



Preparing for General Physics: Math Skills Drills and Other Useful Help, Calculus Version

By Arnold D. Pickar

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Before beginning his teaching career in 1963, **Arnold Pickar** made his connections with physics in a variety of contexts. He was an engineering officer in the merchant marine at the end of World War II and for several years thereafter. Later, working out of the Naval Research Laboratory, he helped develop airborne submarine detection devices and also built instrumentation for rocket-borne ionosphere studies. At the National Bureau of Standards, he studied spin interactions in paramagnetic substances at liquid helium temperatures. Finally, during his tenure at Portland State University, in connection with the Environmental Sciences and Resources Program, he investigated mechanisms of charge transport across lipid bilayer membranes induced by pesticides and other environmental toxins.

At PSU, besides this teaching and research in physics, he taught liberal arts courses on the history and social implications of science and technology. He also helped develop courses integrating physics, chemistry, and biology at both the high school and college science-majors levels.

It was in his teaching of general physics that he became acutely aware of the barriers that cause many otherwise excellent students to stumble pitifully when they encounter their first course in college physics. In response, he developed an evolving series of mini-courses which emphasized not only basic mathematical skills, but the ability to deal with word problems and to think pictorially and graphically. These remedial courses were the genesis of his books, *Preparing for General Physics*.

Arny is now retired but maintains an active association with Portland State - at least when he's not volunteering for a variety of causes or skiing and hiking.

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