

COMPARISON CHART

10 Homeschool Science Programs

Rated by how much hands-on work actually happens · check the publisher's site for current prices

PROGRAM	GRADES	HANDS-ON LEVEL	WHO LEADS IT	WORLDVIEW
REAL Science Odyssey Pandia Press	K-6	Heavy	You teach	Secular
Real Science-4-Kids Gravitas Publications	K-8	Heavy	You teach	Secular
Elemental Science Classic Series	K-8	Mod.-Heavy	You teach	Neutral
Nancy Larson Science	K-5	Heavy	Kit + script	Secular
Mystery Science Discovery	K-5	Moderate	Video leads	Secular
Apologia Exploring Creation	K-12	Moderate	You / child reads	Christian
Berean Builders	K-12	Heavy	You teach	Christian, young-earth
BookShark Science	Ages 5-17	Light	Child reads	Not faith-specific
Novare Science	Grades 6-12	Mod.-Heavy	Student-led (HS)	Christian-friendly
Supercharged Science e-Science	K-12	Heavy	Video leads	Secular

How much hands-on, really?

Light = reading first, occasional activity. **Moderate** = hands-on most weeks. **Heavy** = a real experiment in nearly every lesson.

Match this to your week, not your ambitions. A Light program that gets opened beats a Heavy one that does not.

Who leads the lesson?

You teach from a guide. **Video leads** and you run the activity together. **Kit + script** tells you exactly what to say. **Child reads** and works with less daily teaching from you.

Read this chart with one child in mind.

There is no best program on this page. There is the one whose mess level and worldview actually match your family. Turn the page and work that out before you spend anything.

Which Science Program Fits?

Answer for one child · the notes under each question point you at a type, not a brand

Child: _____

Grade: _____

Date: _____

1. How does this child like to learn something new?

- ☐ Build it or do it ☐ Read about it ☐ Watch it explained first

Build → a Heavy program. Read → a Light, literature-based one. Watch → a video-led program.

2. How much mess and prep can this year actually hold?

- ☐ Very little ☐ Some, if I plan ahead ☐ Bring it on

Very little → Light. Bring it on → Heavy, or a shipped kit to skip the shopping.

3. Kit shipped to you, or gather your own from home?

- ☐ Ship me a kit ☐ I will gather household items

A shipped kit costs more but removes the weekly shopping trip entirely.

4. Secular, neutral, or faith-based content?

- ☐ Secular ☐ Religiously neutral ☐ Christian

This alone removes about two-thirds of the market before you compare anything else.

5. How much should I be the one teaching it?

- ☐ I want to teach it myself ☐ I want it delivered for me ☐ Child should work independently

Delivered → video-led. Independent → an upper-level, student-written program.

6. Is this a high schooler who needs lab hours documented?

- ☐ Yes, for the transcript ☐ Not yet

If yes, pick Moderate or Heavy, or plan to add extra labs — see page 3.

My shortlist of three

Never shortlist more than three. You will not compare four honestly.

Budget and reuse

What I can spend on science this year

Consumables I must rebuy per child

Check, Then Try for 30 Days

Six checks, the real high school lab-hour rule, and a log for the first month

The lab-hour rule (grades 9–12)

HSLDA's own transcript guidance: log a minimum of **150 hours** for a regular 1.0 core credit, but a minimum of **180 hours for a lab science credit** — the extra 30+ hours are the actual lab work. A Light program rarely gets you there on its own; log hours as you go rather than guessing in May.

MONTH	LECTURE / READING HOURS	LAB HOURS
Month 1		
Month 2		
Month 3		

Six checks before you pay

- ☐ Picked a Hands-On Level before a brand name
- ☐ Read one real unit's supply list, not just the marketing page
- ☐ Confirmed secular, neutral, or faith-based matches your family
- ☐ Checked whether a lab notebook or report is built in (grades 9–12)
- ☐ Worked one full lesson, experiment included, with the child
- ☐ Added up the full year, including any kit

If it is not working

- ☐ Move science to the same two mornings, first thing
- ☐ Switch to a kit-shipped program to remove the shopping trip
- ☐ Drop from Heavy to Moderate before dropping the program entirely
- ☐ Only then change curriculum, and finish the unit if you can

Most "wrong curriculum" is a mismatch in mess level or prep time, not content.

Our decision after 30 days

- ☐ Keep it ☐ Keep it, lighter pace ☐ Switch

What we would tell a friend

One program at a time.

Running two science curricula at once doubles the mess and hides which one is actually teaching your child.