Using a Burette

Now we're going to look at how to use a burette. A burette consists of a tip, a stopcock, and a column. If you break one, please do not throw them away; we can usually salvage them for parts, or we can repair them and use them again. With that, how you put one of these together.

First, you'll need a ring stand, a clamp, and of course a burette. Add the clamp to the ring stand, mount the burette to the clamp, and we're ready to go.

To fill a burette, make sure the stopcock is closed. Grab a waste beaker, place it underneath, and use a funnel. At this point, start adding your liquid. Don't try to get to zero, because chances are, you're probably not going to be able to make it. Just try to get close. Before you start dispensing your liquid, open the stopcock and get rid of all the bubbles in the tip.

At this point, grab an index card, or anything with a white background. You want to read the burette from the bottom of the meniscus; you can estimate from in between the graduations on the column itself. The meniscus is in between 3.2 and 3.3, so I'm going to estimate that to be 3.26. Record the volume. I'll need 5 mL. You can get very accurate measurements using a burette - as you get closer, you can make it a bit slower. We're at 8.26. So record that volume. So if you subtract your final volume your initial volume, you get the change in volume, and that's the volume you dispensed. So you can get highly accurate volumes that way.

Now you have your solution, which you can use in whatever reaction you need to. At this point, you need to clean the burette. Pour out the remaining solution into a waste beaker and close the stopcock. Add some soap, and add a little bit of water. Get a burette brush and clean the interior of the burette. Rinse the burette, and its ready to go.