

Lab Partners from

A E L L

Lab groups: the great equalizer. The truest case of a man being judged by the company he keeps is in the land of group grades. To the floundering student, a lab partner represents the light at the end of the tunnel- hope for a better GPA. To the above-average student, a lab group may seem like nothing but a liability. *PEM* studied hundreds of lab group horror stories and created five composite characters to help you identify potentially risky partners. You may ask, "But what should I do once I can categorize a lab partner as hazardous to my grade?" Come on, you're an engineer... you figure it out.

The Mirage

INDICATIONS: This guy is involved in so many organizations and activities that finding time to meet and collaborate is like trying to nail Jell-O to a tree. In fact, you're lucky if he can find time in his packed social schedule to make it to lab. He's like the Loch Ness Monster in khakis. Luckily his extensive networking does have an upside: with all his connections, he's bound to have access to a file for any class you're taking. In the interest of saving time, he'll always have ample contributions to the lab report, even if they aren't exactly the fruit of his own labors.

POSSIBLE FUTURE: with availability this scarce, he's destined to work for the DMV.

QUOTE: (not available for comment)

The Pyromaniac

INDICATIONS: You knew you were in trouble when he pulled an engraved flint striker out of his backpack on the first day of lab. "It was a graduation present," he said with hushed reverence. It was then you noticed the lack of hair on his knuckles and arms, and the acrid smell of burnt hair that seemed to follow him like a Designer Imposters body spray. This man's love for fire started young; he melted his first chemistry set while still in kindergarten. He went through brand name fume hoods like most kids went through lunch boxes- Dukes of Hazzard in early grade school, then Transformers, G.I. Joe. "Knowing is half the battle," he once said, "but the more important half is firepower." If a little heat is good, more must be better.

POSSIBLE FUTURE: an explosive career in Hollywood pyrotechnics

QUOTE: "Ooo, sorry about your eyebrows there... they'll start to grow back in two to three weeks, though."



The Kleptomaniac

INDICATIONS: He's got a huge backpack (30 gallons maximum capacity) and lots of pockets. Surrounding lab groups find their equipment mysteriously vanishing... beakers and test tubes at first, then chemical reagents, and hey, whatever happened to the mass spectrometer? It's not necessarily bad to have him as an ally because you'll always have what you need, but before long you'll earn the hatred of your classmates and may find yourself ostracized.

POSSIBLE FUTURE: a major player in the shady underworld of the Erlenmeyer black market

QUOTE: "Psssst! You need any 10 mL test tubes?"

Safety Man

INDICATIONS: He has permanent 'goggle face' and leaves fingerprints everywhere from the fine white latex glove powder. He can recite the warning labels for most hazardous substances in the lab *and* give graphic accounts of their biological effects, sometimes with visual aids. In addition to his job as the summer roadie for the band The Bunsen Burners, he produced their hit "Don't Get Burned" (featured in the Chem 115 and 116 safety video) and lobbied tirelessly to get the video into heavy rotation on MTV.

POSSIBLE FUTURE: government health inspector

QUOTE: "Do as you oughter, add acid to water."

The Brain Donor

INDICATIONS: You know when you're in class and really sleepy, and you suddenly open your eyes, only you didn't know they were closed? The Brain Donor feels like that all the time. He's terminally clueless, and some people dub his very survival in college "the eighth wonder of the world."

POSSIBLE FUTURE: spends his time pondering the rumor that the light in the fridge turns off when you close the door

QUOTE: "Whoa... where am I?"