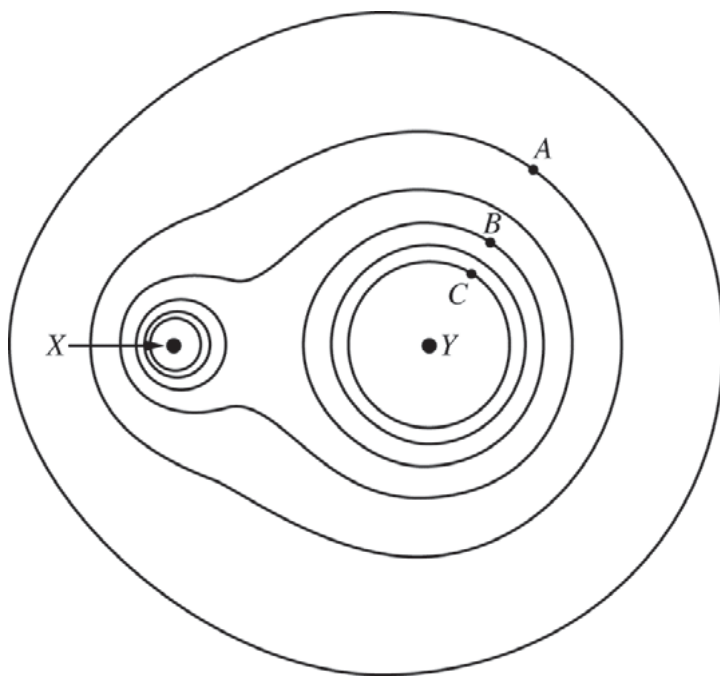




3. (12 points, suggested time 25 minutes)

The dots in the figure above represent two identical spheres, X and Y , that are fixed in place with their centers in the plane of the page. Both spheres are charged, and the charge on sphere Y is positive. The lines are isolines of electric potential, also in the plane of the page, with a potential difference of 10 V between each set of adjacent lines. The absolute value of the electric potential of the outermost line is 50 V.

(a) Indicate the values of the potentials, including the signs, at the labeled points A and B .

Potential at point A _____ Potential at point B _____

(b)

- How do the magnitudes and the signs of the charges of the spheres compare? Explain your answer in terms of the isolines of electric potential shown.
- The spheres at points X and Y have masses in the same ratio as the magnitudes of their charges. The isolines of gravitational potential for the spheres have shapes similar to those of the isolines shown. Explain why the two sets of isolines have similar shapes.

Let the potentials at the three labeled points be V_A , V_B , and V_C . A proton with charge $+q$ and mass m is released from rest at point B .

(c) Based on your answer to part (b)(ii), briefly describe one similarity and one difference between the electric and gravitational forces exerted on the proton by the system of the two spheres. The similarity and difference you describe must not be ones that generally apply to all forces.

(d) At some time after being released from rest at point B , the proton has moved through a potential difference of magnitude 20 V.

- Determine the change in electric potential energy of the proton-spheres system when the proton has moved through the 20 V potential difference. Express your answer symbolically in terms of q , V_A , V_B , V_C , and physical constants, as appropriate.
- As it moved through the 20 V potential difference, the proton was displaced a distance d by the electric force. Determine a symbolic expression for the total work done on the proton by the electric field in terms of the average magnitude E_{avg} of the electric field over that distance.
- Two students are discussing how and why the kinetic energy of the proton would change after it is released.
 - Student 1 says that if the system is defined as the proton and the spheres, the increase in the proton's kinetic energy is due to a change in the system's potential energy as the proton moves through the 20 V potential difference.
 - Student 2 says that if the system is defined as only the proton, the kinetic energy of the proton increases because positive work is done on the proton by the electric field as the proton moves through the 20 V potential difference.

Discuss each student's claims, explaining why each is correct or incorrect.