Reading Question Assignments

A portion of the grade for this class is the Reading Question Assignments for each chapter. Each set of questions must be turned in at the beginning of the class on the day they are due, and they are graded on a Pass/Fail basis. In this handout we try to give examples of what a passing assignment looks like, what the typical problems are. We also address what to do if you receive a failing grade.

An example of a question which will receive a passing grade:

Question #1 from Chapter 9:
We claim that momentum is conserved. Yet most moving objects eventually slow down and stop. Explain.

Answer: Momentum is conserved if no outside forces are acting on an object. In our everyday experiences outside forces such as friction and air resistance are present to oppose the motion of most moving objects, which in time will slow them down and/or stop them. If an “isolated” system were to be broadened to include friction and air resistance, i.e., all of earth, then momentum would be conserved.

This is a solid answer and a single paragraph is usually enough. The English is clear and an adequate amount of effort was applied toward addressing the content of the question. In general, if there is more of an explanation, or if an example is given, it will be easier to grade and you will get more out of this assignment in the long run. Also, please put your name, the date, the assignment and your section on the paper.

Typical problems which cause a Fail

- Leaving crucial information out of the answer. If you do this the grader will assume that you do not know what is going on and you will not get credit. Do not assume that any information is basic knowledge for the grader. Be careful of answers which were too easy.
- The English and grammar is sloppy, and/or the handwriting is illegible. If the grader cannot understand what you have written you will not get credit. It is your problem to make sure they can understand. Typing is not necessary, but it’s always helpful.
- The wrong problem was answered (more common than you’d believe)
- Too short. Your answers should be at least two sentences long to have something close to an adequate answer.

What to do if you receive a failing score:

Every so often an assignment will be turned in that is unacceptable for one reason or another and does not receive a passing grade. In some cases it will be given back to you and you will be given the opportunity to revise it and resubmit it for full credit. In this case you will be given 1 week after it is returned to you to get it back in, and you need to submit both the original and the revised version stapled together. Note that if you do not turn in the assignment the first time, you will not be given the opportunity to resubmit it. If you do an inadequate job of attempting the assignment the first time you will not be given the opportunity to resubmit it either. This is why we ask for you to give us both copies.