

**1. Write the expression for either the relative uncertainty or the absolute uncertainty.**

(For sum/difference, start with absolute uncertainty  $\delta q$ . For other types, find the relative uncertainty  $\delta q/q$  first.)

$F = ma$	$\frac{\delta F}{F} = \frac{\delta m}{m} + \frac{\delta a}{a}$
$m = m_1 - m_2$	
$V = \frac{1}{6}\pi D^3$	
$q = \sqrt{xy}$	
$T = 2\pi \sqrt{\frac{l}{g}}$	
$L_{ave} = \frac{1}{2}(L_1 + L_2)$	

**2. Work out the numbers**

Find the numerical value for  $q$  and its absolute and relative uncertainties. For products, find the value of the relative uncertainty first, and then multiply by  $q$  to get the absolute uncertainty. Quote your answer properly.

$$A = (3.3 \pm 0.5) \text{ m}^2, B = (2.2 \pm 0.1) \text{ m}, C = (5.5 \pm 0.2) \text{ m}.$$

**Example:**

$$q = \frac{3AB}{C}$$

**Try yourself:**

2a.

$$q = \frac{3AB^2}{C}$$

Answer:  $(8.7 \pm 2.4) \text{ m}^3$  ( $\pm 28\%$ ) or  $(9 \pm 2) \text{ m}^3$  ( $\pm 28\%$ )

2b.

$$q = A + BC$$

Answer:  $(15.4 \pm 1.5) \text{ m}^2$  ( $\pm 9.7\%$ )

### 3. A more complete example

To determine the amount of wallpaper  $q$  needed for a square room, a decorator measures:

Wall height,  $h = 2.49 \pm 0.01$  m

Wall width,  $w = 2.10 \pm 0.01$  m

Area of windows and doors,  $A = 3.51 \pm 0.06$  m<sup>2</sup>

Find  $q = 4hw - A$  and its uncertainty. (Answer:  $q = (17.4 \pm 0.2)$  m<sup>2</sup> ( $\pm 1\%$ ))

### Try yourself:

To determine the magnitude of the angular momentum  $L$  of a uniform disk, a student measures:

Mass,  $M = 0.55 \pm 0.01$  kg

Radius,  $R = 0.180 \pm 0.005$  m

Angular velocity,  $\omega = 15.0 \pm 0.3$  rad/s

Find  $L = \frac{1}{2}MR^2\omega$  and its uncertainty.

(Answer:  $L = (0.13 \pm 0.01)$  kgm<sup>2</sup>/s ( $\pm 9\%$ ) or  $L = (0.134 \pm 0.013)$  kgm<sup>2</sup>/s ( $\pm 9.4\%$ ))