

LABORATORY NOTEBOOK PROTOCOL

Your laboratory notebook is a valuable tool.

Learning to use one properly takes practice! Here are some tips:

1. Place your name on the outside cover and on the first page. Include the range of dates covered within the book on the cover.
2. Save a few pages at the beginning of the book for a table of contents. Number the pages. Keep the table of contents up to date.
3. Data are to be entered directly into the notebook.
4. All entries are to be in pen. Scratch-work can be in pencil, but only on the back sides of pages.
5. To delete an entry, draw a neat line through it so that it is still legible. **NEVER DESTROY DATA!**
6. Do not write on the back side of pages containing data or graphs.
7. Every page should be numbered, initialed, and dated.
8. No pages should ever be removed from the book.
9. If data and/or graphs are printed separately, such as occurs when a computer collects data, a copy should be taped in the book.
10. If you perform an experiment with a partner, have them review and witness your notes.
11. Record as much as is feasible, especially during an experiment. Record time of day, temperature, weather, etc. What may seem trivial during the experiment could be critical later.
12. Be observant! Anticipate your later analyses. Do 'back of the envelope calculations' throughout the experiment to make sure your results are reasonable, and to help discover variables you may not have thought to record.
13. Which apparatus did you use? Who was the manufacturer? Which reagents? Who was your lab partner? Have you recorded sufficient information so someone else could reproduce your results?
14. Record your ideas and questions as they come to you. Don't try to be 'too neat' in the book; it is not judged on neatness, but completeness. Treat it as a stream of consciousness record.