

**Things to do with your Excel Plots  
to keep Prof. Chapman happy  
(some of these require you to override dumb defaults)**

1. Kill the gray background.
2. Include a legend *only* when you have multiple sets of data.
3. Get rid of unnecessary zeroes on the axis labels (2, not 2.00).
4. Make the colors visible (no yellow points or curves!)
5. Show experimental data with unconnected points (no lines or curves) and keep the symbols simple.
6. When plotting a curve from an equation (e.g. the least squares line), omit points: this is not experimental data.
7. Spread the data out, with both a good scale and reduced margins.  
If all your points fall within an inch along the y-axis, you will never be able to see evidence of curvature.
8. Fit to a line only *after* your eye has told you that it looks linear.
9. Make the Trendline fine rather than thick and black.
10. Show plenty of digits in the Trendline parameters.
11. Print both the data table and the graph.
12. Use a descriptive title: *never* “Problem 3” or “ln k vs. 1/T”.

