

Peer Tutoring Resources

Free Tutoring Online



Welcome to Free Online Tutoring!

We're thrilled at your interest in becoming a free online tutor. In order to assist you in getting started, we've created this resource that covers the benefits of peer tutoring as well as an overview of some key things to keep in mind when getting started.

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Benefits of Peer Tutoring

Becoming a tutor can be incredibly beneficial to both you and the students you tutor.

Through tutoring, students are able to receive one-on-one attention that better enables them to comprehend their course materials and get personal attention that full classrooms are not always able to provide. This personalized attention offers students the opportunity to focus specifically on the areas where they're struggling, and gives them the chance to ask questions, build confidence, and learn to study independently.

Volunteering as a tutor in STEM education also has a great societal impact that can help empower students who otherwise face inequality in education. Schools with a higher percentage of ethnic minorities and lower socioeconomic class statuses often do not have the necessary resources to hire teachers qualified in STEM education or to provide students with the hands-on materials that engage them better. As such, "this unequal access to high-quality STEM education perpetuates established racial, socioeconomic, and gender inequalities in both schools and career fields" ([Tu](#)). By volunteering your time, you will be using your privilege to reduce the inequities faced in STEM education and help make a difference in the lives of others.

In addition to helping students, studies have shown that teaching others actually helps the tutors themselves better engage with and understand the course materials. Volunteering your time tutoring also helps you earn hours that can be applied toward the Presidential Service Award, a tremendous honor that is nationally recognized.

How to Earn the President's Volunteer Service Award with Tutoring

We have partnered with Loop Abroad to be able to grant you the Presidential Volunteer Service Award (PVSA) for your tutoring hours. This award is only available to US citizens, but there may be other service awards or honors available through your school, state, county, or country.

Keep a record of your tutoring hours that includes the date, name of student tutored, and hours (to the nearest half-hour), and if you reach 100 hours or more within a calendar year, you can submit this record to admissions@loopabroad.com with the subject line "PVSA" and your full name, birthday, and mailing address, in order to be eligible to receive the PVSA.

The President's Volunteer Service Award celebrates Americans making a difference through volunteer work. It not only serves as a tremendous honor, but also helps encourage others to dedicate themselves to making an impact in their communities.

Eligibility Requirements

Per the [PVSA website](#), individuals, families and groups that meet the below criteria are eligible for the PVSA:

- Recipient(s) must be a United States citizen or a lawfully admitted permanent resident of the United States.

- Awards are issued for service hours served within a 12-month time period or over the course of a lifetime.
- Awards are issued for volunteer service only; additional levels of participation with the organization (i.e., charitable support) are not a factor considered for the award.
- Court-ordered community service does not qualify for the award.
- Awards are issued by approved Certifying Organizations.
- Service must be with an approved Certifying Organization that is legally established in the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or one of the U.S. territories.

Hours are measured over a 12-month period and awards are designated based on cumulative hours. The awards are offered in multiple levels and are designed to recognize each milestone of your service achievement. Levels include bronze, silver, gold and the highest honor, the President’s Lifetime Achievement Award for those who contribute more than 4,000 hours of service in their lifetime.

HOURS BY AWARD	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
Kids (5-10)	26 – 49	50 – 74	75 +
Teens (11–15)	50 – 74	75 – 99	100 +
Young Adults (16-25)	100 – 174	175 – 249	250 +
Adults (26 and older)	100 – 249	250 – 499	500+
Families and Groups*	200 – 499	500 – 999	1,000+

President’s Lifetime Achievement Award: Individuals who have completed 4,000 or more hours in their lifetime. **As of February 18, 2019, the Lifetime Achievement Award will be temporarily suspended to evaluate programmatic and technical components.**

** Two or more people, with each member contributing at least 25 hours toward the total*

Award

Along with the ultimate honor of presidential recognition, recipients will receive a personalized certificate, an official pin, medallion or coin and a congratulatory letter from the president of the United States.

How to Peer Tutor

Tutor Awareness

Before beginning any tutoring lesson, it's important to be mindful of the way your life experiences and background may differ from those of your students', and what you might consider "common sense" or "practical advice" may not yet be tools your students possess. As such, it's essential to be aware of the circumstances of others, and realize that their life experiences may impact things like being on time, having basic supplies, knowing how to read and follow instructions, and so on. Please always be kind, and support your student as best you can to empower their learning.

Student Assessment

Student assessments are vital for gauging where you student is academically, and will help you in building lesson plans that both challenge and engage them.

One option is to utilize a practice test based on your student's grade level or subject being taught in class. Practice tests can be useful in seeing the types of questions where your student is strongest vs weakest, and can help you determine where you might need to focus your lessons more. These can also be useful to keep on hand and use as a reference tool later on when tracking your student's progress.

One drawback to practice tests is that they don't always provide an idea of your student's process or how long they take on specific questions. However, by utilizing the virtual whiteboard and writing the equations where you both can see them, you'll be better able to see them work out the problem, where they might be struggling, and also offer support if needed.

Another option for assessing your student is having them talk you through a problem. You can start by asking them to explain a simple problem to you, which will help you gain a better understanding of what they do or don't know. This method is also useful because it helps your students think about *how* they solve a problem as opposed to just automatically running through the necessary steps to find the answer. Being able to talk out how they solve a problem will be vital in real world settings where employers want solutions to problems and an explanation of why it works.

Lesson Plan Components

Many students seeking tutoring services will be coming to you with a specific homework assignment or concept they're looking to comprehend further. The first step in crafting a lesson plan is to understand the goal of the learning -- look beyond the answer to a problem or equation, and try to determine the overall learning objective. Assess the assignment to see what

your student needs to know to complete it, what they already know, and where they might be struggling.

In order to empower your student to learn on their own, going over some of the core principles in reading comprehension can help them. For example, discuss how paying attention to the bolded words in a text are often the key words their teacher may want them to know, and that understanding their definitions will better help them with comprehending the overall learning objective. While assisting them in answering specific questions will help them with that particular assignment, focusing the lesson on comprehending the concept as a whole will facilitate their future learning and ability to study on their own. This is where STEM education comes in handy.

STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. Instead of teaching these as separate disciplines, STEM education takes on an interdisciplinary approach to not only incorporate the different subjects into one lesson, but to also apply the material to real-world applications. STEM lessons also strive to take on engineering design processes, immerse students in hands-on activities, and explore open-ended learning processes (Jolly).

Creating a STEM focused lesson may sound challenging, but start small and build it as you go. Focus on one discipline first and how you can focus the lesson in a way that enables your student the opportunity for open ended exploration and applying it to real-world issues. Then, add in another discipline and apply the same ideas. Not every lesson will or has to incorporate each discipline, but getting in the habit of trying to do so will broaden your student's comprehension of their course materials and future learning.

Take a look at the below articles to gain a better understanding of the concepts behind STEM lessons and how you might be able to bring them to your tutoring sessions:

- [“Six Characteristics of a Great STEM Lesson”](#) by Anne Jolly
- [“Plan Engaging STEM Lessons: STEM Lesson Plan Template”](#) by Math Geek Mama

Student Behavior

Not every student will be actively engaged with online learning. Try to be as understanding as possible when working with students and pay attention to physical or verbal cues like nodding, affirmations, or difficulty focusing to determine if the student is paying attention or having trouble comprehending the lesson. Though you won't be there in person, the interactive online classroom tool provides an opportunity for students to engage in a hands-on way by allowing them to use the whiteboard to problem-solve or the mic to ask questions and talk through the problem.

If you notice a student is having trouble focusing, you may need to switch the teaching style to present the material in a way that they respond to. Always remember that each student is unique, and the way one student learns may not be the same as another.

If a student comes to the lesson having not done the reading or preparation, try to help them understand the learning objective and focus their efforts by engaging them with questions, encouragement, and problem-solving. If a student continues to have trouble following the lesson or comprehending the objective, ask them if there's anything you can do to help their learning. However, if a student is intentionally dismissive of the lesson, being disruptive or rude, and otherwise not engaging, please report the issue to us.

How to Connect

Now that you have a lesson, it is important to be able to interact with your student in the most efficient way possible. Free applications such as Skype and Zoom are available and offer many options. Skype is a video chatting system that offers screen sharing capabilities. [Zoom](#), another free application offers screen sharing capabilities as well as 'whiteboard' functions that are very useful to visualize problems to students. All small sign up process are required for both of these.

[This](#) is a great free online course for learning to tutor using Zoom. You might watch this course together in one of your group meetings to learn and share new online tutoring skills.

It is important that prior to a meeting, both a student and tutor exchange their account information in order to be able to communicate on the day of the lesson. An email to a student should look something like this:

Hello [student],

This is your tutor, [name], from Free Tutoring Online. In order for us to have a successful time working together I would like for you to download Zoom. It is a free application that will allow us to video chat and do your work at the same time. You can download and create an account on zoom by downloading it on their [website](#). Once you create an account you can add me on Zoom at [username]. In addition to this, sending me your work ahead of time (or as soon as possible) will allow me to set up our meeting.

If you have any further questions please contact me at [email].

See you soon,

[name]

Organizing a meeting prior to the meeting time is crucial to carrying out a smooth session.

Finding Extra Practice Problems

In order to make sure a student understands coursework, additional problems can be assigned.

[Khan Academy](#) is a wonderful resource that provides lessons as well as extra practice problems in subjects such as math, art, computer programming, economics, physics, chemistry, biology, medicine, finance, and history.

This [website](#) is divided into Algebra topics that provide formulas as well as various practice problems.

[Quizlet](#) is another wonderful source that allows students or teachers to create their own set of notecards and learn them in various ways. Users are also able to search user created sets and learn from those.

[Kuta Software](#) has free worksheets for pre-algebra, algebra, and geometry practice areas, and includes answer keys.

Being Mindful When Tutoring

These two websites contain lists of different blogs tutors can join. Communicating with different teachers and hearing about their own experiences can be very helpful in learning how to teach in the best ways as well deal with different situations.

- <http://becomingabettertutor.blogspot.com/2011/03/10-tutoring-blogs-you-must-join.html>
- <http://www.smarttutor.com/blogs/>

This a good source that give tips on how to teach students that are challenging to communicate with.

- <https://www.lamission.edu/learningcenter/docs/handling%20difficult%20tutoring%20situations.pdf>

When tutoring, it is important to take into account that not all students come from the same background or have the same views on education. It is important that while teaching, positive methods of encouragement are used to properly educate a student. This link provides insights on how to do this.

- http://www2.phy.ilstu.edu/pte/310content/case_studies/resources/Tutoring_Across_Cultures.pdf

Building a Lesson Plan

Now that you've learned more about the benefits of peer tutoring and the components of a solid lesson plan, it's time to try building your own. But where do you begin?

Start first with SMART goals. Help your student determine the goals they'd like to achieve through tutoring. This will give your student something to strive toward and measure themselves, as well as assist you in creating future lesson plans designed to move them toward their learning objective.

A SMART goal is one that is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound.

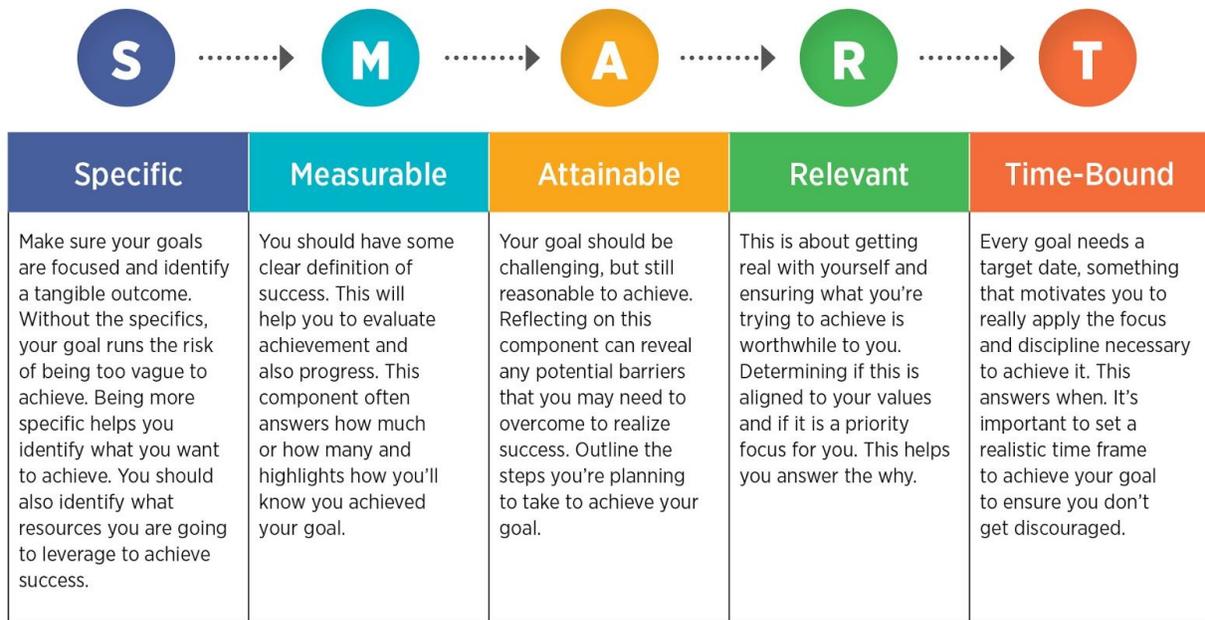


Image courtesy of [Canadian Management Centre](#).

Check out the resources section of this ebook for a printable worksheet you can use with your students when mapping out their SMART goals.

Your next step in writing a lesson plan is to determine your specific lesson objective. What do you want the learning outcome to be? It's important to note the state or school standards when defining your goals for the lesson as it will better prepare your student for meeting the state requirements. You'll want the learning objective to be measurable as well, so that at the end of your lesson you're able to say whether or not they were met.

The next step in building your lesson plan is to define the anticipatory set. This is a way to lead into the lesson and is effective because it's designed to engage your student's prior knowledge and get them excited for what's to come. This can be done through a brief activity (a short video, challenge, scenario, etc.) or a question and answer session. [ThoughtCo](#) and [Heart2HeartTeaching](#) have terrific articles that outline effective ways to engage your students in the anticipatory set.

Once you've outlined the intro to your lesson, you'll want to write out the way in which you will present the lesson's concepts to your student and how you want them to engage with the material. Be sure to have a couple options available in case one doesn't resonate with your student and keep them fully interested in the subject. When planning out this portion of the lesson, try to incorporate the STEM education model - go beyond just introducing a problem with one answer and instead focus on how you can integrate multiple subject areas with real-world problems. Take a look at [this article by EdWeek](#) and [this one by Math Geek Mama](#) for ideas on how you can build a STEM centered lesson that your students will love.

At the end of the lesson, review the core lesson concepts with your students and identify any areas that may need further attention. This period is an opportunity for your student to ask clarifying questions, connect the lesson with previously learned topics, and build the foundation for the next lesson.

Throughout the lesson you'll want to check in with your student to be sure they understand the material you're teaching. Simply asking your student if they understand often leads to yes or no answers and misses an opportunity to allow your student to *show* you they understand. So how do you check?

Take a look at [@TeachHeath](#)'s questions for student comprehension. These questions go beyond having students repeat steps to solve a problem and instead probe them to explain or elaborate on their thinking.

MATH QUESTIONS FOR STUDENT REFLECTION:

@TEACHHEATH

Check for Accuracy (You KNOW the student understands the topic):

1. Explain your method or strategy you used- Why did you choose that method?
2. Would it work if you didn't use that method?
3. If you broke this down into parts, what would they be?
4. Can you create and solve a problem similar to this one?
5. Try doing this a different way to show your thinking.
6. Can you think of an anti-example?

Check for Understanding (You THINK a student understands the topic):

1. Why is your method and answer correct?
2. Can you convince us you are correct?
3. Have you thought about all parts of your answer? Are there places where you could be wrong?
4. Can you explain your thinking in simpler terms?
5. Can you make a model to show that?

Check for Clarity (You THINK the student may be confused):

1. What do you need to find out?
2. What strategies will you use?
3. How would you describe the problem in your own words?
4. Could you try this with simpler numbers? Fewer numbers?
5. What did other members of your group try?
6. What pieces of the problem make sense to you and which parts are confusing?

Giving Clarity (You KNOW the student is confused):

1. Which words are important?
2. Where do you think we should start?
3. Where are your issues with this problem? What confuses you?
4. Did you try a different method? Pictures or models?
5. Try explaining your thoughts. Start by saying "I know I have to dobecause..."
6. Where can you find the help you need?
7. How can your group members help you? Draw it? Talk about it?

Now it's time to put it together. Check out the resources section for sample templates you can use to fill in your lesson plan.

Tutoring Resources

SMART Goals Worksheet

S M A R T
goals

Specific: What will you accomplish?

Measurable: How can you measure progress and know when you've achieved your goal?

Achievable: Do you have the skills required to achieve this goal? If not, how will you obtain them?

Relevant: Why is this goal important to you?

Time-Bound: What's the deadline and is it realistic?

Lesson Plan Template

Student Name: _____		Date: _____	
Subject: _____		Grade: _____	
Learning Objective: _____			
Minutes		Anticipatory Set/Warm-Up	
0 - 10			
Minutes		Lesson Outline	
10 - 20			
20 - 30			
30 - 40			
40 - 50			
Minutes		Lesson Review	
50 - 60			

Free Online Lesson Planning Tools

If you need some inspiration or templates to guide you in creating lessons for your students, be sure to take a look at these free resources.

[Khan Academy](#) is a valuable online resource that can make lesson building an easy process. Once you sign up for a free account, you'll get access to their teacher dashboard where you can note all the different classes you teach, keep a record of your students and their progress, and utilize their various resources, including online assessments, practice tests, and lesson exercises.

[HotChalk](#) has thousands of free lesson plans that you can browse by grade level or subject. You can download and use ones that you find valuable for your students, or utilize the site to guide you in creating your own.

[Achieve the Core](#) is another online lesson planning tool. After creating a free account, you can use their online tool to guide you through a series of prompts about the lesson content, structure, and activities to build a lesson that meets Common Core State Standards. They also have a few [math assessments](#) you can browse by grade level.

[LearnBoost](#) has a free tool to building lesson plans where you can include Common Core State Standards and attach any media files you intend to use.

[BookWidgets](#) created [this lesson plan template](#) that you can fill in digitally.

Starting Your Online Tutoring Role

You made it through the book and it is now time for action. Starting a tutoring club and becoming a peer tutor can be complicated at first, but making sure everything is organized from the start will ensure the collaboration that is needed in order for everyone to do his or her part. Participating in peer tutoring is beneficial to all of those involved. Students without the resources to pay for tutoring support are gaining access to knowledge and help that they would not get otherwise. As a tutor, you are gaining the valuable skill of being able to teach as well as receiving opportunities to get service hours. Although things may be rough in the first couple of weeks, the hard work pays off. If there are any questions regarding the club, leaders can be contacted or an email can be sent to us at freetutoringonline@gmail.com. We suggest you use your club meetings to work together on how to improve tutoring questions or challenges that you may have.

Thank you for making a positive impact on communities all over the country and good luck!