



For Immediate Release

A TIMELY CHOICE FOR AT-HOME LEARNING & HOLIDAY GIFTING

New MindLabs Combines Virtual and Physical Worlds with AR to Teach STEM to Tweens – Affordably

West Lafayette, IN, October 12 – [MindLabs: Energy and Circuits](#) is a magical STEM learning tool for children ages 8 and up. A fun and exciting new way to teach children circuitry, an essential element of STEM, MindLabs uniquely pairs digital and physical worlds, by combining an app, tabletop playing cards and the excitement of augmented reality. With MindLabs, kids not only can create circuits in 3D, but can also share the playing experience with friends – either in person or remotely.

Families download the free MindLabs: Energy and Circuits app from the [App Store*](#) or [Google Play*](#), then purchase playing cards from the [MindLabs website](#).

The cards picture an assortment of electrical components, including different types of batteries and lights, plus fans, buzzers, switches and more. Within the app, two friendly robots guide players through a carefully sequenced series of over 20 interactive exercises that challenge kids to learn the secrets of circuitry. Lessons include basic energy sources, open and closed circuits, short circuits, as well as engineering design and troubleshooting.

Children then arrange the cards in the proper order to produce working circuits. Next, they draw the connecting wires on a mobile device, and “see” the electricity moving through the wires in 3D through augmented reality. Lightbulbs glow, buzzers buzz, fans spin, and much more! A lightbulb really does go off (and on) as players realize how cool, and easy, it is to learn STEM.

Because there are no physical components required besides the cards, there are no pieces to break down or blow out as in some other STEM experiences, frustrating children and sometimes leading to tears. MindLabs allows kids to experiment, learn something new each time and play MindLabs again and again.

Children can also engage in open-ended play by building their own unique circuits—as many as their imaginations can conjure. Little or no parental supervision is required.

MindLabs is designed for one to four players, in the same or different locations. Children take turns adding (or deleting) component cards and wires to create the desired circuit. All the players see the results of their combined efforts at the same time through their device. It's the perfect tool to foster collaboration in STEM, and ideal, right now, for children who are social distancing from friends or engaging remotely with classmates. MindLabs is also currently used in school STEM courses for grades 3 through 5.

MindLabs may be played on iOS devices, including iPhone SE 2016, iPad Mini Gen 5, or iPad 2017, which meet iOS 11.0 minimum operating requirements, as well as on Android phones and tablets.

In the recent past, STEM products too often have been priced beyond the reach of most families. "Our goal is to increase access to high-quality STEM learning experiences, through immersive, educational games that are affordably priced," said Amanda Thompson, CEO of Explore Interactive, creators of MindLabs.

"The MindLabs game highlights how augmented reality promotes learning through discovery," added Jaime Donally of ARVRinEDU, a recognized expert in the use of augmented reality in schools. "Kids find connections to STEM content through collaborative play and interactions, putting our children in the driver's seat of their own learning."

The MindLabs app is free and a package of 40 cards (two sets of 20, for up to four players) is only \$24.99.

Educators have long maintained that hands-on learning – using physical playthings – is preferable to relying on screens alone. MindLabs not only enables that, but uses AR to further enhance the experience.

MindLabs has been funded by the National Science Foundation and the National Institute of Health. This October and November, Explore Interactive will conduct a series of webinars for Boston's Museum of Science on how AR in the classroom makes STEM possible.

For more information visit MindLabs at www.exploremindlabs.com, and follow them on [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

*App Store and Google Play links open on phones and iPads only.

About Explore Interactive

Explore Interactive is an educational technology company dedicated to democratizing STEM education with accessible and interactive learning through augmented reality. Supported by SBIR grants from the National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health, the first product MindLabs Energy and Circuits pairs an innovative augmented reality app with a physical card set available at www.exploremindlabs.com. This dynamic digital and physical combination gives parents and educators of elementary students hands-on STEM learning that is easy to learn and use, even for beginners! The guided engineering challenges teach circuit concepts while the open-ended design space provides a venue for collaborative projects even for remote learners. This approach empowers educators with an intuitive platform and engaging content developed in collaboration with researchers at the INSPIRE center of Purdue University.