

AST 111 Homework Guidelines

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You are welcome (indeed, encouraged) to work together on the homework — on a *theoretical* level. However, the work that you turn in must be entirely your own. It is OK if someone explains to you verbally how they approached a problem, but you should never be looking directly at their work.

Below are some guidelines for how to approach problem sets in your astronomy and physics courses. Establishing good habits on your homework now will aid you in the rest of your courses at the University of Rochester.

For the first two problem sets, Amanda, Juliana, and Steven will simply note if any of these things are problems. For the remaining assignments, they will subtract 5% from your homework for failing to do any of the (necessary) steps below.

- Read through the problem completely.
- Set aside an appropriate amount of space for your work.
- Draw a diagram (when necessary).
- Write down the “knowns.”
- Determine which principles apply.
- Write down any relevant equations.
- Determine the unknown variable.
- Solve the equation algebraically for the unknown. (Do NOT plug in any numbers yet!)
- Ask if the result makes sense (i.e., check units, dimensional analysis)
- *Now* plug in any numbers. (Include your units!)
- Make sure to include a unit in your answer.
- *Circle/box* your answer.
- Is your handwriting neat enough?
- Pencil preferred over pen (blue or black ink).
- Leave enough space for the next problem so that your work (and answer) for this problem are clearly separate from the next.
- *Staple* your pages together (no paperclips or fancy folding).