

# Guidelines for Lab Notebooks

Your lab notebook is a diary of your activity on your assignments. It should be a continuous chronological account of exactly what was done, when it was done, and why; and it should be complete enough so that an engineer, using only the recorded material, could repeat any measurement, check any result, duplicate any set-up, or even reconstruct the entire development.

Some general guidelines for keeping a lab notebook:

1. All entries should be clearly legible, preferably in ink.
2. The first entry made on any day should be the date.
3. Make entries in chronological order. Leave no blank pages. Any notations out of chronological order should be so indicated and dated.
4. Cross out, but do not erase superseded entries. Leave them legible. Never tear out pages. Often you may find that what seemed to be useless or incorrect data actually turns out to provide important information.
5. Include adequate topic headings to facilitate later search and indexing. Use explanatory text freely.
6. Show schematics with element values of all tested circuits. Show block diagrams of test setups. Include instrument numbers. Indicate clearly where readings comprising recorded data were observed.
7. Adequately label and reference all curves and coordinate axes. Graph sheets should be securely pasted in place.
8. Intermediate calculations, if of no interest in themselves, may be made on scratch paper, but all premises and factors involved in the calculations and all results should be recorded.