Welcome to Honors PreCalc,  
  
Before you start the year you need to have confidence in yourself. PreCalc is much different from any other math class you've ever taken, I can assure you that. You really need to push yourself. At the beginning of the school year last year, we had 21 students in our class, at the end we had 13. Don't let this scare you. Use this as motivation to be one of the students that stays in the class all year. Don't doubt yourself because if you study and pay attention and get help when needed, you can make it. Ms. Carrigg might seem a little intimidating and she might go really fast sometimes, but this is an Honors class. It's probably one of the hardest classes you will take, but don't be afraid to ask her questions or have her repeat things. Also, don't be afraid to get a tutor; extra help really does help.   
Good luck this year and push yourself because junior year is the most important year in high school.

JR, Junior

Hello,

Welcome to Honors Precalculus with Ms. Carrigg! You are in for quite a year, and not gonna lie this class is tough. I came in this class late from IB Math Studies, had to complete the Summer Work in one night, and had a test my first day in class. You are going to walk into this class on the first day and be frustrated that you're getting things wrong, intimidated by the other geniuses in the room, and confused as to why you are even in the class. My class started with around 21 kids, and by the end of the year there are 13 of us now. However, before you start dropping out or jumping to any conclusions, There are a few things you should know about the class:  
1. Raise your hand and try to answer every single ticket problem. Tickets will save you in this class; they're an extra credit point and if you try answering every one, chances are you will have a nice boost on your marking period average.  
2. Do every single homework assignment. You are not going to get credit for late homework and a 0 in the gradebook kills. So do it. Also there are a lot of homework quizzes that are unannounced so if you have any questions when going over the homework, ask them.  
3. Do not let a bad grade on a quiz weigh you down. The amount of scores I have gotten this year between a 50-70 is too much, but because I did my homework and did my class work well I was able to keep a pretty good average.  
4. Don't wait until the night before to complete your problem sets. A problem set is a group of difficult questions that go with each chapter and weigh heavily in the gradebook. They take a long time and absolutely suck if you start them the night before.  
5. Do not let the class intimidate you. So many kids drop out, but it gets so much easier and so much better and it is so worth it. It is going to be a rough year and an even rougher first week of school, but don't let that make you leave the class.  
You'll do fine as long as you try, Ms. Carrigg is a very chill teacher and she will help you if you need it. If you're doubting whether or not to take this class, give it a month. People dropped out of our class in January. Good luck and don't fail.

GP, Junior

Incoming Honors Pre-Calc Students:

The class you will be taking is a difficult and fast paced class, almost like an A.P. class. The class will require your attention and discipline, and consequences concerning your grades will show if you're not active in completing the work.

The most important piece of advice I can give you is to be persistent with your work and your desire to learn in this class.  The less involved you are with the work, the less you will understand the material, the worse you will do on quizzes and tests.

Good luck,

JL, Junior

Coming into honors pre-calc you may feel confident in your abilities in math classes. So did I. That all changed when I started this class. Honors pre-calc is commonly known as one of if not the hardest class in this school and for good reason. Think of pre-calc as honors geometry and honors algebra 2 combined and then taken to the next level. We all quickly learned how hard the class was going to be. In the beginning we were all overwhelmed and were not doing as well as we would have wanted. It got really stressful in the beginning. We lost almost half of our class in the first marking period. However, if you're determined to stay in this class, you will soon adapt and learn to deal with how difficult it is. It does seem to get easier as the year goes by. And then you get to chapter 6. Chapter 6 is pretty awful. But it honestly does get better when you learn to take advantage of every opportunity to get points. Take advantage of ticket problems, homework quizes, classwork grades, and homework grades because the quizzes and tests can be really hard. Good luck!

DB, Sophomore

Dear Incoming Precalc-er,

I'm telling you right now, this course is no joke. It's fast-paced and very challenging. If you're hoping to get an easy A in this class, you're about to be sorely disappointed. But if you put in the necessary work for this class, it doesn't *have* to be as terrifying as people will say it is (and people *will*say it is). The curriculum is very well organized; Ms. Carrigg does a really good job of delivering the lessons and explaining questions students ask. There is a clear and simple routine to the class, which is *very*helpful when the information being taught is *so not simple*. If you have any questions or find yourself confused about what you are currently learning, don't be afraid to ask and go in for extra help. I went in for help more times than I can count, and every time has been only to my benefit.

The first marking period is the hardest. Try to stick it out in this class! But if you know this class is really too much for you, don't worry; we lost seven people throughout the year...

Congratulations on how far you've come in your math career, and good luck!

Sincerely,

WM, Sophomore

Hi, my name is CS. The math course you're about to take is really unlike any other. This sounds cheesy but I learned so much more than math in this class....

I came into Honors Pre Calc as a straight A student. I have always taken all honors courses and never gotten a B as a final grade in my life. I thought Algebra 2 honors, which I had doubled up with Geometry my freshman year, was the most difficult math course I would ever have to take. At most it was slightly frustrating in comparison to Pre-calc, in retrospect. (Don't let yourself be scared yet!)

So I came into the class with Ms. Carrigg the first day, expecting an introduction to Calculus. It was to my disappointment when I found this course was mostly a review of all the math I'd spent my years learning plus much more, with the last Chapter as an intro to calc. I thought this would make it easier because it would be a "review year." Wrong.

The first test I got back was an 80, I believe. This was a review of the summer work. I thought, wow, what happened here? I hadn't thought that test was especially hard. Guess I'll just try harder next time. The next quiz I got back was a 69. The next was a 76, the next was a 70. I was starting to get even more fed up with my performance in the class. Other kids in the class had A's! I never had to study for a math assessment before, and I wasn't about to start now! I kept on this track of grades, getting D's and C's, until I was on the verge of giving up. Five kids had already dropped out of the course, I can't even tell you how much I had my heart set on quitting as well. After I got my next 64, I went to my guidance counselor, crying, because *I-can't-do-this-math-it's-too-hard-I'm-dumb-in-that-class-I-don't-belong-there*. I thought Ms. Carrigg hated me because I was getting all these bad grades, so we addressed the problem by holding a meeting between me, Carrigg, and my guidance counselor. Carrigg started off by saying that I was in this course for a reason. She said I am smart enough, and that there were really ingenious kids in my class this year, which is likely why I felt inferior. But she wanted me to know I was more than capable. Carrigg and my guidance counselor both told me this was the hardest math course in the school, probably a little too hard :). Neither of them wanted me to drop it, although I still wasn't convinced. Carrigg recommended going to peer tutoring, and going to her every day or whenever I could to review the homework and class work to make sure I understood it. I was pretty uncomfortable with this suggestion, because like I said, I didn't usually even study and now I have to be tutored? I felt a little wounded.

However, I ended up taking Carrigg's suggestions really seriously. I did go to peer tutoring every day, and the other kids doing well in my class helped me boatloads there. Carrigg was my study hall teacher, so we did my homework together and she helped me when I had trouble. I began taking studying seriously as well, studying the night before the assessment and sleeping on what I just read. Maybe all of the stuff I did sounds boring and lame, and it took up a huge time commitment, but I couldn't believe what happened next.

My grades started improving. I started getting B's instead of C's and D's. I even got the occasional A. I even started doing better in my other classes, because I learned it was okay to get help and ask questions and how to study. The most important thing I learned would have to be the value of a B. Now I know that sounds weird, as most of you are probably the student I once was: coming from all honors courses, if not that, straight A's. But do you know what feels better than an A just handed to you? A B, that you worked your butt off for. Spent lots of time reviewing the notes. Spent asking your teacher to go over these 3 problems with you. If you know you are doing the best you can and working as hard as you can, getting that earned B feels amazing. The only time it sucks to get a B is when you didn't put all your effort into it.

To review, my first marking period final grade was an 82, this is when I first started studying with Carrigg and going to peer tutoring. My second marking period grade was an 84. Third was an 86. And to end the school, I got a 94 as my final grade. The great improvement I saw in others and especially myself awed me, as everyone who stuck with the course saw an impressive increase in math ability.

Lastly, I have to give a huge shout out to Ms. Carrigg. Honestly, even though at the beginning of the year I thought she didn't like me, she is the teacher I have gotten the closest to during my sophomore year. We have gotten to the point where we share jokes, I assist her helping other kids with math, and she listens to my problems (whether or not she wants to, apparently me and my study hall bestfriends talk too loud and she hears everything we talk about). Ms. Carrigg has taught me even more than vectors or limits (those are sure fun), but she has genuinely taught me how to not give up. And I can genuinely say I will miss this class the most moving on to junior year.

So, I gotta ask you guys to please stick with this course. Ms. Carrigg is helpful and fun, the people in the class are always great, and the overall class environment is structured yet super fun. I always come out of math happy and stronger.

CS, Sophomore

Dear Future Honors Pre-Calculus Student/Parent,   
This course you are about to take is the most challenging class at RBR. Your grade will reflect your effort. Homework is due the next block, sometimes you will even get double the workload if you don't finish class work. Not only are the topics challenging, but the pace is like nothing you have ever experienced in a classroom. All of this however, is expected (it's an Honors class). The year starts off hard, hence there are a lot of people who drop the class early. If you can complete homework/classwork and pay attention in class, the rest of the year will come easier to an extent. If you think you can handle that, don't drop the class. There's a huge difference in difficulty between CP and Honors Pre-Calc. The easy A would be CP, but Honors does pay off especially if you want to take AP Physics or become an engineer in the future. What I would recommend is to get into the habit of doing A-Day homework the night of an A-Day and B-Day homework the night of a B-Day. Do your homework the day you get it. This way you can not only ask Ms. Carrigg questions the next day if you need help, but other teachers as well. Your first assignment is Summer Work. Do it early, while you still know some Algebra 2. Don't leave it to the last minute. Never leave any assignment from this class for the last minute. During class, pay full attention and ask plenty of questions because if you don't understand something quick enough, you will move onto the next section and it will come back later to haunt you. Also, if you need more help, you can see Mrs. Carrigg during Study Hall or ask her to stay after school the day before a big chapter test (you won't be the only one that will stay after). Most importantly, don't give up. Don't be discouraged by your grade as there is plenty of assignments given to bump it up. I started out one marking period by failing a test (test grades are worth twice as much). I managed to bring it up to a B. One tip is to try to never have to dig yourself out of a hole. It is not fun. It is to your benefit to yourself and your GPA if you stay on top of your work and understand what Ms. Carrigg is teaching. This class is very manageable if you are willing to dedicate yourself; do some problems on the weekends, get extra help, see a tutor, etc. In addition, manage your time. Anyone with extracurricular activities needs to set aside extra time for this class. Athletes; school comes first. Make sure your doing what you need to do in the classroom before anything else.   
Don't be scared to take this class. I wasn't trying to scare you before, but it is the reality of a class of this caliber. If you put in time and hard work, I promise you'll be pleased when you log onto Genesis. Just stick with the class, even if your friends start dropping it. Get past the first marking period and you'll be fine if you keep up the hard work. I finished with around a 82. It could've been a lot higher if I studied harder here and there. Good luck next year, and remember to have fun...just put save some time for Honors Pre-Calc.

AB, Sophomore

This course is not like your typical math class. If you are used to easily getting by your math classes, this year will likely be the year you are finally introduced to more interesting, challenging material as algebra and geometry come together. I believe the key to the class was the amount of effort you put in. If you pay attention to the notes and ASK QUESTIONS WHEN YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND SOMETHING, you will be in a good position for that night's homework. If you realize you get most of the homework right, you will be in good position for the tests and quizzes. That is not to say don't study, it just means you will likely need to do less studying as the material will be fresh in your head. Homework can range from around 20 minutes to seriously hours sometimes but again, the time it takes probably has to do with how much of the lesson you understood that day. It can frustrating at times seeing grades you are not used to but as long as you commit to your work and really try to digest the lesson, you should be able to get far in the class. That being said, the effort starts in the summer with the summer work. Coming into September, if the packet was not taken seriously, it's going to be a struggle the first few weeks. Also, I recommend jumping at any extra credit opportunity possible. If you have Ms. Carrigg, try every ticket problem, you have nothing to lose! Every small quiz point adds up in this way and can really have an impact by the end of the marking period if you've gathered a lot of tickets. In closing, give it your best effort in Honors Pre-calc. Start strong with your algebra 2 skills and it will make everything new learned easier. After the first month, you'll get the general routine and know what to expect coming into class (typically two-three note days, followed by a quiz day, repeat two-three times and then you get your chapter test). Good luck and seriously, just really try!

BC, Sophomore

To all future honors pre-calc students–what to expect from this class and how to deal with it:

1. Do not underestimate the difficulty of this class. I'm a straight A student and I thought that despite hearing that the class was hard, I would still get straight As in this class. Needless to say I was wrong and failed the first two tests of the year.
2. Do not drop the class just because it is challenging. Prove to yourself and your teacher that you can handle the challenge. I heavily contemplated dropping this class (many students in our class ended up dropping out) but I'm glad I didn't. Taking this class made me a better student and it'll make you guys better students too. Don't give up, you got this.
3. Your grades will probably shock you in the first marking period, but don't worry. They will improve once you get used to the class. I started off the year getting grades in the 50s and 60s and now (in the fourth marking period) I'm getting grades in the 90s.
4. Set aside a lot of time to study and do homework. You're going to learn a lot of complicated and difficult information. Do not ever try to take a test in this class without studying. And don't expect your homework to be done in under an hour. It often took me over 2 or 3 hours to do my homework for this class. Your grades are sure to disappoint if you don't put in the time. Likewise if you do put in the time, you'll be pleased with the results.
5. Ask questions. Don't stop asking questions until you understand. This class is difficult and sometimes the concepts are hard to grasp. Don't be afraid to speak up and ask for clarification (or to call Ms. Carrigg out on her mistakes, she gives you extra credit tickets!). If you still don't get it spend your lunch or study hall in her room doing your homework. It really helps.

* LB, Junior

So you're here in Honors Pre-Calc? First off, may I congratulate you for getting this far, secondly I would recommend a good therapist and always keeping a stress ball handy, especially for the first half of the year. Pre-Calculus is one of the hardest classes at this school, and you have the privileged of signing your soul away to the devil to make the beginning easy. Yes, somehow the first few chapters of this course are the hardest, because who needs an easy ride through high school? But don't fret if your grades start to dip, that is completely normal because you're finally in the right class. Challenges abound, and being smart and learning to act quickly and correctly will make ticket problems your new bestie. Mistakes as well, Ms.Carrigg LOVES when the class points out a mistake she makes. This isn't memorize shapes and normal formulas, it is memorize everything for one chapter, take what's necessary and move on, which makes the final a joy to study for. In all honesty, it will be very difficult at first, there is no doubt in my mind about that. But just stick it out and I promise you, you'll feel more accomplished than you ever felt before. It's sorta cathartic. You're a bunch of smart kids doing a dumb thing to make them even smarter, that is the premise of upper level courses is it not? Enjoy the year and remember, stressing is just part of the fun, keep with it until the end or you'll regret it. It's all worth it in the end. Take it from a VPA major,

Sincerely,

MD, Sophomore

Welcome to Honors Pre-Calc! From personal experience this year I have some advice that will hopefully help you succeed in this class. I am not going to lie; this class was very difficult for me, but the reward of staying in completely outweighed the struggles I faced. In the beginning of the first marking period I struggled a lot and I was very close to dropping the class. Eventually, I decided to stay in, which was the best choice I've made all year. If you struggle after the first few quizzes and tests, I highly suggest not dropping the course. I recommend reviewing all of your Algebra 2 notes because that is the main reason I struggled early. I forgot most of the material from the previous year so I did not have a strong base to build off of. As long as you actually do the homework and spend the proper amount of time working out the problems and studying, you will be successful. Most of the tests and quizzes are very similar to the reviews so if you know how to do everything on the review you should be set to do well. The course is different from other math classes because the pace of this class is much quicker, so it is essential to ask Ms. Carrigg for help if you fall behind. Whenever I had any trouble Ms. Carrigg was always more than willing to help out. I tended to do much better on the tests when I stayed after school each time Ms. Carrigg allowed us to. As the year went along for me, the class became much easier and my grades increased for every new marking period. Don't be scared just because the first month was difficult because it gets much better. Overall, my advice to you is to not drop out and to actually spend the right amount of time doing the homework and studying. If you listen to all of this advice, you should be very successful in this class. Good luck!

JM, Junior

Future Pre-Calc Students,

I'm going to be very straightforward when I say that this is the hardest course I've taken in high school. At the conclusion of the course I had just finished my junior year and had taken 5 college-level AP, IB, and SUPA courses. This class was more difficult than all of them. I performed very well in algebra 1 and geometry and average in algebra 2. I am going to finish the year with a C in this class, which I've never done in any other class before.

While the work is consistent, it is consistently very difficult. Ms. Carrigg follows the same structure with all of her lessons which makes it easier to know what to expect. The class is very difficult, but there are many different resources you can use if you require assistance. Ms. Carrigg is always open during lunch/study if you have any questions. My study hall teacher also happened to be an AP Calculus teacher so she would always help me if I needed it. The work is definitely very high-level and requires some hard work, but if you manage it well and use the extra help when you need it, then you should be able to do well.

Probably the most important piece of advice I can give to you is that you should have a strong background in all of the material given in Algebra 2. Everything we learn in pre-calc is heavily based on the knowledge learned in that class. I, myself, did not have a strong background in that course and therefore did not do as well as I had hoped in the beginning of the year.

Best of luck,

KN, Junior