



Guidelines for Engineering Notebook

Introduction:

Keeping an engineering notebook is vital for organizing the project, recording valuable data, drawings, and research. It is also a legal document that can be used to prove ownership during patent applications. It is important to have the students use their engineering notebooks on a daily basis during the course of the project.

Categories for the Notebook:

1. Identification of the owner: Cover of the notebook should include the owners name, the class name, year (consider including an email address or phone number if lost).
2. Writing principal: Only use the right side of the notebook, write in ink, not pencil, (you may use left side of notebook for scratch work which will be in pencil).
3. Page Numbering: Number only the top right side of the page, only the right side of the notebook.
4. Table of Contents: Should be at the beginning and be approximately 3 pages in length. Add to the TOC as you add new sections of importance into the notebook.
5. Chronological section: This is the bulk of the engineering notebook. This is where the daily recordings, data recordings and sketches are made.
6. Reference section: This is the last quarter of the engineering notebook. It includes reference information such as websites, books, or any other resources used in the project for future reference. This should be about 20 pages long.

7. Contacts section: This should cover the last 5 pages of the notebook. It is a place to keep track of professional contacts during the course of the experiment (including name, email, phone number, or websites associated with the contact).

Daily Entries/Content:

- Make sure to date each page in the notebook that entries are made - usually at the top of the page.
- This journal can include technical information, your thoughts, sketches, diagrams, to do lists for the project, calculations, etc. The more information written down in the engineering journal, the better document that it will become.
- Be technically specific. If performing a test, make sure to record the actual data into the journal, then give a summary of the test and what steps need to be taken from this point forward.
- If recording data or information from other subsystems or groups, make sure to reference that group/subsystem name and the information you are gathering from that group.
- Organize the entries with headers, underlines, or some reasonable method to quickly find the information for future review.
- All design decisions should be well documented including all possibilities considered. Show the comparison between ideas, and how the final decision was decided upon.
- Once you are complete with your entry for the day, if there is still blank space on the page of your engineering notebook, cross out the blank space and begin the next day's entry on the following journal page.
- Make sure to mark the date before each day's entry.

Citations:

- Cite your references in your journal entry, but make the full citation in your Reference section. If you refer to the same reference in your entry section multiple times, it only needs to be cited once in the

Reference section. It is suggested to use the APA style of citation for the Reference section.

Drawings and Sketches:

- Drawings and sketches should be included in the Chronological sections. Needs to have lots of detail, including labeling and measured parts. Annotations and notes should be included to explain the drawing or sketch. It should be done in ink as well, but it can be done in pencil on the left side of the notebook where rough sketches and ideas are kept. If drawings are made on the computer, it may be printed and glued into the notebook.

Phone Conversations:

- May be included into the daily entry section, but make sure to include the contact in the Contacts section.
- Give a summary of the phone conversation in the daily entry section.

Footers:

Every page on the right side of the notebook should have a footer. This footer will be where the author of the engineering journal will sign and date his/her name and then he/she will have a peer also sign and date to prove that it is indeed authentic work. This practice is done in real engineering professions as a means to keep ideas as their own intellectual property.