Graphical Methods-Summary

A graph is one of the most effective representations of the relationship between two variables. The independent variable (one controlled by the experimenter) is usually placed on the x-axis. The dependent variable (one that responds to changes in the independent variable) is usually placed on the y-axis. It is important for you to be able interpret a graphical relationship and express it in a written statement and by means of an algebraic expression.

Graph shape	Written relationship	Modification required to linearize graph	Algebraic representation
y x	As x increases, y remains the same. There is no relationship between the variables. No Relationship Logger Pro – Linear Excel – Linear	None	y = b, or y is constant
y x	As x increases, y increases proportionally. Y is directly proportional to x. Directly proportional Logger Pro – Linear Excel – Linear	None	<i>y</i> = <i>mx</i> + <i>b</i>
y x	As x increases, y decreases. Y is inversely proportional to x. Inversely proportional Logger Pro – N th Inverse; N=1 Excel – Cannot be adequately represented	Graph y vs $rac{1}{x}$, or y vs x 1	$y = m\left(\frac{1}{x}\right) + b$
y x	Y is proportional to the square of x. x² Relationship Logger Pro – Quadratic Excel – Polynomial of 2 nd order	Graph y vs x ²	$y = mx^2 + b$
y x	The square of y is proportional to x. y² Relationship Logger Pro – Power Excel – Power	Graph y ² vs x	$y^2 = mx + b$

When you state the relationship, tell how y depends on x (e.g., as x increases, y \dots)