

How to make a 'Cheat Sheet' for Math

If you are currently enrolled in either Applied or Essential Mathematics, your Math teacher has likely encouraged you to make a student generated Reference Sheet. Students lovingly call it, "The Cheat Sheet!"

Before you begin, ask your teacher for his or her specific rules surrounding this sheet.

1. Make the sheet yourself. The benefits of this resource come from making it, not actually having it. Over time, many students will find themselves not actually having to use it as often as they did at the beginning of a course.
2. Start creating the Reference Sheet on the first day of the new unit. Many teachers highlight definitions, formulae, and point out tricky things to watch out for as the unit develops. Copy these things down on the first draft.
3. Write down examples of the different type of questions you might face on a test, especially the ones that you didn't get correct the first time through, and be sure to show the detailed solutions to these questions. Teachers will reward you with more marks when you show your work. Just stating the final solution is not acceptable.
4. Compare your sheet to one from a trusted classmate. If either of you has missed or over-looked something, hopefully a quick check will catch the omission.
5. Edit your draft before you start on the good copy. What may have seemed very important at the beginning of the unit, might now be 'second nature' by the time the unit is almost over.
6. Make sure you can easily read your writing. Don't make your work too small or too messy.
7. Group questions from the same topic together. For example, you might want to put all area questions on the same section of your paper.
8. Highlight sparingly. If your sheet is too busy with colour, it can be distracting rather than helpful.
9. Learn from your mistakes. If your resource sheet from your first test or two wasn't detailed enough, neat enough, etc., fix the problem before your next assessment.
10. Keep your unit reference sheets. You will need to refer to these again when making your overall course reference sheet for your final exam.

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