A Checklist for Lab Reports and Scientific Papers

☐ Is the title concise, and does it adequately describe the contents?

☐ Are the appropriate headings and subheadings included and in proper order?

☐ Are the tone and style appropriate? Scientific writing is intended to be more factual than entertaining: leave out descriptive language, anecdotes, personal opinions, humor, or dialogue.

☐ Does the writer use passive voice? (Ex: “Solution A was centrifuged” not “I centrifuged solution A.”)

☐ Is the past tense used for describing procedures and present tense for describing results and conclusions?

☐ Are sentences short and to the point, expressing facts clearly and concisely? Does the writer answer all the basic questions about the topic?

☐ Have disciplinary conventions related to symbols and abbreviations been observed?

☐ Are figures and tables numbered and accompanied by explanatory captions? Are they introduced before they appear in the text?