

The Pokémon Card Pricing Cheat Sheet

Stop guessing what a card is worth, and stop overpaying on eBay. This is the one-page reference for pricing any Pokémon card the way a dealer does: read three printed fields, check the right source, adjust for condition, and know when the graded comp is the only one that matters.

The condition multipliers

Every pricing source quotes a Near Mint price by default. If your card is not NM, adjust by these multipliers, the ones bulk buyers and TCGplayer sellers actually use.

Condition	% of NM	What it means
Near Mint (NM)	100%	Sharp corners, clean glossy surface, no visible whitening. The reference.
Lightly Played (LP)	80–90%	Whitening on an edge or corner under direct light; nothing obvious at arm's length.
Moderately Played (MP)	60–75%	Obvious edge wear, minor surface scratches. Usually not a grading candidate.
Heavily Played (HP)	40–55%	Major whitening, scratches visible at arm's length, a possible soft bend.
Damaged (DMG)	20–35%	Tears, water damage, creases that break the front face, or ink.

1. The three fields to read off any card

Pricing starts with three printed fields. Skip one and you price a different card than the one in your hand.

- **Name and mechanic suffix.** A Charizard is not a Charizard ex, V, VMAX, or VSTAR. The suffix sets the price band more than the base name. Read it verbatim.
- **Set code.** The 2 to 4 character code at the bottom (SVI, MEW, OBF). Names repeat across dozens of sets; the set code disambiguates the print.
- **Collector number (XXX/YYYY).** The left number can legitimately exceed the right. 199/167 is a real secret or special illustration rare, not a typo.

2. Where to look up the price

- **eBay sold listings.** Ground truth for what a buyer actually paid. Filter to Sold, last 30 days, your condition, and take the median of 5 to 10. Active listings run 30 to 50% above sold, so never quote a value from an active listing.
- **TCGplayer market price.** Most accurate for in-print modern singles, where daily volume smooths the noise.
- **PriceCharting graded ladder.** The reference for any graded card or grading candidate (Ungraded, Grade 7, 8, 9, PSA 10, BGS 9.5, CGC 10).

3. Raw vs graded, and when grading is worth it

For any card worth more than about \$30 raw in NM, the graded comp is where the real money sits. PSA 10 is the ceiling; PSA 9 is often 20 to 40% of the PSA 10 price on chase cards. Grade only when all three are true:

- The raw card visibly grades NM or better: sharp corners, clean surface, centering about 60/40 or better on the front.
- The PSA 10 comp is at least 5x the raw price after grading fees and the realistic chance of landing a 10.

- There is recent (last 90 days) PSA 10 sold data, not just a population report.

4. Japanese cards, quickly

Japanese SAR and SIR prints from sub-sets often sell for 1.5 to 3x their English counterparts; commons and uncommons usually trade below English. The set code prefix encodes the era (sv, s, sm), and a trailing letter (a, b) marks the sub-sets where the chase cards live. Price against US eBay sold in USD, not the Japan-domestic listing.

5. The five mistakes that cost the most

- Pricing off active listings instead of sold listings.
- Ignoring the set code (a Base Set Charizard and an Evolutions Charizard share a name).
- Quoting the NM price for a played card (apply the multiplier first).
- Trusting a single sale (take the median of several recent ones).
- Skipping the graded comp on a card that is NM or better.

6. The 60-second routine

- 1 Read the name and suffix, the set code, and the collector number.
- 2 Search eBay sold, last 30 days, in your card's condition; take the median of 5 to 10.
- 3 If the card is not NM, apply the condition multiplier above.
- 4 If it grades NM or better and is valuable, check the PSA 10 comp before you sell or buy.
- 5 Never quote a value from an active listing.

This is the static reference. The deals move daily.

The cheat sheet tells you what a card is worth. Foil's weekly email applies it to live listings so you never overpay: the best live deals right now, the cards on the move, and one sharp valuation note. Subscribe free at foiltcg.com/newsletter.