Good vs Bad Cheat Sheets

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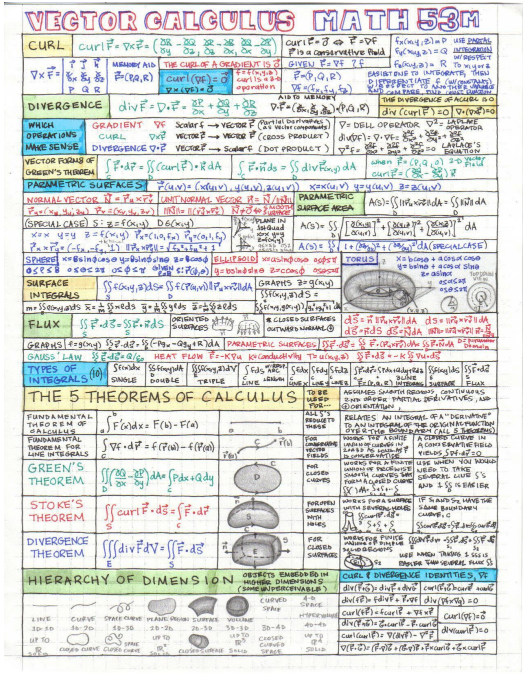
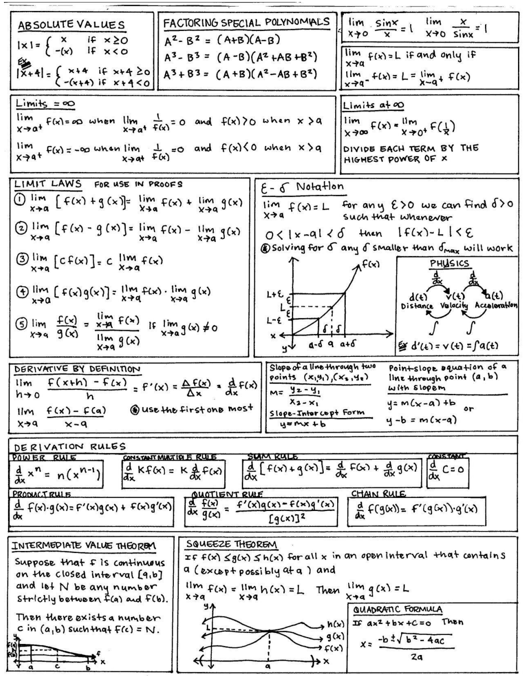
GCSs vs BCSs

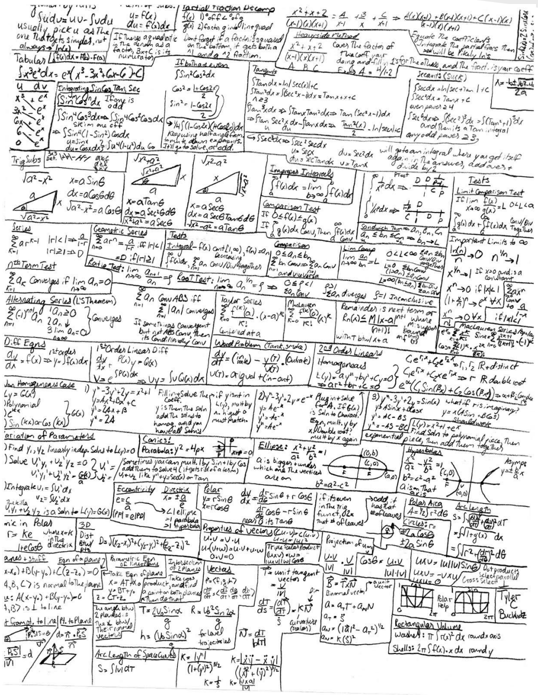
There are Good Cheat Sheets (GCSs) and there are Bad Cheat Sheets (BCSs).

Don't make BCSs! Make GCSs!

Inspiration of GCSs



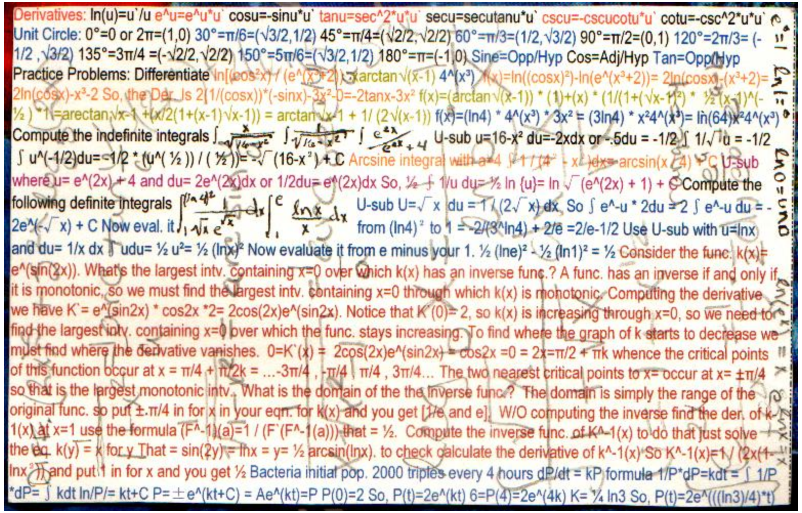




Inspiration of GCSs

- https://www.cfa.harvard.edu/~afriedman/CheatSheetsIndex.html
- https://www.cfa.harvard.edu/~afriedman/Images/CheatSheetScans/MATH53_1.jpg

Horrors of BCSs!



Horrors of BCSs!

- http://komplexify.com/epsilon/2009/04/23/when-cheat-sheets-go-bad/
- http://i.imgur.com/k0pQ35F.jpg?1
- http://img.wonderhowto.com/img/original/16/80/63494460985769/0/6349446098576916 80.jpg (reddit: http://www.reddit.com/r/EngineeringStudents/comments/1ax982/only_1_sheet_allowed_for_exam_no_problem/)
- you get the idea...

GCSs in a nutshell

- neat, organized, legible
- hand-written (this is important!)
- material organized by subjects, not necessarily the order it was covered
- important formulas (don't forget pre-requisite material!)
- important algebra tricks

BCSs in a nutshell

- messy, font too small, illegible
- no organization, just copied all the text or all the formals at randonm
- not hand-written (see second bullet)
- hard to find information

Making a GCS is a process

First, it helps to organize the material into sections (usually by chapters and sections, but not always). For example, group the limits material, group the continuity material together, group the derivative rules, group the derivative applications, etc etc. Next, you need to go through your notes and textbook highlighting key terms, definitions, special tricks, and sometimes the steps to follows. The key here is to use *short-cuts* to refresh your memory of a subject without having to be so formal about it (eg. writing the short-cuts +C/-0=-infinity, C/+infinity=0, etc). Sometimes you might include a solution to a tricky problem (eg. computing limits using the guidelines with a tricky algebra step). But don't go overboard here: only include a few--you should already know how to do the easy and medium level questions because you've practiced it lots and lots. You might want to include a section that recalls review material like algebra tricks (rationalize, exponent rules, solving various equations, etc).

After you've reviewed all the material, grouped it together intelligently, you are ready to write a nice, neat cheat sheet. The key is *organization* (so you can find what you need, when you need it) and *neatness*.

Benefits of GCS

- a natural part of the study process
- making one by hand aids memorization
- helps organize complex, difficult information
- helps put information *into context*
- helps reduce stress if allowed to use on exams
- and many more!

Good luck and make GCSs!

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