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Math 1111 – College Algebra

Using Algebra in Everyday Life

How do you feel about the last few months of the year? Do you enjoy them or do they cause you stress? To some people, the last few months of the year are the most treasured of all the months. To other people, the last few months of the year are dreadful. An important factor influencing that opinion more than likely has a lot to do with the approaching holidays that fall in November and December. Thanksgiving and Christmas are two of the most popular holidays year-round. Celebrating each of these can bring joy, warmth, and positive energy.

Some families have traditions that they continue to uphold year after year. Those traditions can be holiday specific. For example, some Thanksgiving traditions that have trickled down through my family over time include having dinner at grandma’s house, drawing names out of a hat to see which family member you need to buy a Christmas present for, and putting up grandma’s Christmas tree so all the children can hang the decorations where they please. Some of the Christmas traditions we continue to celebrate include sitting in a circle in the living room while wrapping presents, making cookies to leave out for Santa, and curling up by the fireplace while wearing pajamas and drinking hot chocolate to watch a movie on Christmas Eve.

Although some traditions pertain to certain holidays, there is one tradition my family enjoys that combines both Thanksgiving and Christmas. That tradition is known all throughout the country as Black Friday. Since Thanksgiving takes place on the last Thursday of the month of November every year, Black Friday always begins on the night of Thanksgiving and follows through to the next day. The famous Black Friday consists of thousands of stores hosting outrageous sales on their merchandise. These sales are usually capable of offering things at a half-price discount, if not more. However, the tricky part is figuring out how much items that are on sale are going to cost. When the sale advertisements are released on the internet and sent through the mail, they have large letters in bright colors across the page that read “60% off all Vizio televisions!” or “30% off all king size comforter bed sets”. Although those sound like an extremely large price deduction, you must figure out what the new reduced price is so that you have the ability to manage the budget you have set aside for spending.

In the beginning of this Algebra course while learning the exam one material, there were additional worksheets provided to help us students refresh our memory on concepts we should already know. For example, worksheet five provided examples on how to find percentages in many different situations. Without having to complete this worksheet I would not have been able to calculate the price of different items during the Black Friday sales this year. Although I should have known how to do this simple task previously, I never did fully understand the concept of it until taking this Algebra course.

When finding percentages, you can use the formula “a= r × b”. To apply this formula in a real-life situation we will use an example that features a television on sale. If the original price of a fifty-five-inch television is usually $600.00 and is 70% off during the Black Friday sale, then what is the price of the television during the sale? The first thing you must do is multiply 600 by 0.70 in order to find the amount that is going to be taken off of the original price. The product of those two numbers equals 420. The next step consists of subtracting 420 from 600 which will give you the price of the television while on sale. The difference between the two numbers is 180. Therefore, the price of the television during the Black Friday sale is $180.00.

Without finally taking the time to figure out how to solve percentage related problems, I never would have been able to confidently calculate the price of items on sale without using the help of the internet.