Below is a typical journal entry for activities in one lab period. Remember that the entry should mainly be a reflection on what you did not a narrative of what you did. However, you can provide some discussion of what you did as an introduction to your comments. You can relate the activity to prior educational experiences or personal experiences. You can discuss what you might do in a classroom based on the activity or how you could modify to work for your grade level. You can indicate concepts that are unclear or questions you may have after completing an activity. Do not write how you “feel” about the class, your classmates, the instructor or your academic performance. You are encouraged to share these comments with the instructor directly. It should be at least one page handwritten in standard sized script or at least ½ a page typewritten, single-spaced.

You are not expected to write journal entries for days when there are no activities (performance tasks/quizzes) unless there is discussion of a previous activity.

Sample Journal Entry for Rocks and Minerals Activity

January 29, 2008

The activity we did today was on rocks and minerals. We first had to make our own categories to try and determine what a rock is and what is a mineral. I have spent a lot of time putting things in categories but have never had to make my own categories. It made a lot of sense once I saw the minerals have a single composition. I think kids will be able to do this to see the distinction. I think they will also enjoy the different textures and colors of the samples. I expect that some of them will want to use size or color or texture to sort the samples as our group did the first time.

Determining the characteristics of some minerals was interesting. It is obvious that using just one trait is not sufficient to identify a mineral. This kind of activity can be used to develop observational and problem-solving skills if you use unknowns with students after they have tested a number of minerals. I have to admit that I could do without the odor from the sulfide containing minerals! Looking at the amethyst reminded me of the time when I was in elementary school and one the way home stopped near a site where gravel was being laid for a new road. I found several pieces of amethyst and was so excited because it was so crystalline and purple. It began my mineral collection and I still have it today.

It was the next class period before we looked at the rock types. The crystals in the igneous rocks were fairly obvious for most of the samples. One or two samples reminded me of granite pieces that I have picked up in the Rocky Mountains and in New Hampshire. The types and colors of the crystals are different but the crystals are large and distinct like some of the minerals we looked at. I could see that the metamorphic rocks looked like they had been distorted in some fashion (stretched, folded). The sedimentary rocks looked very different and more like conglomerations of materials or layers of materials. It is the least attractive class but interesting because some of the rocks seem to contain fossils. I think I could classify a rock if it had some of the obvious characteristics of the type. I can see that it is important for all students to see the different types of rocks and not just memorize definitions of them. It makes the descriptions more meaningful.
INTERNET SITES

**Scientific Reference Sites:** these sites should be sources of detailed information on the college level or higher. They do not have to be scientific research papers but should provide discussion of concepts that could be used in writing an in-depth paper. They can be sites for government scientific agencies or universities or pages for a college course (if the information is detailed enough, not just an outline). They cannot be sites that are designed for the general public or commercial sites. Ads on a page are a sign that the page is not a good selection.

**Curriculum Site:** these sites can be designed for the general public (such as a museum site) or for kids. It can also be a site for teachers with curricular activities.

Here are some examples of acceptable sites. You **CANNOT** use these in your portfolio.

Types of Rocks:

- **Scientific Reference:** Igneous Rock Page (other rock types linked to this site)  
  [http://csmres.jmu.edu/geollab/Fichter/IgnRx/IgHome.html](http://csmres.jmu.edu/geollab/Fichter/IgnRx/IgHome.html)

- **Curriculum:** Discover How Rocks are Formed  
  [http://www.fi.edu/fellows/payton/rocks/create/index.html](http://www.fi.edu/fellows/payton/rocks/create/index.html)

Be sure that the URL (Internet address) is on the page that you submit AND at the top of the critique for the site.