Guidelines for writing lab reports

All lab reports that you turn in must be typed and follow these general guidelines:

I. Opening Paragraph
   It should be a short statement or description of what you are going to do in the experiment.

II. Procedures and Descriptions
   Describe any procedure that is not spelled out in the lab manual. Include a schematic to show wire connections, distances, etc...

III. The Data
   List your original data in a table. It is critical that you write down the units for everything.

IV. Sketches and Graphs
   Clearly label all axes on your graphs. If two or more curves or lines are included in the same graph, make sure you indicate which curve is which with some sort of legend. Graphs are usually constructed with the independent variable (what you are changing) on the horizontal axis, and the dependent variable (the affected quantity) on the vertical axis.

V. Analysis
   This is one of the most important aspects of the lab report. Always indicate which equations you are using and write them down. Always show a sample calculation. When asked to compare two quantities, such as a theoretical value to an experimental value, be sure to calculate the percentage error.

VI. Conclusions
   Use it to show that you understood what you did. Answer these general questions:
   (a) Did you accomplish what you set out to do? If you did, briefly back up this accomplishment with your measured quantities and graphs.
   (b) What specific problems did you encounter and how did you solve them?
   Finally, state some of the things you have learned in by doing the experiment.

Be Neat and Clear in your writing. It counts!!!