

What You need to do Before Coming to Laboratory

1. Before your first lab meeting, make sure that you have written your contact information in the front of your notebook, and have prepared a "Table of Contents". Click [here](#) for more information on the laboratory notebook.

2. Be sure that the entries (calculations, graphs and conclusions) for any previous experiments that have been completed are ready to be presented to the instructor. If your class has post-lab questions with its laboratory exercises, don't forget to answer them and be prepared to turn them in, as your instructor directs you.

3. Answer any pre-laboratory questions for the current exercise. Your instructor will give your further information on how to complete these questions.

4. Begin the new exercise on the first blank page. Write the title of the lab, your lab partner's name, and the date on the top of the page. Write the lab's title and starting page number in the "Table of Contents".

Helpful Hints Read the "[Background](#)" and "[Procedural Outline](#)" sections of the [Laboratory Notebook](#) page before proceeding. Use a highlighter to note important steps and materials (this is key to writing the "Background" and "Procedural Outline"). The first few times you may want to write out steps 5 through 7 on loose-leaf paper first (not in the notebook). In this way you can edit what you've written before you transfer the final version to your notebook. Do not, however, get in the habit of doing it this way; it is too time-consuming. You must quickly learn what you need to have in your notebook to perform effectively in the laboratory. As you are preparing your notebook, always remember that once something is written in the notebook, you must never recopy it (you may edit it).

5. Complete the "Statement of Purpose." Remember that this is a concise (two sentences maximum) description of what is to be done and how it is to be done.

6. Complete any required "Background" information. This section is usually omitted in CHEM 120 and CHEM 121 exercises, but check with your instructor to be sure. If you are required to have background information, check that all the necessary information is present before writing the next section.

7. Write the "Procedural Outline" (see the [Laboratory Notebook](#) page for formatting). The key here is to summarize the procedure in your own words so that you can do the exercise without the laboratory manual or handout.

8. Reserve space for your "Observations" and "Calculations". Unless you wish to do some of the calculations before lab, leave these spaces blank.

Your instructor may want to check your notebook, or may require you to turn in the duplicate pages from your notebook, before you begin the laboratory exercise. Be sure to read the course's syllabus and ask the instructor, if you are unclear on his or her requirements.