

Below, I have reproduced one of the grader's comments about how to improve your homework.

The first few paragraphs are general comments more intended towards the students; they're kind of long, but it's probably just something I'll mention the first time and omit from subsequent reports:

First, please staple the papers together. This was only a problem in one or two cases. There's an industrial stapler in the library at the circulation desk if you can't get access to any other one.

On several of the assignments there are notes made that the homework was worked on as a group, which is fantastic (and I hope the students will continue to make note of this) not only because it is in accordance with the honor code, but also because it gives me a better idea of the demographics of the class. Overall, students who worked in groups did better than those who didn't, so I encourage those who did not do so well to find a study group. However, on the flip side, on number 17 everyone [*Names removed to protect the innocent*] got the problem wrong, so I want to make a point to be wary about working in groups, that sometimes the consensus answer is not always correct, so be aware of this if you suspect the problem is not correct.

Also, for students working in groups, sometimes the work will be found on one paper but not the other; the work needs to be shown on all papers involved. Otherwise the suspicion is that if a student gets from equation A to equation B and skips 10 steps along the way, he or she may have copied the answer off someone, which is not acceptable and will be consequently marked wrong.

Also, I encourage any questions the students might have concerning the grading of the homework, especially the first assignment; this first one is as much a learning process for me as it is for them as I try and gauge how severely or lightly I should grade these assignments.

Finally, students in general need to show more work. Unfortunately there's no set rule on how much work should be shown, but if you're skipping more than two steps I think work needs to be shown. It can be something as simple as subtract x on both sides, i.e. it is not always necessary to recopy the entire problem. This is especially true in problems like 10 c where you're asked to show something is true; since the answer (and several of the intermediate information) are all given, many students only wrote these down without showing the work, and I can't tell whether they just copied the statements out of the book or if they really understood them. As a result I can't give any credit when the answer seems to be just a repeat of the book.

Along these lines, several students made small mistakes along the way and often these were just transcription errors from one line to the next. However if insufficient work is shown, I have no way of knowing this.