

Greetings from the Cardinal Ritter Math Department! We want to provide you with a detailed description of the requirement in all Cardinal Ritter high school math classes: *a graphing calculator*. The details in this guide should assist you in not only having a better understanding of which model to purchase, but more importantly, why this piece of technology is being required in the classroom. The guide may not answer all of your questions, so please feel free to contact us in regards to any of this information.

1. Why does my son/daughter need a graphing calculator?

First and foremost, the Indiana College and Career Readiness Standards, which are the major driving force for the math curriculum at Cardinal Ritter, require students to perform mathematical computations *using* a graphing calculator.

Second, research shows that students best learn material in a math classroom through “multiple representations”, which means students need to see more than just an equation on the board. Graphing calculators enable the student to see an equation, the corresponding table of values, and a graphical representation of the equation in a matter of seconds.

Third, after teachers in the math department attended several state and national level conferences on technology in the math classroom, we discovered this is a standard policy in most of the top rated high schools by the United States Department of Education. Your child deserves the best education possible, and this policy will ensure that they receive it!

2. Since technology changes so frequently, will I have to continue to purchase an updated version every year?

Absolutely not. Purchasing just one of these calculators now will last your son/daughter for the duration of high school and college, assuming proper care. The graphing calculator I purchased over 15 years ago was used all through high school, in four years of college, and is still in use today in my classroom. Any changes to the applications of the calculator can now be downloaded for free by connecting the calculator to a computer with internet access.

3. Will this calculator be the same model required by teachers in their subsequent math classes at Cardinal Ritter?

Yes! We assure you that no teacher in a future math class will require anything different than what is recommended on this guide.

4. Since there are several calculator options, which is the best brand and model to purchase?

The brand you will want to buy is **Texas Instruments**. As mentioned earlier, teachers in the math department have spent a lot of time investigating other brands through attending technology seminars and through personal use, but nothing matches Texas Instruments in terms of quality, capability, and ease of use for the students.

We recommend the TI-84 Plus.

Just to clarify, you may see a “Silver Edition” or “C Silver Edition” attached to the end of the TI-84 Plus. These words simply mean more memory and a color screen so just buy the cheapest TI-84 Plus model you can find. Please note that these calculators can be used on ISTEP, ECA, SAT, ACT, and AP Tests.

5. Where is the cheapest location to purchase a TI-84?

The best place to look is in the weekend adds in the newspaper for any special deals, but they tend to only last through the middle of August. Walmart typically has the lowest price, but Staples, Office Depot, and any other office supply store can have competitive pricing. An average price is \$90 to \$100 for the TI-84 Plus.

Another great resource for these calculators is any online store such as Amazon or Ebay, which is where I buy all of my calculators. Currently, there are hundreds of new and used TI-84 Plus calculators around \$60.

6. What can be done to prevent the graphing calculator from being lost or stolen?

Immediately after purchase, place your child’s name in permanent marker on both the calculator and the calculator case. Additionally, record the serial number of the calculator (located on the back of the calculator). In the event of a lost or stolen calculator, we can use that number to assist in tracing the calculator back to the owner.

Please let us know if you need further assistance in choosing a graphing calculator for your child. We look forward to using these graphing calculators with your child to delve even deeper into the field of mathematics!

Sincerely,

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