

Students: It is assumed you have carefully read this document. You will be held responsible for knowing all of the information contained herein. Tell your friends!

To increase your chances of success in General Chemistry this year, we've added A.Le.K.S. (Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces) as a required component (***X percent of your total grade will be calculated based on your performance in the ALEKS Gradebook***), to identify rapidly and accurately any areas of strength or weakness, and where gaps are found to help you firm up your knowledge of pre-requisite topics BEFORE CLASSES BEGIN. Then, ALEKS will be with you to help you learn the material as we move forward.

ALEKS is a powerful artificial-intelligence based teaching tool. ALEKS first assesses exactly what you know and don't know in General Chemistry and its Pre-requisites from high school, and reports the results of this assessment to you and the UCSB Department of Chemistry in a pie graph which is also your navigation into the learning mode. Once ALEKS determines what you have remembered and what you have forgotten or never learned before about the course, it will teach you only those things meeting the following criteria:

A) You don't already know how to do an item (**though these can be reviewed at any time in ALEKS by clicking the tab labeled "Review"**)

B) You are ready to learn it, based on what you know already.

ALEKS will rarely force you to "learn" material you already know, nor will it try to teach you things for which your foundational skills make you unlikely to succeed.

Do the initial assessment carefully and honestly! It is the way ALEKS finds out about YOU, politely asking what you already know and are therefore ready to learn! Other systems just make you do things whether or not you already know them, or are not ready to learn them. If you do this assessment carelessly or answer randomly, you'll waste time later because ALEKS will force you to work through material you already know and don't really need to review. On the other hand, there is no advantage to consulting outside resources -- such as a textbook, the internet, or a friend -- to improve your assessment score. Then, the assessment will just take you much longer and **when you enter the learning mode ALEKS will try to teach you things you are not really ready to learn.** The occasional progress assessments will

discover this, and you'll spend even more time in learning than is necessary. IT IS A WASTE of time to play games with the ALEKS assessments. Always read and follow the onscreen instructions very carefully.

NEVER! Click the "***I don't know***" button during any ALEKS assessment unless you really don't have any idea of how to do the problem. Otherwise, ALEKS will think you don't know a bunch of things you actually do know and ***take you way back*** and make you "learn" them.

The initial assessment should take no longer than an hour for all but the strongest students. The strongest students will get more difficult questions (the test adapts to you), and may take as long as an hour and a half. (But these students will spend much less time in the learning mode!). Your professor will be able to see how long it took to complete your assessment. If that number is 6 hours or some huge amount of time, your instructor will know you need to start over with a brand new assessment, and you will be asked to contact ALEKS customer support to reset the results and— START ALL OVER.

Once the initial assessment has determined what you remember, you will enter a pie chart learning mode where you can work to fill any gaps in your knowledge of pre-requisite material. As you work in the learning mode you will take occasional progress assessments to confirm retention of previous material. These will be very important, because if you've forgotten something important, ALEKS will catch this, and ***first ask you nicely to please review the material*** (Note: If you do not do these reviews, you will be sorry, we promise, when ALEKS makes you go back into the pie and re-learn the material). If you ignore these suggestions, ALEKS will force you to learn the topic again before you can move ahead. IMPORTANT NOTE: A grade will populate the Gradebook corresponding to percentage mastery you demonstrated by the deadline for the objective. Once a grade has been recorded, it will never change, even if you later forget some of the material.

Everyone will have a different assessment profile and need to review different topics and skills. Consequently, even if we had plenty of time, it would be impractical to review all the topics that everyone needs during class. When you use ALEKS, you complete the learning tasks you need and not those somebody else needs. ALEKS provides one-on-one instruction tailored specifically to you, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, from virtually any computer with access to the web. All your work on ALEKS will be on your own schedule outside of class. Your instructor will monitor your progress on ALEKS.

Get started with ALEKS immediately! We will use the Math Readiness, Matter and Energy, Measurement, and other basic topics intensively in General Chemistry from the very beginning. If there are gaps in your knowledge, you need to fill them immediately! Your first homework assignment includes completing the initial ALEKS assessment no later than 10:00 PM, September 27.

*The number one thing to know about ALEKS is this: ALEKS is very unfriendly to procrastinators, because ALEKS was **designed by cognitive scientists who specialize in learning**. They know that procrastinating until Sunday night and then cramming is not a good way to learn, so you can't do ALEKS that way. You must put in some time just about each day, or else you will fall so far behind on basic topics that you won't even be able to do the college level material (the ones that COUNT towards your grade) Gone are the days (if it was in fact ever possible) when a Chemistry student at UCSB could earn a good grade through cramming all night right before the test.*

To register as an ALEKS user:

- Go to the ALEKS web site at <http://www.aleks.com>.
- Click on the link marked "SIGN UP NOW" (upper left corner of the screen).
- On the next screen you will be asked to provide the following course

CHEM 1A -RKQ6K-D99VM

- The next screen will ask for information we need to give you credit for your work on ALEKS. Please provide all the information requested. Your student ID # is your PERM number. YOU MUST ENTER YOUR THE UCSB PERM NUMBER AND NOTHING ELSE TO RECEIVE CREDIT FOR YOUR WORK! Go back and re-read the last sentence! Click Continue and you should be set to go.

VERY IMPORTANT a special note concerning the ALEKS plug-in and getting technical support:

1) *No one in the department of chemistry at UCSB* can provide you with competent technical support for ALEKS. They don't have the knowledge of the system, your OS, browser, JAVA version, etc... needed. So don't write to your teacher with ALEKS questions. Fortunately, ALEKS provides this at <http://support.aleks.com>

2) Note Concerning installing ALEKS Plug-in:

Your browser uses the ALEKS plug-in when you are logged on to ALEKS. It is inactive at other times, and does not do anything except provide functionality for ALEKS. Installation of the ALEKS plug-in is automatic. When you access ALEKS, it will automatically check to see if the current plug-in is installed on your computer. If it isn't, the plug-in will be downloaded. You will then be asked for your permission to install the plug-in on your system. This is a safe operation for your computer.

If you need to access ALEKS in the library, a computer lab, or another place where you don't have authorization to install software, use the ALEKS "streaming" plug-in. To use the "streaming" plug-in, follow these steps:

1. Go to <http://www.aleks.com/plugin> and simply log in to or register with ALEKS as you normally would.

2. Upon first login, ALEKS will automatically retrieve the ALEKS plug-in from the server and store it in the browser's "cache" memory. You don't need to grant any special user rights or privileges on a computer for this installation to occur.

3. The plug-in will be available in the browser's cache until an updated version is available on the ALEKS server or until the browser's cache is cleared.

4. Important: When you restart the browser and return to ALEKS, you must go to <http://www.aleks.com/plugin>. If you do not add "/plugin" to the end of the URL, ALEKS will attempt to install the standard ALEKS plug-in on the computer instead of using the streaming version of the plug-in.