

A TEACHER REFLECTS



Since the Pythagorean Theorem was new to most of my students, I really emphasized journal writing in this phase. I felt that students would benefit from having many opportunities to write down the statement of the Pythagorean Theorem and sets of Pythagorean triples. I asked the class to keep a record of everything they learned about the theorem, as well as different ways in which they used it.

Laura's journal was quite thorough. She included vocabulary and examples of how the Pythagorean Theorem was used in class. Looking at her journal entry also indicated that she might have some confusion about what constitutes a Pythagorean triple. I made a note to ask her about this later on.

The pythagorean theorem was discovered by the Greek mathematician Pythagoras, for which it's named. It's about right triangles. He made his discovery about 2000 years ago. The formula is $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$. The flagpole, ladder, and ramp measurements were all based on right triangles.

In baseball everything must be perfect to get a strike (3-base hit). The runner must be fast. The ball must be hit to right field. The ball must go passed to fielder.

In a pythagorean triple everything must also be perfect. In most case perfect - squares such as 3, 4, 5, 20, 36.

Vocabulary:

In a right triangle, the 'a' and the 'b' are called legs. The other side, the 'c', is called the hypotenuse.

Today we are drawing a ramp with a certain drawing to figure out its length. Then we'll use the Pythagorean theorem to find the exact answer.