially when there is food involve. When my cousins come over we always argue on who gets more. In this case we divide the food into how many of us there is so that way we don’t argue on who got more and who didn’t.

No matter what you do you will always use a bit of math in your life. Even if it's just to go out and go to the mall, buy groceries or if you are working, math will follow us through our lifetime.

We might not be good at graphing quadratic functions in one variables but we might have a easier time knowing what's 75% of 100.

This essay is fine. You didn't specifically mention topics form ALEKS, but I know that when you write "If it's 20% off you need to find 20% of it original price to see how much the new total will be," you're referring to the problem about finding the sales price give the original price and the percentage discount. You don't need to write back to me, but I would like you to think about how to set up the situation that you described in the next two sentences ("There can also be sales where it says buy one get the other half off. All we have to do is calculate the percentage of the total cost.") so that you could use some of what you've learned in this course.

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