

RULES FOR SOLVING PHYSICS PROBLEMS - Mr. Ward - 2006-2007

Rule 0:

Do problems in PENCIL; erase, DON'T SCRATCH OUT errors.

Rule 1:

Write the GIVEN info and UNKNOWN with correct SYMBOL & UNITS.

Rule 2:

Draw DIAGRAM or FBD when needed.

Rule 3:

Convert all the units to MKS UNITS.

Rule 4:

Write down the BASIC EQUATION.

Rule 5:

REARRANGE the equation to SOLVE FOR UNKNOWN on the LEFT.

Rule 6:

Write ONLY 1 (ONE) EQUAL SIGN PER LINE.

Rule 7:

ALIGN all EQUAL SIGNS and EQUATIONS VERTICALLY.

Rule 8:

SUBSTITUTE KNOWN VALUES, with UNITS, into the WORKING equation.

Rule 9:

Answer must have SYMBOL, EQUAL SIGN, NUMBER, and correct UNITS.

Rule 10:

Put FINAL ANSWER on a LINE BY ITSELF.

Rule 11:

ROUND to proper number of SIG FIGS, usually THREE.

Rule 12:

DOES THE ANSWER MAKE SENSE? If "YES", BOX IT!

Rule 13:

Numbers must begin with a DIGIT from 0 to 9, not a DECIMAL POINT.

Rule 14:

No COMMAS in numbers. No DOTS or 'X' to multiply or '/' to divide. Use ().

Rule 15:

Use SCIENTIFIC NOTATION when NUMBER in exponent is <-3 or >3 .