

Cheating to Get a Better Grade

by Ron Kurtus (revised 7 July 2012)

Some students cheat on their homework and on tests as a way to get better grades. It may be tempting to try to get better grades by cheating, too. But is it worth it?

Reasons students cheat are that they are pressured to get good grades by their parents, it is an easy way out, everyone seems to do it, and it is even fun to do.

Benefits of cheating include assuring yourself of a good grade with little work required. However the consequences of getting caught cheating overshadow any apparent benefits. You can get an automatic failing grade or be kicked out of school, among other punishments.

It is always best to take the honest route, even if it is more difficult.

Questions you may have include:

- Why do some students cheat?
- What are the benefits and consequences from cheating?
- What should you do?

This lesson will answer those questions.

Reasons students cheat

There are a number of reasons that some students cheat on homework or tests.

Pressure from parents

Parents often pressure their children to get good grades. If their son or daughter doesn't reach a certain level of expectation, the parents may reprimand, punish, or ground the student.

In such cases, students may cheat simply to satisfy their parents' expectations.

Easy way out

Sometimes students neglect to do their homework or study for a test. Sometimes they are too busy or forgot to do the work. However, more often it is because they just didn't feel like doing the work.

So, to avoid doing the work involved and to not let anyone know they goofed off, these students will copy someone else's homework or test answers. It is the easy way out.

Everyone does it

Other students rationalize cheating by saying, "Why not? Everyone else does it."

Get away with something

Some students really don't need to cheat, but they like to show how they can "beat the system" or get away with breaking the rules. Some are just plain dishonest.

Pros and cons of cheating

You may be able to get good grades through cheating, but you may also get caught.

Benefits of cheating

If you copy the work of others—whether it is plagiarizing material from books or the Internet or copying the homework of another student—it results in not having to work very hard for a passing or even good grade. Cheating is like getting something for nothing.

In fact, in some colleges, there are people who sell homework and test answers. They make money and the student gets a good grade with little work.

Cheating on a test can result in getting a top grade in class, even if you didn't study or don't understand the material. It seems like a tempting route to take.

Consequences of cheating

Being caught cheating on a test or copying someone else's material for homework can result in a lowered grade and even expulsion from school.

Even if you don't get caught, there is still the problem that you haven't learned the material. That ignorance may come to haunt you down the road, when you are required to apply what you've learned.

There is a story about how Johnny didn't study for his math test, but he sat right next to Mary, who was the smartest kid in class. He decided to use a mirror, so he could see her paper and copy her answers.

Unfortunately, he copied all the answers backwards. She got a 94 on the test, but he only got a 49.

In either case, there is also the moral stigma that you subconsciously hold inside of you that you didn't deserve the grade you received and that you are a cheater. Such a person may go far in life, but he or she will never be a champion.

What should you do?

Certainly, you should do the right thing.

Easy way out not worth it

Taking the "easy way out" by cheating may get you a good grade, but it can also result in serious consequences, if you are caught. Even if you are not caught, you are setting yourself up for failure in later classes.

It isn't worth the risk, and it doesn't say much about your character if you do cheat.

It is much better to efficiently and effectively do the required work and make preparations so that tests are not that difficult to do.

Don't cave in to parent pressure

Suppose your parents would like you to get good grades in a class, but you just don't understand the material or maybe you had missed some assignments and weren't ready for the final exam. Also, suppose you had an opportunity to get the answers to the test ahead of time. Should you cheat?

This can be a dilemma. On one hand, if you take the test and try to do your best, you may fail or get a poor grade. And then your parents will be on your case.

But on the other hand, if you cheat, you can be sure that you will pass with a good grade.

Kally's parents wanted her to get good grades. They promised her an iPad if she got an "A" in Biology.

At first she thought about copying the answers on the test from Jeff. But then she realized that it wasn't a good idea. She felt it was better to simply try to do her best. Maybe she still could get the good grade.

The best bet is to take the test and do as well as you can. If you don't pass or receive a good grade, so be it. You can tell your parents that you tried to do the best you can. They will have to accept it.

Plus, you can't make believe you are what you aren't. To top it off, even if you get away with cheating once, it just isn't worth the risk. You always feel better about yourself by being honest.

Summary

Although you may be pressured by your parents to get good grades, you should not cheat on homework or tests. If you claim to be too lazy to do the work or are looking for an easy way out, cheating is not the solution.

You may gain in the short-term with good grades, but in the end you will lose out. If you are caught cheating, you may be punished and perhaps kicked out of school. At the very least, you will be stigmatized as someone that can't be trusted. If you don't get caught, you will probably end up lacking needed knowledge and skill. You might also become morally bankrupt. Don't cheat!

Realize that you have the potential to get good grades without cheating.

Be proud of the work you do

Resources and references

[Ron Kurtus' Credentials](#)

Websites

[3 Top Reasons Why Students Cheat](#) - About.com

[Creative Ways College Students Cheat in School](#) - Education Insider News Blog

[Reasons Students Cheat](#) - Point Loma University

[Good Grades Resources](#)

Books

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[Top-rated books on Taking Tests in School](#)

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