

HOW TO USE

Five Minutes for Success

Welcome to *Alpha*. I believe you will have a positive experience with the unique Math-U-See approach to teaching math. These first few pages explain the essence of this methodology, which has worked for thousands of students and teachers. I hope you will take five minutes and read through these steps carefully.

The student should be able to count and write the numbers from zero to nine and be ready for formal schooling.

If you are using the program properly and still need additional help, you may visit us online at mathusee.com or call us at 888-854-6284. –**Steve Demme**

The Goal of Math-U-See

The underlying assumption or premise of Math-U-See is that the reason we study math is to apply math in everyday situations. Our goal is to help produce confident problem solvers who enjoy the study of math. These are students who learn their math facts, rules, and formulas and are able to use this knowledge to solve word problems and real-life applications. Therefore, the study of math is much more than simply committing to memory a list of facts. It includes memorization, but it also encompasses learning the underlying concepts of math that are critical to successful problem solving.

Support and Resources

Math-U-See has a number of resources to help you in the educational process.

Many of our customer service representatives have been with us for over 10 years. They are able to answer your questions, help you place your student in the appropriate level, and provide knowledgeable support throughout the school year.

Visit mathusee.com to use our many online resources, find out when we will be in your neighborhood, and connect with us on social media.

More than Memorization

Many people confuse memorization with understanding. Once while I was teaching seven junior high students, I asked how many pieces they would each receive if there were fourteen pieces. The students' response was, "What do we do: add, subtract, multiply, or divide?" Knowing how to divide is important; understanding when to divide is equally important.

The Suggested 4-Step Math-U-See Approach

In order to train students to be confident problem solvers, here are the four steps that I suggest you use to get the most from the Math-U-See curriculum.

Step 1. Prepare for the lesson

Step 2. Present and explore the new concept together


Step 3. Practice for mastery

Step 4. Progress after mastery

Step 1. Prepare for the lesson

 Watch the video lesson to learn the new concept and see how to demonstrate this concept with the manipulatives when applicable. Study the written explanations and examples in the instruction manual.


Step 2. Present and explore the new concept together

 Present the new concept to your student. Have the student watch the video lesson with you, if you think it would be helpful. The following should happen interactively.

- a. **Build:** Use the manipulatives to demonstrate and model problems from the instruction manual. If you need more examples, use the appropriate lesson practice pages.
- b. **Write:** Write down the step-by-step solutions as you work through the problems together, using manipulatives.
- c. **Say:** Talk through the why of the math concept as you build and write.


Give as many opportunities for the student to "Build, Write, Say" as necessary until the student fully understands the new concept and can demonstrate it to you confidently. One of the joys of teaching is hearing a student say, *"Now I get it!"* or *"Now I see it!"*

Step 3. Practice for mastery

 Using the lesson practice problems from the student workbook, have students practice the new concept until they understand it. It is one thing for students to watch someone else do a problem; it is quite another to do the same problem

themselves. Together complete as many of the lesson practice pages as necessary (not all pages may be needed) until the student understands the new concept, demonstrating confident mastery of the skill. Remember, to demonstrate mastery, your student should be able to teach the concept back to you using the Build, Write, Say method. Give special attention to the word problems, which are designed to apply the concept being taught in the lesson. If your student needs more assistance, go to mathusee.com to find review tools and other resources.

Step 4. Progress after mastery

 Once mastery of the new concept is demonstrated, advance to the systematic review pages for that lesson. These worksheets review the new material as well as provide practice of the math concepts previously studied. If the student struggles, reteach these concepts to maintain mastery. If students quickly demonstrate mastery, they may not need to complete all of the systematic review pages.

You may use the application and enrichment pages (2012 student workbook) for additional practice and for variety.

Now you are ready for the lesson tests. These were designed to be an assessment tool to help determine mastery, but they may also be used as extra worksheets. Your student will be ready for the next lesson only after demonstrating mastery of the new concept and maintaining mastery of concepts found in the systematic review worksheets.

Tell me, I forget. Show me, I understand. Let me do it, I remember.
—Ancient Proverb

To this Math-U-See adds, *"Let me teach it, and I will have achieved mastery!"*

Length of a Lesson

How long should a lesson take? This will vary from student to student and from topic to topic. You may spend a day on a new topic, or you may spend several days. There are so many factors that influence this process that it is impossible to predict the length of time from one lesson to another. I have spent three days on a lesson, and I have also invested three weeks in a lesson. This experience occurred in the same book with the same student. If you move from lesson to lesson too quickly without the student demonstrating mastery, the student will become overwhelmed and discouraged as he or she is exposed to more new material without having learned previous topics. If you move too slowly, the student may become bored

and lose interest in math. I believe that as you regularly spend time working along with the student, you will sense the right time to take the lesson test and progress through the book.

By following the four steps outlined above, you will have a much greater opportunity to succeed. Math must be taught sequentially, as it builds line upon line and precept upon precept on previously learned material. I hope you will try this methodology and move at the student's pace. As you do, I think you will be helping to create a confident problem solver who enjoys the study of math.