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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *Readers Read. Writers Write. Mathers Math!*.

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# The Habits of "Good" Learners

How can we leverage what we know about teaching literacy and our beliefs about good readers to build a community of mathers? It is a lot easier than we think. The first step is to consistently include mathematics as one of the core academic skills in our words and deeds. Intentionally demonstrate the cross-curricular connections, weave mathematics throughout all content areas, and highlight the mathing that is going on all day in our classrooms and beyond. When students begin to realize that math resides outside of the math block and can be used to make sense of the world, just like reading and writing, they will learn to embrace math as a part of their academic identities. Mathematics is meant to be a sense-making super power, but too often it is viewed as Kryptonite. In other words, students need to mathematize EVERYTHING!

For decades, in classrooms far and wide, we have seen posters outlining the habits of good readers. These posters are hanging as reminders to students, no matter their relationship with reading or how far along they are in the process of learning, to set aspirational goals. What is interesting is I cannot remember ever seeing a similar poster outlining the good habits of mathers. Of course, this idea of mathers is new, but hopefully we can learn what it might look like by checking out these not so exclusive reading strategies.

So, what are the habits of mind that students are taught as the habits of good readers?

## Good readers . . .

1. use the information they know to help them understand new information in the text.
2. decide which details are important and what information is not needed for their understanding.
3. ask lots of questions in their minds and of others to gain clarity and focus their ideas.
4. visualize by creating images or "making a movie in their minds" to help them imagine what the sensory experience might feel like as they read.
5. make inferences using their prior knowledge and information from the text to interpret, predict, and draw conclusions about the text.

6. synthesize information by making connections across old and new ideas, filtering out obsolete understandings, and creating new learning pathways.
7. use varied strategies to make sense of information they do not comprehend like rereading, comparing and contrasting ideas, considering the context, or skipping ahead and coming back.

And, what would it take to adapt these practices to work for mathers?

### Good mathers . . .

1. use the information they know to help them understand new information in **the task**.
2. decide which details are important and what information is not needed for their understanding.
3. ask lots of questions in their minds and of others to gain clarity and focus their ideas.
4. visualize by **creating pictures, diagrams, or models** to help them imagine what the **solution path might be**.
5. make inferences using their prior knowledge and information from **the task** to interpret, **estimate, strategize**, and draw conclusions about **the task**.
6. synthesize information by making connections **across strategies, considering number relationships**, filtering out obsolete understandings, and creating new learning pathways.
7. use varied strategies to make sense of information they do not comprehend like rereading, comparing and contrasting **mathematical ideas**, considering the context, or skipping ahead and coming back.

### What do you notice? What do you wonder?

I notice there are more similarities than differences, so we should consider sharing the *Habits of Good Learners* instead of treating these subjects so differently. We can leverage what we know about supporting students with developing good reading habits to help them realize they need very similar habits to be good mathers. The focus here is on establishing a norm that ALL students need to develop these habits to learn. Students will recognize that if they CAN read, they are readers, if they CAN write, they are writers, and if they CAN math, they are mathers. This distinction is important because they don't have to

love all subjects to be successful in them. We want students to embrace reader, writer, and mather as a part of their academic identities. Later, they can decide if they will invest the time and practice to excel in these areas or choose career paths that require them to become more than proficient. Our job is to ensure that they are equipped to make these decisions from a place of confidence not fear. The way we do this is by cultivating a love of learning, a passion for problem-solving, and a mindset that anything is possible.

*Students don't have to love all subjects to be successful in them.*



Source: istock.com/Jacob Wackerhausen



## **READ. WRITE. MATH. CONNECT.**

When assigning reading for homework, give options to families. For some students, reading for 20 minutes will work just fine. Other students who are easily distracted or avoid reading practice often benefit from being assigned a number of pages or chapters. This way more time is spent on task instead of taking trips to the restroom, getting water, or asking if the time is up yet. It also gives children a little more control over how long they read with a concrete goal instead of the abstraction of time.

*Readers Read. Writers Write. Mathers Math!: Bridging the Gap Between Literacy and Mathematics* by Deborah Peart Crayton. Copyright © 2025 by Corwin Press, Inc. All rights reserved.