

## Questions and Answers about Graphing Calculators for RHS Students

(Models: TI 84 Plus or TI 84 Plus CE)

**Q: What is a graphing calculator and how is it different than a regular calculator?**

*A: A graphing calculator does everything a scientific calculator does plus much more. It will display the graph of the equation and multiply matrices. Students are able to interpret the graphs and draw conclusions for real-life situations. For more information about each recommended model, click on the hyperlinks [TI 84 Plus](#) or the [TI 84 Plus CE](#).*

**Q: What classes will my son/daughter use it in?**

*A. The graphing calculator is mainly used in Algebra 2 and upper level math classes, including College Algebra, College Trigonometry, Statistics, Pre-Calculus and Calculus. AP Physics may also require a graphing calculator.*

**Q: Where can I find a graphing calculator at an affordable price?**

*A: New graphing calculators may be purchased at retail stores such as Walmart or Target. Be sure to take advantage of the [Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday Weekend for Aug. 4-6, 2017](#), which exempts school supplies, clothing and other items from state sales tax. They also may be purchased online new or used using other online retailers and discount websites. (such as Amazon, Overstock.com, Texas Instruments, etc.)*

**Q: If I cannot afford this calculator, will my child be able to use one in class while he/she is at school?**

*The math department currently has several class sets for classroom use. However, these stay in the classroom.*

**Q: Has RHS always used graphing calculators in math courses? Why is this now on the school supply list?**

*A: The RHS math department has used graphing calculators in upper level classes for more than a decade. This year, RHS revised its recommended school supply list to include the TI 84 Plus or TI 84 Plus CE graphing calculators because students can use this for multiple higher-level courses in class and at home. Plus they will be able to use it for the ACT exam. This is a tool they likely will need for math courses in college.*

**Q: If my student already has a scientific calculator or graphing calculator that is a different model, will that fit all his/her needs in class and for homework?**

*A. Yes. However, a graphing calculator is more visual. A scientific calculator may not have all of the functions that can help the student solve math problems quickly like a graphing calculator offers. When only using a scientific (or “regular”) calculator, the student might have to do some problem-solving by hand that could be done more quickly on a graphing calculator. It can be compared to using a “flip phone” instead of a*

*“Smart phone.” The models Ritenour has suggested for the graphing calculator are approved to use on college entrance exams such as the ACT.*

**Q: Will my son/daughter be able to use these models for the ACT, PSAT or SAT exams?**

*A: Yes. Both models (TI 84 Plus and TI 84 Plus CE) are approved for the ACT, PSAT and SAT exams. All RHS juniors are required to take the ACT exam. They also are approved for the Advanced Placement (AP) exams that allow or require a graphing calculator.*