

# Guidelines for Keeping a Laboratory Notebook

## *General Chemistry • Skyline College*

Follow the “General Lab Report Guidelines” handout when writing pre-labs and lab reports. Below are some additional notes about the proper use of the lab notebook.

- ***Always write in the lab notebook in PEN with permanent blue or black ink.***
- Do not write in pencil or erasable ink. Do not use felt tip or colorful gel pens.
- ***Use a single line to cross out a mistake, and write the correct word or number next to it. Initial the cross-out.***  
Example: ~~mistake~~ mistake
- Do not white out or scribble out mistakes.
- ***You must practice real-time entry of data, observations, and steps in the lab. In other words, record data directly into your notebook.***
- Do not write on scratch paper, then copy into the notebook later. This could result in the loss or confusion of data and makes the validity of your data suspect. Lab reports will NOT be accepted and you will receive no credit for an experiment if you do not practice real-time entry.
- Organize data tables before you begin collecting data.
- Clearly label and organize each section of your report.
- Clearly label all data tables, calculations, and graphs.
- Keep the *Table of Contents* up-to-date.
- ***Remove only pages marked COPY from your notebook.***
- Do not remove the original pages, even if you mess them up. Removing pages makes your data suspect.
- Write lab reports for a college freshman non-science major audience that has a high school education with some chemistry in it. Write for an audience that you assume has not read the lab handout.
- ***Neatness and legibility are very important. We must be able to easily read what you write.***