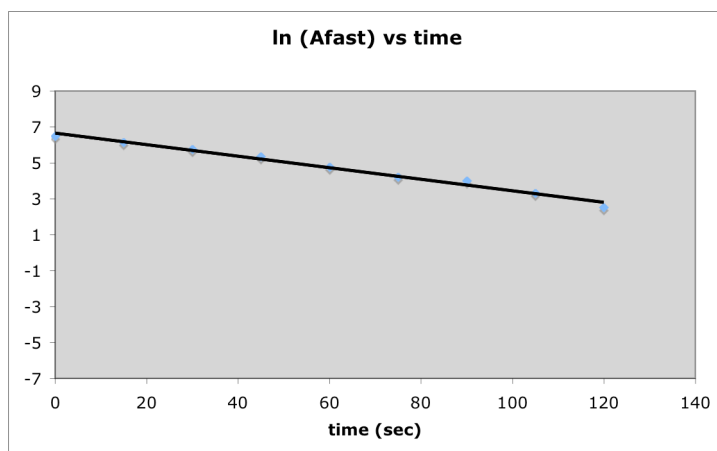


Lab Report Pet Peeves

Wendy and Maggie have put together this document to describe their pet peeves, the things that get them really annoyed when they are grading lab reports. Arwyn and Randy may have similar pet peeves. It is in your best interest to keep your lab instructors happy while they are grading. So might we suggest that you consider the following?

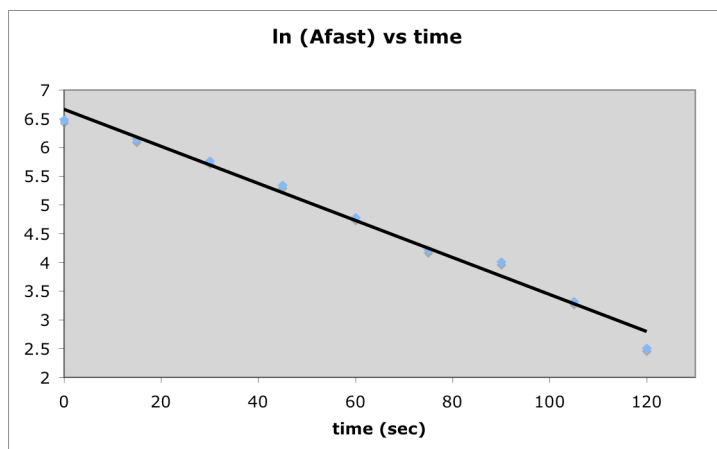
1. **Abstract:** The abstract should be SHORT – strive for three sentences: Sentence 1 describes the purpose of the experiment. Sentence 2 briefly mentions the methods used (i.e. ‘Mass spectrometry was used to determine the molecular weight of the protein’). Sentence 3 outlines the results.
2. **Graphs:** Scale graphs to fit data. Adjust the x and y axes values so that your graph occupies most of the space on the plot.

Example of Bad Plot:



Why is this a bad plot? Well aside from the fact that the y-axis is not labeled, there is no figure number and caption, and there is a title (we don't like those!), the entire bottom half of the plot is empty!

Example of a Better Plot:



Note that all of the space is used effectively. Of course, the other problems haven't been fixed...

3. Format your tables with lines, dividing columns and rows. Don't just cut and paste a table from Excel into a Word document. A little formatting thought goes a long way towards making a table easier to read. And don't leave a ridiculous number of sig figs on the numbers you obtain from Excel.
4. Please include TEXT in your Results section. You need to provide text that tells the reader of your lab report what they will find in Figure 1, Figure 2, Table 1, etc. The text also directs the reader to look at said figure at the correct time. Maggie may choose not to look at a figure unless you direct her to it in your narrative.