

Letters to the Editor

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To the math teachers I've known before: I'm sorry

Editor:

**To all the math teachers I've known before: I'm
sorry I doubted you.**

**As a student, math was never my favorite subject.
The rules and formulas didn't speak to me the way
literature or history did. My teachers insisted that**

some day I would have to do math in my daily life and that I wouldn't always have a calculator in my pocket.

Then there were the dreaded words, etched large in red ink pen, on the side of my homework: "Show your work!"

Why do I need to show my work if the answer is right? Who cares how I got there? As I review my "corrected" 2025 Valencia County property tax bill, I see now the invaluable importance of showing one's work.

The county assessor's office and the county treasurer's office would have us believe that regardless of how they got to their final answer, it is correct. Without being able to define exactly how each line item is accounted for, their total due amount (correct or not) is irrelevant.

They are responsible to demonstrate to us not only where our taxes are going, but that they are competent enough to do the job. It is the burden of these offices to transparently show us their work, not to insist residents make the pilgrimage to the county offices.

To all the math teachers I've known before: thank you.

Thank you for showing me the value in doing the work the correct way and showing my steps.
Thank you for teaching me rounding rules,

multiplication, percentages, decimals and most importantly, that math is not arbitrarily applied or to be blindly trusted.

Katherine Gauer

Los Lunas

Monroe Doctrine history

Editor:

During his press conference on Jan. 3, following the U.S. action in Venezuela, the president brought up the Monroe Doctrine. What is the Monroe Doctrine, and does it matter?

The Monroe Doctrine comes from a speech by President James Monroe (hence the name) given to Congress on Dec. 2, 1823. In that speech, President Monroe stated “a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers.”

The United States would oppose future European colonies in the Americas. You might think of the Monroe Doctrine as posting a “Europe, Keep Out” sign on the Western Hemisphere.

The Monroe Doctrine differs markedly from our founding documents. In a way, it is not a document at all, but a statement of policy made during a

presidential speech. Unlike the Declaration of Independence, it was not a statement of a legislative group. Unlike the Constitution, it is not legally binding.

With that background, does the Monroe Doctrine matter today? Today, we don't worry that Europe will colonize South America. We might consider the Monroe Doctrine an antiquated historical artifact whose usefulness has been lost to history.

Or we might not. Perhaps the principle of opposing meddling on the American continents by powers on other continents is still important. We may no longer need a "Europe, Keep Out" sign, but it might be useful to have a sign that says "China, Keep Out" or "Iran, Keep Out" or "Russia, Keep Out."

Which makes the Monroe Doctrine like the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution in one important respect: its importance today depends on what we do with it.

Jonathan Gardner

Los Lunas

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