Guidelines for Presentation of Homework Solutions

Grading homework is never an easy task, so please help our graders by making your solutions neat and clear. It is to your advantage to do so, as well, because the amount of feedback and credit that the grader can give to you will depend on whether she or he can follow your work. Here are some points to keep in mind while writing your solutions. The graders will be instructed that they should take off points, or even not grade your work at all, if you do not follow reasonably well these guidelines. Full credit can be assured only if your solution is correct and your presentation is acceptable.

1. Use standard unfolded 8½ by 11 inch paper, preferably not torn out of a spiral-bound notebook. If you do use spiral-bound paper, then please remove all of the little torn pieces along the edge after you rip it out. Recycle paper printed on only one side is okay.
2. Please staple together all of your pages. If not possible, then be sure to write your name on each page.
3. Print your name and the number of the assignment at the top of the first page.
4. Do not use red ink or red pencil!
5. Present your solutions in the order that the problems are assigned. Number them as in the assignment. The grader should not be expected to hunt through your pages for randomly ordered or unlabeled problems.
6. Each solution to a problem or answer to a question should begin at the left margin of the paper. In other words, do not work in multiple columns. Your work should flow neatly from left to right and top to bottom.
7. We do not want to see your scratch work, doodles, false starts, etc.
8. However, your presentation of the solution must show each step of your work, except those that you can do entirely in your head.
9. Some notes explaining what you are doing, when not obvious, are always appreciated and often necessary in order to make sense of your work.
10. Dimensional results must be presented along with the correct units and correct number of significant figures (if in doubt, one extra digit is fine).
11. If a graph or plot is requested, then it should be done to proper scale on graph paper (computer generated graphs, such as those plotted by Mathematica, are even better). The graph should be drawn such that it fills most of the page. Each axis should be clearly labeled with the values along the axis, the name of the variable, and the units. Points should be plotted to the full accuracy possible with the graph paper, but curves may be interpolated freehand, or with a French curve, between points. If only a sketch is requested, then graph paper is not required.
12. If you use a computer program, such as Mathematica, to check your work or help you with the algebra, you still have to show each step of the algebra in your solution. Mathematica printout will not be accepted as a replacement for your algebra.
13. Indefinite integrals can be done by referring to a standard table of integrals (e.g. Appendix E of the textbook) or by a symbolic computer program. But if you do so, then you must state clearly from where you obtained the integral.