

The notebook should be of the bound hardback type (not a loose leaf file). Entries should be made with black ink or black ballpoint pen (to permit clear photocopying if required). Pencil should not be used (so that there is no suspicion of later changes to data).

The first page should give your personal information.

The next four pages should be reserved for the notebook index which should be filled in as the notebook entries are completed.

The next page should be reserved for abbreviations which will be used in the notebook and it should be filled in as new abbreviations occur during the course of writing up work.

Number all the pages consecutively in the top right corner. It is recommended that as a safeguard in the event of possible legal problems, every page should be used in sequence with no blank pages or spaces remaining. This requires that any blank page or space remaining at the bottom of a page is 'crossed' and signed and dated with the statement No entry. Pages should not be torn out or added as this can lead to doubts about the authenticity of entries. Deletions, corrections or additions should be initialled and dated by the author. If something needs to be added as an afterthought at a later date it should be entered with the date of writing and the statement continued from ... and then cross referenced on the appropriate page with the statement related work or notes on pages

The date on which work is conducted should be entered near the outer margin so that it can then easily be found when quickly checking through for some particular entry - although if the index is kept up to date this should present no problem!

The style used for writing up the notebook will be a personal choice but the aims are clarity, accuracy and completeness. Usually each experiment or set of observations can be divided into

- Background and aims
- Plan
- Description of how work is done
- Record of all results
- Analysis of results
- Conclusion

Using these or similar headings in the notebook will help ensure that all are given adequate coverage. If the plan includes a detailed description of a method, then a note of any specific safety hazards and precautions should be made. When recording results, enter everything directly into the notebook when it happens. Do not keep notes on scraps of paper to write up later - the notes get confused or lost, 'spare' time is always elusive and there is a temptation to leave it until tomorrow with the result it may never be done properly.

The back of the notebook can hold protocols, ladder pictures, sample usage information (for lab bills) etc.