

PHYS 114 Homework Guidelines

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 physics courses. For the first homework the TA will simply note if any of these things are problems. For the remaining homeworks, the TA will subtract 10 points from your homework for failing to do any of the (necessary) steps below. (E.g., if you don't box any of your answers, that will be just 10 points off one time, but if you also don't draw a diagram when one is needed, that is another 10 points off.)

- Read through the problem completely
- Set aside an appropriate amount of space for your work
- Draw a diagram
- Write down the “knowns”
- Determine which principles apply (e.g., momentum, energy, angular momentum, conservation thereof, etc.)
- Write down any relevant equations
- Determine the unknown variable
- Solve the equation algebraically for the unknown (don't plug in any numbers yet!)
- Ask if the result makes sense (i.e., check units, dimensional analysis)
- *Now* plug in any numbers
- Make sure to include a unit in your answer
- Circle/box your answer
- Is your handwriting neat enough?
- Leave enough space for the next problem so that your work (and answer) for this problem are clearly separate from the next.