

Descriptive Labs – PreLab

PreLab: questions to answer before doing the lab

Name: _____

Date: _____

Lab Section: _____

Lab Title: _____

First, carefully read the description of the lab.

In most lab classes, you will have a lab manual that contains background for the lab and directions for doing the lab procedure. There may also be handouts or other materials you have access to. Read it all. And don't just skim it. In fact, you may need to read it more than once to get a good grasp of it.

Next, answer the following questions about the lab:

1. What are you supposed to be learning about by doing the lab?

The goal of this lab is to help you learn about a scientific concept (principle, theory, law) or about a laboratory procedure. Based on your reading of the lab materials, identify the scientific concept and/or lab procedure you are supposed to be learning about. Then write down what you know about the concept or procedure of the lab based on information from the lab manual, textbook, class notes, handouts, etc.

2. What are the objectives for this lab?

Describe the specific actions you are being asked to perform in the lab, such as observe, analyze, determine, etc.

3. What is the overall purpose of the lab?

Briefly describe how what you are being asked to do in the lab (the objectives) will help you learn about the scientific concept(s) or laboratory procedure(s). In other words, show the link between your response to question 2 (what you will do in the lab) to your response to question 1 (what you are supposed to be learning by doing the lab).

4. What are some questions you have about the lab?

Look for aspects of the lab--related to the scientific concept, procedure, or anything else--that you don't understand or would like to know more about. Turn these into a list of questions. These questions provide a focus of inquiry for the lab.