

Your Chemistry Journal

Objective: You will be able to organize and synthesize the concepts presented in the textbook and during class throughout the year.

The Components of a Chemistry Journal

A Chemistry Journal is one of the best study tools available for developing comprehensive and in-depth understanding of chemistry. A Chemistry Journal is a chronology of:

- your textbook reading notes
- questions that come to mind while reading the textbook
- the answers to your questions
- class notes and activities

Reading a textbook effectively and taking meaningful notes are two important study skills. Integrating interactive course material into your Chemistry Journal with your textbook notes will contribute significantly to your understanding of chemistry.

Chemistry Journal Format

An organized Chemistry Journal is amazingly useful. Students should follow the format outlined below for the first several reading assignments. As your experience grows, you may find alterations to this scheme that are better suited to your learning style.

- Clearly label the cover of your Chemistry Journal with your name, the course, and the block.
- Keep a Table of Contents on the first 2-3 pages.
- For each topic, keep Chemistry Journal notes on the right hand page and questions/class notes on the left hand page, as shown below. The left and right hand pages should be coordinated to be on the same topic/section of reading.

Left Page	Right Page
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Questions from reading (with space for answers)• Additional class notes on same topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chemistry Journal notes, including summary of the Big Idea.• Key vocabulary

How to Take Effective Textbook Reading Notes

You are responsible for reading the textbook before class and recording a summary in your Chemistry Journal. Think of this summary as an “elevator pitch” – it must be concise and to the point.

Before the class discussion/activities:

1. Read through the section but do not write any notes. Be sure to read everything on the page, not just the main text. Sometimes the most helpful and the most interesting things are written on the sides or are in the diagrams and pictures! Now, write a question (or more) about something you want or need clarified, or something that you are curious about.

Following the class discussion/activities:

2. Return to the beginning of the section and write a summary of the Big Idea using complete sentences. It is often a good idea to create a summary picture or diagram or copy such pictures from the text.
3. For concepts that involve calculations, write out and annotate an example of how to solve a problem.
4. For new vocabulary words, write a definition in your own words along with the textbook definition. You may wish to collect vocabulary words together in a table:

Key Term	My Definition	Textbook Definition
matter	stuff	anything that has mass and volume

5. Write down any additional questions you may have.
6. Make sure your notes are complete. A good way to check if your notes and your understanding is to review the expected outcomes listed in the “Outcomes Review” in the second to last section of each chapter. Also, check to see that your notes include all of the terms or phrases in bold face that are embedded in the text of each section.

Using Your Chemistry Journal in Class

When the material is discussed in class, highlight the concepts that are emphasized and take additional notes on the opposite page. If your questions are not answered during the presentation, ask! In this way we can focus our attention in class on the topics that have not been well understood, rather than going over all of the assigned reading, most of which was already understood.

When you study for a test or quiz, review your Chemistry Journal. For some, it may be helpful to re-read sections from the textbook to see the big picture. When you review your graded tests & quizzes, add or edit your reading notes to reflect the correct answers to the questions you missed.

Accountability

Chemistry Journals will be frequently checked for completion and periodically collected so that I can provide feedback. I expect Chemistry Journals to be brought to every class and used for note taking.