Your Laboratory Notebook

Your notebook is your research diary. It should be a legible description of exactly what you did in lab, reasons for why you did it, and what you observed. The goal is to make your notebook clear enough so that someone else (as well as yourself) may easily reproduce your work!

Leave the first 3-5 pages of your notebook blank for a table of contents. Update this regularly with the pages and titles of all experiments/protocols.

Write EVERYTHING directly into your notebook (DO NOT USE SCRAP PAPER!). EVERYTHING includes notes, ideas, questions, thoughts, calculations, procedures and modifications, and any notes from library research/reading.

- Number every page
- Date every entry
- Write in non-erasable pen (NEVER USE PENCIL!)
- Do not use whiteout
- Do not remove pages
- If you make a mistake, just put a single line through it and rewrite it
- Do not store any loose pages in your notebook
  - Keep original data in a separate binder and cross-reference all data (spectra, tables, chromatograms, etc..) with a notebook number and page number.
  - It may also be useful to photoreduce your data and tape a copy into your notebook
  - Clearly label all data with:
    - Sample name and notebook page number
    - Instrument name
    - Sample preparation (solvent, concentration, etc…)
    - Date of data collection
    - Any user modified data acquisition parameters
- Include full references for any literature procedure or protocol you use or reference
  - Examples:  JOURNAL TITLE, VOL# (YEAR) PP.
  - BOOK TITLE, AUTHOR(S), YEAR, PP.
  - To make it easier later, you might include the Library Call number!

If you follow these rules, then your notebook should be an extremely helpful resource when you compile your work into a written report!