How to set up your Engineering Notebook

Why do I need an engineering notebook?
The goal of an engineering notebook is a documentation aimed to capture all the important details of a project. It serves two major purposes: (1) for engineers and project members to record experiments and progression of the project, (2) providing detailed dates for verification and legal information if the project is patented. Therefore, is it essential that you start developing and practicing the skills of recording information that demonstrates the progression of your project throughout all the engineering challenges this year.

What does it look like?
• 1 Bound notebook dedicated for your engineering challenges for Physics class this year.
• Your FULL NAME, Block, and Teacher’s Name written on the front on the notebook.

Who is responsible for recording in the notebook?
In general, YOURSELF! In most cases we will be working on this project in-class and you will be responsible for writing in your own notebook. Sometimes I will collect an official “report” from your group at the end of the project where you can work together to type up the important steps of your engineering process. When that happens, all of your notebooks serve as important rough drafts for your final report.

When will the notebook be graded?
I will be collecting the notebooks at random times throughout projects this year. Sometimes I will just spot check certain section of your notebook DAILY and give you a stamp for completion, sometimes I will collect and grade your notebook at the end of the whole project.

How should I record the notes?
In general, you should aim to provide enough detail so someone else (who is not on your team) can understand the project. Think of it this way: In a team of three engineers, one of your team members was sick and absent from school yesterday. She came back and found both of you were out because of a field trip! She should be able to pick up one of your engineering notebooks and step-in and continue the work without any questions.

Write legibly! Label any sketches, chart, or calculation you have. Since this is a running notebook, you should write EVERYTHING DOWN! If you made a mistake, you should just cross out the words. The notebook may help you remember the mistakes or issues in the design process so you do not repeat the same tests again without reason.
Here is a template of how I recommend you set-up the notebook. You may add more headings if you find it useful for your organizational purposes.

1. Leave 2 pages in the front for Table of Contents.

2. Notebook Pages Layout:

   Project Title: __________________________ Start Date: ___/___/____
   Team Members: __________________________

   Goal:

   Constraints:

   Daily Log:
   • Date:
   • Notes:

   • Sketch/Calculation/Graph:

     • Notes:

     • Sketch/Calculation/Graph:

     Student Initial:  Teacher Stamp: