

Math 203 Writing Assignment 1

The handout from class, “Reading Mathematics”, describes some of the ways in which people have perceived that mathematical writing, and reading mathematics, differs from the kinds of writing and reading to be found in other fields and other disciplines.

For this writing assignment, you are asked to reflect on the differences and/or similarities that you have observed, between the mathematical expositions you have encountered in this class and elsewhere and the sort of writing that you routinely encounter in, for example, your own academic major (although you can choose any other form of writing that you feel you can make interesting comparisons with). Some possible points to focus on: what are the individual strengths or weaknesses of each style of exposition? Are there aspects of one that you think could profitably be incorporated in the other? Are there “differences” described in the handout that aren’t really differences at all?

Even though you are writing for a mathematics class, for this assignment you should spend a fair proportion of your time describing to your instructor, a mathematician, the style of writing that is typically encountered in an area that he is likely to be unfamiliar with. (That is, you can spend much of your time writing about something other than mathematics!)

Your essay should consist of 1.5-3 typed pages (although you should use as much space as you think necessary to adequately convey your ideas). The assignment is due in class on Friday, October 12.