

## ***Using the Back of the Book***

Just as it has been every year for you, the answers to the odd-numbered problems are listed in the back of your textbook. Some students believe that their teachers are so dumb that they don't even know they're back there ... or, just as often, students think the back of the book is a curse to teachers who wish the publishers would just quit making that printing mistake over and over again.

Just the opposite is true; I'm glad the answers are back there ... for a couple of reasons. Reason one is so that you may check your work. If you've gone through a problem or a section of material that you didn't feel real good about, the back of the book can help you determine if you're on the right track.

Reason two is to help you when you're stuck. If you are looking at a problem where you have no idea how to proceed, it can sometimes help to know how it ends. For example, if you see that the answer to a problem is six miles, you may be able to reason backward from there to determine a course of action.

Notice that I wrote 'help you' ... not 'give you the answer'. The biggest misuse of the back of the book is by students who blindly copy answers from there without doing the problems at all. From time to time, I'll even have kids turn in something that has 'answers may vary' as one of their answers. You might as well just make a photocopy of the answer page and write your name on it, for crying out loud.

Just remember that I know the answers are back there ... and I take it into account when grading homework. It is for this reason that I am slightly more interested in your work on the even-numbered problems than the odd-numbered problems. And if I see that you've done all the odd problems correctly and the even problems incorrectly, I know that you're having trouble not only with mathematics, but honesty.

The answers are in the back for two very good reasons. Please feel free to use them appropriately.