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Find the Mathematics...



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...in Succulents!

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You are Overdoin' if You Cancel Everything

Lawrence M. Lesser, The University of Texas at El Paso

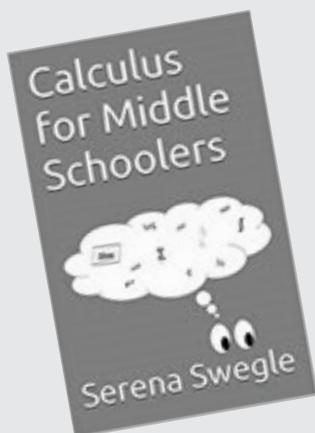
NUMERATOR

DENOMINATOR

I offer this visual gem for use in classrooms where students are sometimes too quick to cancel. From my years teaching high school and college, I don't remember seeing a student cancel digits in a fraction (e.g., "simplifying" $16/64$ by cancelling sixes), but I have seen students make cancelling errors with algebraic expressions, such as by cancelling individual terms in something like $(x^2 - 8)/(x - 2)$ instead of entire factors or such as cancelling an x from both sides of $x^2 = 3x$, thus losing the solution $x = 0$. Cancelling all common letters in the wordplay above reveals the memorable warning:

You are overdoin'

I was also inspired to write a full-length poem with additional connections and wordplay with cancelling and it was published in the first 2021 issue of *Teaching for Excellence and Equity in Mathematics*, the refereed journal of the NCTM affiliate organization TODOS: Mathematics for ALL.



You would be surprised by how much calculus middle schoolers can do! This book is geared toward this young age, but also extremely helpful for older students. Easy and engaging, it will give students a huge head start with advanced math. Find it on Amazon!

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Can you find mathematics in the real world? If so, capture real world mathematics problems by taking pictures and sending them to tctmeditor@gmail.com. Submit 3-5 mathematics problems connected to your pictures and you will have the opportunity for your pictures to appear on the cover of the *Texas Mathematics Teacher* journal. All pictures should be saved as a jpg.