

# What are the Different Types of Online Education?

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Nowadays it seems that anything and everything is available online. We can do our shopping from home, book tickets, check train timetables or find out almost anything we want. So, what about education? Is that also available online? Well, the answer is a resounding 'yes'.

There are two types of educational websites, both offering different services – online tuition and online education. Though they sound similar, these are not quite the same thing. So let's take a look at each in turn.

## What is Online Tuition?

Online tuition sites provide children with actual tutors who they speak to over the internet. This can be very useful for those schooled at home, those who need extra help with their studies or those who are not being challenged enough at school. Online tuition works by connecting students with tutors via software like Skype or MSN Messenger.

## Which Online Tuition Sites are the Most Popular?

To give you an idea of what is available, and how much it costs, here are some of the most popular online tuition websites:

**Briteschool** offers primary (from aged 9) and secondary education for home-schooled and expatriate students. They also teach A-level but in only one subject – maths. After an enrolment fee of between £48 (full-time) and £26, they charge £2,325-£2,495 per year for secondary education and £1,200 per year for primary. The online lessons are given to groups of students, rather than individuals but they do offer one-on-one tuition which costs £30 per hour.

**MyTutor** has more than 4,000 teachers who give online lessons to students of 11+ all the way up to university. They cover most National Curriculum subjects and a few more specialist ones at higher levels. You might expect the more advanced level of MyTutor to bring with it a slightly higher cost, but that isn't the case. On average, a teacher from MyTutor will cost you around £22 per hour.

**Simply Learning Tuition** provides tutors from pre-school all the way up to university. It covers almost all National Curriculum subjects and a few more at college and university level. It is quite expensive though. After an initial registration fee of £100, individual lessons then cost between £65 and £100 per hour.

**Tutorhub** provides access to over 700 tutors who cover all National Curriculum subjects and all Key Stages. They also provide tuition in more specialist subjects up to university level. Prices can vary between tutors but they average at around £20 per hour.

Tuition websites do offer one-to-one tuition which is the best way for children to learn. They can be quite expensive though – about the same cost as visiting a private tutor. But they're more convenient and they're available at home. A good option, if you can afford it.

## What are Education Websites?

Education websites aren't the same as tuition websites. They don't offer a whole course of study or one-on-one help. Instead, they're more of a support to formal education. Their main benefit is to help with revision for exams and to bolster what a child has already learned in class.

## Is Online Education Better than Textbooks?

Online education sites have two major advantages over text books. Firstly, they're interactive and take the form of games, tests or quizzes. This makes them much more interesting for children and more likely to hold their attention. Secondly, they immediately tell you how well you have done so there's no need for a child's work to be marked. Instant feedback gives you an immediate answer to the question 'How well do I know this topic?'

## How Much Does Online Education Cost?

Online education sites are much cheaper than online tuition – some of them are even free - but what they offer varies considerably. To give you an idea of what's out there, here is our review of the most popular sites, with brief descriptions of what they provide and (just as important) how much they cost:

**@ School** has online tests, interactive exercises and worksheets for maths, English and science, though it only caters for primary school children. It's £9.99 for a 3 month subscription. That works out at £3.33 per month - the cheapest of the major pay-to-use education sites.

**BBC Bitesize** helps students to study and revise almost all subjects from KS1 to GCSE. It also covers the Scottish curriculum. As it's funded by the licence fee, BBC Bitesize is free for its users. The only downside is that its content is not quite as in depth as some of its rivals. But, overall, it's a very good revision resource.

**EdPlace** offers online exercises in maths, English and science for all key stages. The bad point – it only offers these three subjects, which doesn't help much if you're revising for GCSE history or geography. The price is £15 per month for all three subjects or £10 per month for each one separately.

**Education Quizzes** covers most subjects in the National Curriculum for all key stages. Each subject has its own set of quizzes written by teachers. The downside - languages are not covered in any of the key stages. The cost is £10 per month for which subscribers get access to every quiz on the site.

**IXL Maths** has material for children all the way from reception to year 13 (A-level). It's quite in depth but doesn't follow the National Curriculum. Bad points - it only covers two subjects – maths and English. Subscriptions cost £10 per month for one subject or £15 per month for both.

**Jim Baker's Online Learning** features links to educational resources online as well as advice on teaching and revising. Jim is a teacher with a passion for learning and his site is well worth a look. It's free to use but provides ideas on how to teach children in a fun way rather than detailed quizzes or exercises.

**Khan Academy** offers learning via videos hosted on YouTube. Most subjects are covered on the site which is free to use. However, it doesn't follow the National Curriculum and is based on the American educational system. Great if you just want to browse but frustrating if you want to revise for a specific topic studied at school.

**Mathletics** is a global tool aimed at helping students enjoy maths and improve their exam results. Its activities are aligned with school curriculums in each country, and teachers can create custom courses to suit their particular needs. Mathletics is used primarily by schools who pay a subscription which gives their students free access. Parents can subscribe for £59 per year.

**Sam Learning** is a system set up by schools to help children achieve better exam results. It covers all National Curriculum subjects from KS2 to GCSE with content written by examiners and teachers. The only downside is that Key Stage 1 is missing a few subjects. A year's subscription for one child costs £120. That works out at £10 per month.

There's a good deal of choice when it comes to online education – from one-on-one tuition to free-to-use revision tools.

Hopefully, this guide to online education will help you find your way round the online market and choose which education websites, if any, best meet your child's needs.