How to Write a Chemistry Lab Report

Erlenbeck – Chemistry 2015-16

Your Lab Report should be written in your lab notebook. Always!

1. Construct a Table of Contents on the first page of your notebook. Add each lab report to this table as you write them.

2. Every lab report that you write should have the following section:
   a. **Title**: Give the name of the lab.

   b. **Purpose:** This should be based on the purpose in the lab handout that you are given. If not stated on your lab sheet it should become readily apparent after reading the lab.

   c. **Materials:** A list of all materials used in the experiment.

   d. **Procedure:** A numbered list of steps indicating the procedure followed in the experiment. Sometimes the procedure will be given to you and sometimes you will generate one on your own. Either way, I need to see it in your report.

   e. **Observations:** Record all qualitative observations required by the lab and any others you feel necessary. DO NOT RECORD INTERPRETATIONS IN THIS SECTION. Number each observation and make sure to use complete sentences. This section may be omitted if the lab does not call for any observations.

   f. **Data:** Record all quantitative observations on the data sheet given to you by Mr. Erlenbeck. All data should be neatly organized into tables or charts. Every table and chart should be labeled. DO NOT INCLUDE ANY CALCULATIONS IN THIS SECTION.

   g. **Graphs**: If required, a graph should be titled and properly constructed.

h. **Calculations:** All mathematical calculations that you are asked to perform should appear in this section. For each calculation be sure to:
    - Make a statement as to what is being calculated.
    - Show the mathematical setup.
    - Round off your answer to the proper amount of significant figures.
    - Include the correct units.
    - Circle or box your answer.

i. **Discussion Questions:** All questions (if any) on the lab handout should be answered in this section. Make sure you use complete sentences in your answers unless the question involves a calculation.

j. **Conclusion**: Two things should appear in this section:
    - A statement that responds to the purpose of the lab
    - A statement of your percent error if calculated.

    Do not show set-ups for calculations in this section. Those set-ups should be shown in the calculations section. Also, do not give procedure or analyze error, simply report your results as indicated above.

3. Your lab notebook should never leave the classroom…ever!

Tips:

1. Neatness counts! If I can read it without struggling I'm much happier while grading.
2. Make sure you have fully answered all sections in your report for full credit.
3. Don't forget to put your lab on your table of contents.
4. Use full sentences whenever possible.