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Elliott S. Elliott* (selliott@utm.edu), Department of Mathematics and Statistics, 424 Humanities Building, 209 Hurt Street, Martin, TN 38238-0002. *10 Questions about Numbers: A College Algebra Writing Assignment*. Preliminary report.

This paper examines the successes and failures of a writing assignment required in a college algebra course. Students picked a number from a list including, among others, the digits 0 through 9, e , \aleph_0 , and $\sqrt{2}$. They wrote a paper answering three questions of their choice from a list of ten, such as “How old is this number?” and “What are some examples of this number in art?” The students then shared their papers through oral presentations in class.

The goals of the assignment were to increase interest in mathematics, provide cultural content within the algebra course, and to have students discover some of the beauty of mathematics. To see how well these goals were met, we will look at some of the answers the students gave, student feedback about the assignment, and the instructor’s thoughts about the assignment. (Received September 14, 2008)