

**Algebra Requirement Debates**

**Media List**

**Debatable Issue: Should Algebra be a high school graduation requirement?**

Background/Both Sides (General)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J0F8Twe2Obw>

[Video, 3 mins] Very brief debate on whether algebra should be required in high school.

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/06/16/debate-over-whether-all-undergraduates-should-take-mathematics-course>

Discussion of the recent decision by Wayne State University in Detroit to eliminate math as a general education requirement.

<http://www.npr.org/2016/03/03/469083122/some-educators-question-if-advanced-math-should-be-required>

NPR reports that there are efforts underway across the country to make math teaching more relevant and accessible. These efforts are intended to address the concern that math is becoming an obstacle to higher education for too many Americans.

Affirmative – Algebra Should Be Required

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehT9jgF59rU>

[Video, 4 mins] Stanford University professor Keith Devlin responds to Andrew Hacker by saying that algebra is highly practical and important.

<http://work.chron.com/career-fields-require-algebra-3080.html>

Many jobs in many different fields require the knowledge and use of algebra.

<http://www.maa.org/press/periodicals/maa-focus/should-algebra-be-required>

University of Maryland mathematics professor Danny Gulick provides 100 reasons that studying algebra is highly beneficial and he directly responds to Andrew Hacker’s arguments against the algebra requirement.

<http://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/why-algebra/>

Algebra is considered a “gateway” subject and is essential to success in the 21st century economy because it teaches abstract reasoning skills.

<http://www.danielwillingham.com/daniel-willingham-science-and-education-blog/yes-algebra-is-necessary>

University of Virginia psychology professor Daniel Willingham argues that getting rid of the algebra requirement is simply another way of “dumbing down” school and would move the education system in the direction opposite of where it should be going.

Negative – Algebra Should Not Be Required

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3s1vuBl9eBc>

[Video, 7 mins] Queens University social science professor Andrew Hacker interviewed by PBS about his 2016 book *The Math Myth*, which argues that algebra is entirely unnecessary for 95% of the population and should therefore not be required.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/29/opinion/sunday/is-algebra-necessary.html>

Queens University social science professor Andrew Hacker argues that while algebra is a wonderful thing, it should not be a graduation requirement because it is functioning to block the further and advanced education of far too many students.

<http://harpers.org/archive/2013/09/wrong-answer/>

Novelist Nicholas Baker says that algebra is a leading cause of dropping out of high school and that the algebra requirement should be eliminated.

<http://www.popsci.com/science/article/2013-08/argument-against-algebra>

The algebra requirement is a relic of the Cold War and should be gotten rid of. It no longer makes sense to require all students to study this somewhat esoteric subject.

<http://hechingered.org/content/americas-math-problem-should-we-get-rid-of-algebra_5418/>

A report by Complete College America shows that algebra requirements are a major obstacle to more students pursing and receiving a college degree, which impacts their life chances and choices.