

Guide to tonight's handouts

- This handout. Information about the upcoming test.
[On the **back:**] "Test notes", general information about tests.
[**Attached:**] Test #1 from a previous class, as a sample test. The main purpose is to give you an idea what an X11 test is like. It also gives you a few more practice problems. An answer key is at the web site -- along with the later sample tests and their keys. (Extent of coverage may vary from year to year.) (I don't plan to go over the sample test in class unless there are questions.) (I strongly discourage you from reading the answer key until you have worked on the problems yourself. You learn by doing, not by watching.)
- Ch 6. Regular Ch handout. 2 worksheets are attached to it.
- Dimensional analysis. An optional self-help worksheet, written for another course. It contains problems at various levels of difficulty, with answers. Some may find this helpful as extra practice. (This handout, and some other similar ones that I have written, are also available from the "Chemistry practice problems" page at my web site.)

Test 1, class 5 (3/2), 2nd hour. It should cover through part of Ch 6. (Test coverage will be adjusted, depending on how far we actually get in class 4. I will post the actual cutoff on the Updates page.) Coverage of Ch 6 on Test 1 will be light, consistent with class emphasis. The test will include some problems where you are asked to apply dimensional analysis.

Bring to the test: a (scientific) calculator, the class periodic table (PT) handout, and your note page. You may use one page (one side) of notes. Except for the PT, all notes must be in your own handwriting. Students often tell me that the most useful part of the notes is the thought that goes into organizing them. Some students include outlines, to help them organize the material. (A somewhat longer discussion of the note page is at the web site.)

Questions??? I will "guarantee" phone availability 7-9 pm on the Wednesday evening before the test. It's ok to call at other times; leave a message with your number and a good time to call. I will check my e-mail Thursday morning, probably before 8 am. Also, remember that I am available from about 6:00 in the classroom.

Test follow-up

This is a good time for you to reflect on how you are doing, and why. Different people take the course with different goals, and that is entirely up to you. If you are not happy with your accomplishments so far, you probably should step up your homework. One suggestion is that you turn in homework on a regular basis. This may encourage you to become more regular in doing it, and it will give you some regular feedback. I am happy to discuss your status with you privately.

If you are tempted to leave the course after the first test, I strongly encourage you to talk with me first. My experience is that most people who have this urge are actually doing reasonably, but are being very hard on themselves (especially if they have trouble with the quantitative material). Let's discuss.

Test notes

Students ask questions about tests, and the same questions keep coming up. So here are some common issues. Some of these are most important on take home tests, where it is more difficult to ask a question during the test.

All tests are similar. Use your experience with previous tests (including the sample test) to guide you in what to expect, and in how to interpret new questions.

The final exam is also similar to earlier tests, except that it may be a little longer. The final emphasizes recent material, but may include some review, especially of major issues. Anyway, much of the material is inherently cumulative, so there is some review aspect to the final even without questions that are explicitly review.

If you need more space, you may attach extra pages (or use the back, if practical). Put your name and the question number on any extra pages. Please refer to the attachment on the main page -- so I'll see it at the right time. (In general, the space available for each question should be enough. But sometimes it's simpler to just X-out a first try and redo it on a fresh page.)

Be sure to X-out what you don't want me to read. You don't need to obliterate it; just make it clear what I am supposed to read.

In general, we want to emphasize reasons, not answers. In that spirit...

- On all problems involving calculations, show clear work with clear units. Use dimensional analysis when appropriate.
- Some questions require an explanation. For example, a question may be phrased as a yes/no question, with explanation requested. It's the explanation that matters. Typically, I would give no credit for an answer without any requested explanation.
- I discourage you from leaving questions blank. Some questions are intended to be difficult, to stretch your understanding. Try to "think something, for some reason." You may "know" more than you think you do, or you may at least get some partial credit. Further, you will get some response to what you thought, rather than a plain zero. And I learn what people are thinking, whether correct or not.
- More generally, most test questions are intended to involve reasoning, not guessing.

I would prefer that you not use red ink as your main color. I mark with red, and would like my notes to be easily seen. This does not preclude occasional red in multi-color diagrams.

Course grade. This is a good time to remind you about course grading. See the information about grading and grade options in the Quick Reference section of the General Information handout. Auditors are welcome to take the tests, for the feedback. I encourage everyone to take the tests, if for no other reason than to leave your options open.