

Preservice Point of View: Area of a Trapezoid

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This section of our journal is designed to link teachers and future teachers. In each journal we will share responses to a mathematical concept task presented to students in classes for future teachers. The perspectives revealed in these responses should provide insights into increased understanding, reveal possible misconceptions, and suggest implications for improved instruction. It is our hope that this section of the journal will initiate a dialogue on concept development that will both better prepare our future teachers and reinforce the practices of current teachers.

The following activity was presented to Ann Kirkpatrick's students in a geometry course for elementary school teachers. Ann is currently a mathematics instructor at Southeastern Louisiana University but has twenty years of experience teaching middle school. Before you read the pre-service responses, try it yourself OR ask your students!

NOTE: Responses are presented **exactly** as written.

Explain or illustrate why the formulas below would or would not be appropriate for finding the area of a trapezoid.

- a) $A = \frac{1}{2} bh$
- b) $A = bh$
- c) $A = \frac{1}{2} (b+B)h$

[Click here for student responses.](#)