

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

Physics 162 – Introductory Astronomy

Spring 2026

Problem Set #2

Problem Set Due: Thurs., Jan. 29, 2026

Read OpenStax: Chapter 2

**Show explicitly all your work for full credit.**

1. Expert TA: 2.1.2 multiple choice
  2. Expert TA: 2.1.33 multiple choice
  3. Expert TA: 2.1.50 v1 multiple choice
  4. Expert TA: 2.2.1 show calculation
  5. Expert TA: 2.2.2 show calculation
  6. Expert TA: 2.3.2 draw figure
  7. Expert TA: ch\_2.2.review explain
  8. Expert TA: ch\_2.23.thought explain
  9. Expert TA: 2.6.1 true/false
  10. Expert TA: 2.6.29 true/false
  11. Expert TA: 2.7.2 Stellarium Web—multiple choice “b-g”
12. OpenStax: Go to **Page 28** in **Chapter 1** and do the “Link to Learning” exercise on constructing an atom.

All life on earth are carbon-based life forms. We therefore must consume carbon in order to grow and thrive on Earth.

- (a) Construct a carbon atom using the Phet interactive simulation “Build an Atom”. Use the *snipping tool* in Windows or the Mac to take a picture—save it and copy it to your Word document homework writeup.

For Windows: click on the “Start” button and type “Snipping Tool”

For the Mac: press the Shift+Command+5 keys at the same time

- (b) For a stable, neutral atom, how many protons, neutrons, and electrons can the carbon have?
- (c) When does the carbon atom become an ion?
- (d) When does the carbon atom become unstable?