Tips for Editing Math Problems in Google Docs from Fishtank Plus

If you send a problem set, anchor problems, or target task directly to Google Classroom using Fishtank Plus, the document that is generated uses screenshots of each problem and leaves a marked space for students to type their work below. This is a convenient tool but does have limitations.

If you want to use formatting to add structure to an assignment, we recommend copying and pasting the text from the editable handout to combine it with the images of the equations and diagrams in the Google Doc. This will involve cropping the problem screenshots in the document, but saves you the step of typing out questions that you want to enhance with text elements. You may not want to use the text elements for every problem (in the spirit of gradually removing scaffolds), so there may be some problems you leave as is.

If you want to write new equations, or change equations in an assignment, you do have the option of using the Google Docs equation function found in the Insert menu, but we are partial to Microsoft Word for writing equations.

Here are some things we’ve learned about quickly entering math problems into a Word document:

- Create a keyboard shortcut (on PC or Mac) for opening the equation writing editor.
- Turn on math autocorrect. It’s pretty intuitive and can make typing math so much faster - especially when you’re trying to add something unusual, like a small square in the middle of your text or Greek letters.
- If you want to transfer your equations from Word to Google Docs quickly, use the snipping tool (on PC) or screenshot (with shift+command+4 on Mac).