



Student Guide

Welcome to Sophia Science Labs

We're glad you've chosen Sophia to take the next step in planning your educational journey and significantly reducing the cost of your college tuition.

This online lab course is designed to be self-paced. Sophia has partnered with Labster, a leader in interactive science, to provide you with quality virtual lab experiences that model the real world. It's recommended that you complete this course simultaneously with the accompanying lecture course for the best experience. You may start when it's convenient for you and learn on your own schedule. There are no classes to attend or regular assignments to complete. Access to the Labster simulations is included with your tuition for this course, and no additional fees apply.

Before you start, note these important guidelines:

- Confirm that you're not active in other Sophia courses right now. This will allow you to take the accompanying lecture course alongside this lab course, staying within Sophia's two-course limit.
- Verify that you have a reliable internet connection and a laptop or desktop that meets the minimum specifications.

Earning college credit using Sophia's science lab courses is simple:

- Work through lab Activities where you'll research scientific phenomena and carry out lab procedures using virtual simulations.
- Successfully complete lab quiz questions, demonstrating your mastery of the concepts in the lab.
- Successfully complete course Touchstones, conveying your comprehension of the lab objectives, predictions, methods, and outcomes.
- Submit your final score, and we'll provide you with instructions on requesting your official transcript.

HOW LABS WORK

To earn a Sophia transcript for this course, you must:

- Read each introductory Lesson in Unit 1 and select the "Mark as Complete" button at the bottom of the Lesson.
- Complete each Activity in the course by performing the Labster simulation and answering the quiz questions.
- Complete each Touchstone with a score of at least 50%.
- Achieve a total average score of 70% or better across all Activities and Touchstones.

CONTACT SOPHIA

If you have questions about any of the guidelines in this student guide or any other elements of your Sophia experience, you can reach a Sophia Learning Coach by:

- Email: learningcoach@sophia.org
 - or Phone: 1-800-341-0327
 - or Live Chat during our office hours
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CONTACT LABSTER

If you have questions specifically about Labster's simulations and how they work, visit the [Labster Help Center](#) for technical information and support. Look for Labster's "Live Chat" features to speak with a Labster representative.

WHAT IS A LESSON?

Unit 1 of each science lab course contains introductory Lessons to prepare you for the upcoming labs. You'll learn more about navigating the lab simulations, writing lab reports, and applying the scientific method. To advance to Unit 2 and beyond, you must read through the Lessons and select the "Mark as Complete" button at the bottom of each one. Lessons are not graded and therefore they do not contribute directly to your final score.

WHAT IS AN ACTIVITY?

In each Sophia Activity, you will participate in simulated scenarios from Labster that closely replicate situations in the real world. The course provides background information and lab manuals to assist you with the Activities, helping you understand the key concepts behind each problem or scenario.

Each Activity has a series of questions to answer, or practical problems to solve. You'll have multiple attempts to answer the questions as you receive continuous feedback on your performance (points are deducted for each missed attempt according to Labster's [Score Calculation](#) guidelines). Sophia and Labster always store your best score from a completed Activity. You may leave and return to Activities whenever you want to continue your learning and improve your score. Retakes are unlimited. You must try all of the Activity questions at least once to complete the lab simulation and earn a score on the Activity. Any Activities appearing before a Touchstone must be completed and display an Activity score before that Touchstone can be submitted for grading.

Understanding Your Sophia Activity Score

Your Labster quiz score from a completed simulation will look different from your Sophia Activity score. This is because Sophia has taken your quiz score and normalized it as a percentage. Both scores, Labster and Sophia, represent the same performance. Here's how it works:

- Each Sophia Activity is worth a maximum of 100 points. Your score for the Activity is determined by how well you perform on the related Labster simulation.
- Each Labster formative question is worth a maximum of 10 points.
- Consider the Labster simulation called Properties of Water. It has 5 questions worth a maximum of 50 points ($5 \times 10 = 50$).
- Suppose that you earn 40 points out of the 50 maximum. That's 80% ($40 / 50 = 0.80$).

- Your Sophia Activity will show that you earned 80 points out of the 100 maximum ($0.80 \times 100 = 80$).
- Notice how your fundamental score hasn't changed because it's based on a percentage:
 $40 / 50 = 80 / 100$. In other words, 40 is to 50 as 80 is to 100.

Here are several other scenarios, but there are many more.

No. of Labster questions	Max Labster pts	Labster pts earned (example only)	Percentage	Max Sophia pts	Your Sophia Activity Score
9	90	70	$70 / 90 = 78\%$	100	78
16	160	138	$138 / 160 = 86\%$	100	86
22	220	154	$154 / 220 = 70\%$	100	70

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT LABSTER?

To get the most out of Sophia's science lab courses, we recommend that you understand Labster's system requirements and refer to the helpful tips shown below. You should also keep Labster's contact information handy for technical assistance with the virtual labs if you need it.

Minimum System Requirements

The simulations in this course are accessible online and require memory on your computer. You will need a reliable internet connection and a laptop or desktop that meets minimum specifications. Please visit [Check Your Device](#) for a list of the minimum computer specifications. *Important:* While a Labster app is available on the App Store, the app is not compatible for use with this course.

Tips for Accessing Labster

Visit the [Labster Help Center](#) to read about topics such as getting started, troubleshooting, working in accessibility mode, and understanding your score. The following sections in the help center will be most useful to you:

- Access to Labster
- Simulation Issues & Tips
- Check Your Device (mentioned earlier)
- Contact Our Support Team

Contact Labster Support

For live assistance with the virtual lab simulations, contact [Labster Support](#) to chat online with a Labster representative.

WHAT IS A TOUCHSTONE?

A Touchstone is a project-based assessment and deliverable that helps you apply course concepts to solve an authentic problem or to demonstrate comprehension of the course content. Each Touchstone is checked for originality and then submitted for manual grading, and all submissions must be unique to the course—you may not submit work you have written for previous courses. You can work on a Touchstone whenever you want; however, you must complete all previous Activities in that Unit before you can submit the Touchstone for grading.

Please be aware that it could take up to seven (7) business days to get a Touchstone grade back. You must

get at least half of the available points to pass a Touchstone—but keep in mind that you need to average 70% across all Activities and Touchstones to pass the course. If you do not pass a Touchstone, you will be given one opportunity to resubmit it.

BEST PRACTICES FOR THE SUCCESSFUL STUDENT

Activities

- Set aside enough time to complete each lab Activity.
 - Read through the Lab Manual before completing Labster’s virtual simulation so you know what to look for as you complete the lab.
 - View the related tutorials and background information included with each Activity. You’ll find information about scientific principles and theories that can help you with the lab.
 - If an Activity has a lab report requirement, download and save the template. Take notes and answer the questions in the lab report template as you complete the lab.
 - If you’re struggling, reach out to a Sophia Learning Coach for help with the course, or contact the Labster Help Center for technical help with the lab simulations. They will review your message and respond with guidance.
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Touchstones

- Review the course Touchstones when you begin a unit so you understand the requirements.
 - Give yourself enough time to complete your Touchstone, possibly a few days, as you work through a unit. Avoid rushing through a Touchstone assignment in one sitting.
 - Familiarize yourself with the scoring rubric to understand how the Touchstone will be graded.
 - If you are unclear about any section of the Touchstone, contact a Sophia Learning Coach for assistance.
 - Before you submit a Touchstone, proofread it and make appropriate edits.
 - Touchstone submissions are checked for originality and manually graded. If a Touchstone is determined to contain plagiarized content or large amounts of material that you have previously submitted to another course, it will be rejected and you will be given a single opportunity to submit a new, original version.
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STUDENT HONOR CODE

To take a Sophia course, students must abide by the following Honor Code:

- You are permitted to register only one account. Maintaining multiple accounts is considered a violation of this Honor Code.
- The answers to all assessments will be your work, and your work alone.
- You will not make solutions to assessment questions available to anyone else.
- You will not engage in any other activities that could dishonestly improve your results or improve/hinder the results of others.

Failure to comply with the Student Honor Code will result in removal from the course, removal of courses from

your transcript, and/or disqualification to enroll in future courses.

RETAKE POLICY

We allow unlimited retakes per Activity and one (1) retake per Touchstone. You will be prompted to contact the Sophia Learning Coach team if you fail an assessment in the course.

30 DAY MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

We want you to be completely satisfied with your learning experience. We offer a 30-day money back guarantee prior to completion. Please contact a Learning Coach at learningcoach@sophia.org to drop your course and receive a full refund within 30 days of your membership start date.

OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE SOPHIA PATHWAYS LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

PROGRESS AND SCORE INDICATORS

Track your progress! Your Course Dashboard page provides real time feedback on your progress to help you stay on track. The Progress Bar gives you a recommended schedule to ensure a successful completion. The Score Indicator plots your current score against the 70% passing mark. The “View Report” page provides more details on your activity and progress throughout the course.

THIRD-PARTY TUTORING FROM PEARSON SMARTHINKING

The following courses include up to ten (10) hours of tutoring services from the team at Pearson SmarThinking:

- Financial Accounting
- Calculus I
- College Algebra
- English Composition I
- English Composition II
- Foundations of English Composition
- Human Biology
- Human Biology Lab
- Introduction to Chemistry
- Introduction to Chemistry Lab
- Introduction to College Mathematics
- Introduction to Java Programming
- Introduction to Python Programming
- Introduction to Statistics
- Spanish I
- Spanish II
- Workplace Writing I

- Workplace Writing II

Subject matter tutors for these courses are available on a pre-scheduled or on-demand basis via the “Access a Tutor” link on your Course Dashboard. Time is deducted from your ten hour allotment as follows:

Service Used	Time Charge
Drop-In Tutoring (“on-demand”)	Metered to the minute plus 7 minutes per session for processing and administration
Pre-scheduled Session with Tutor	30 minute minimum increments plus 7 minutes per session for processing and administration
Offline Question Submission	27 minutes

SCIENCE LABS

The following science topics include both a lecture course and a lab course. When taken together, the two courses offer a robust investigation and journey into the natural sciences.

- Human Biology (3 semester credits)
- Human Biology Lab (1 semester credit)
- Introduction to Chemistry (3 semester credits)
- Introduction to Chemistry Lab (1 semester credit)

It's recommended that you complete each pair of courses simultaneously for the best experience, but please plan ahead. While you can take as many Sophia courses as you'd like each month with your membership, you are only allowed to be active in two courses at a time. Taking a lecture course along with a lab course will occupy your two-course limit.

REQUESTING YOUR TRANSCRIPT

Once you have successfully completed a course, you may request an official transcript.

Depending on your institution, we provide transcripts through three separate options:

- Automated transcription to most partner institutions
- Official Sophia transcripts ordered through Parchment— required by some institutions (fee charged)
- Official American Council on Education (ACE) transcripts, ordered through Credly