Top 12 List of Common Lab Report Mistakes

1. Use grammar and spell check
2. Re-read the report at least 12 hours after you finish writing to be sure it reads well
3. Include a zero before a decimal point if no other preceding number—numbers do not start with decimal points.
4. There is a space between a number and a unit: # mg; # g, # mL, # °C
5. Do not write in first person (do not use I, we, our, etc.)
6. Do not use contractions in formal writing
7. CH₂Cl₂ is dichloromethane or methylene chloride, NOT dimethylchloride
8. Avoid extreme adjectives: very, extremely
9. Lab reports are not a conversation; they are a scientific report on the data that has been collected—treat it as such (lab reports are not the place for editorial comments or complaints)
10. Label all figures and tables
   a. Tables are labeled at the top
   b. Figures are labeled beneath the picture
11. All formulas should be correctly subscripted
12. Rotary evaporators do not recrystallize—they remove solvents from compounds in order to isolate the compound. The traps are then filled with organic solvents, not water—dispose of the trap contents correctly in chemical waste.