

# Khan Academy

## *What is it?*

The Khan Academy is a website that seeks to offer a “free, world-class education for anyone anywhere.” Sal Khan, the executive director of the Khan Academy (pictured on the left) is an MIT and Harvard alum who quit his job as a successful hedge fund manager to teach you about calculus, astronomy, and art history (and almost everything else). He started by tutoring his cousin in mathematics by using Yahoo’s Doodle pad. His videos ended up on YouTube and thousands of people recognized the high quality of his tutoring. He started expanding the breadth of his video tutorials to include topics like finance, government, physics, and chemistry. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation caught on to the remarkable educational opportunity that this posed and decided to fund his operation. Sal (and his crew) now works full-time for [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org) in order to expand their content even more. Sal’s goal is to eventually be able to provide high quality content on every subject area in every language.

## *Why does it work?*

Learning on the Khan Academy works because you can view and review topics at your own pace. Each topic is broken down into bite-sized chunks (for example, in the developmental math section, the distributive property is broken down into three videos, each between 2 to 5 minutes – most of the Khan Academy videos are between 5 to 15 minutes long). Sal narrates most of the videos himself, and his presentation is unique and effective. He has a dynamic voice, gives lots of examples, writes out problems and includes pictures and graphics with his narration.

Videos are being captioned and translated more and more each day. The instruction is “explicit” meaning he explains things step-by-step so everything is easy to understand. For the mathematics section, you can even map the videos you’ve watched and the problem-sets you have worked on. (For the truly motivated, you earn rewards and medals for completing work and watching videos!) The Khan Academy has built-in motivation. Try it out, and you will see why it’s so fun to use.

## *How does it work?*

Using the Khan Academy is free. Totally free. And easy. You login with your Google or Facebook account. On the front page, you will see the library of educational videos (currently numbering close to 3,000 – a list of the topic areas is included on the reverse side of this handout). For many of your classes, you will be able to find video tutorials that match what you are studying. So, if you didn’t quite understand the material the way it was presented in class, check out Sal’s videos and you will! His video tutorials serve as an amazing lecture supplement for all kinds of math and science classes that are offered in college.

## *Resources:*

- The main website is located at [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org).
- Embedded on this page is a video demo about the mathematics exercise software you can access at the Khan Academy: <http://www.khanacademy.org/about>.
- Please email Dr. Jonathan Thomas-Stagg at [jstagg@illinois.edu](mailto:jstagg@illinois.edu) if you have any questions!

## *Change that habit!*

The best way to change your academic habits for long-term success is to invest time and energy into using resources like the Khan Academy. It may not work great right away, but the effort you put in to practicing better academic habits is directly proportional to the success you will experience. Coaching at DRES can help you change your habits. To start coaching, please contact Dr. Jonathan Thomas-Stagg at [jstagg@illinois.edu](mailto:jstagg@illinois.edu). Thanks!



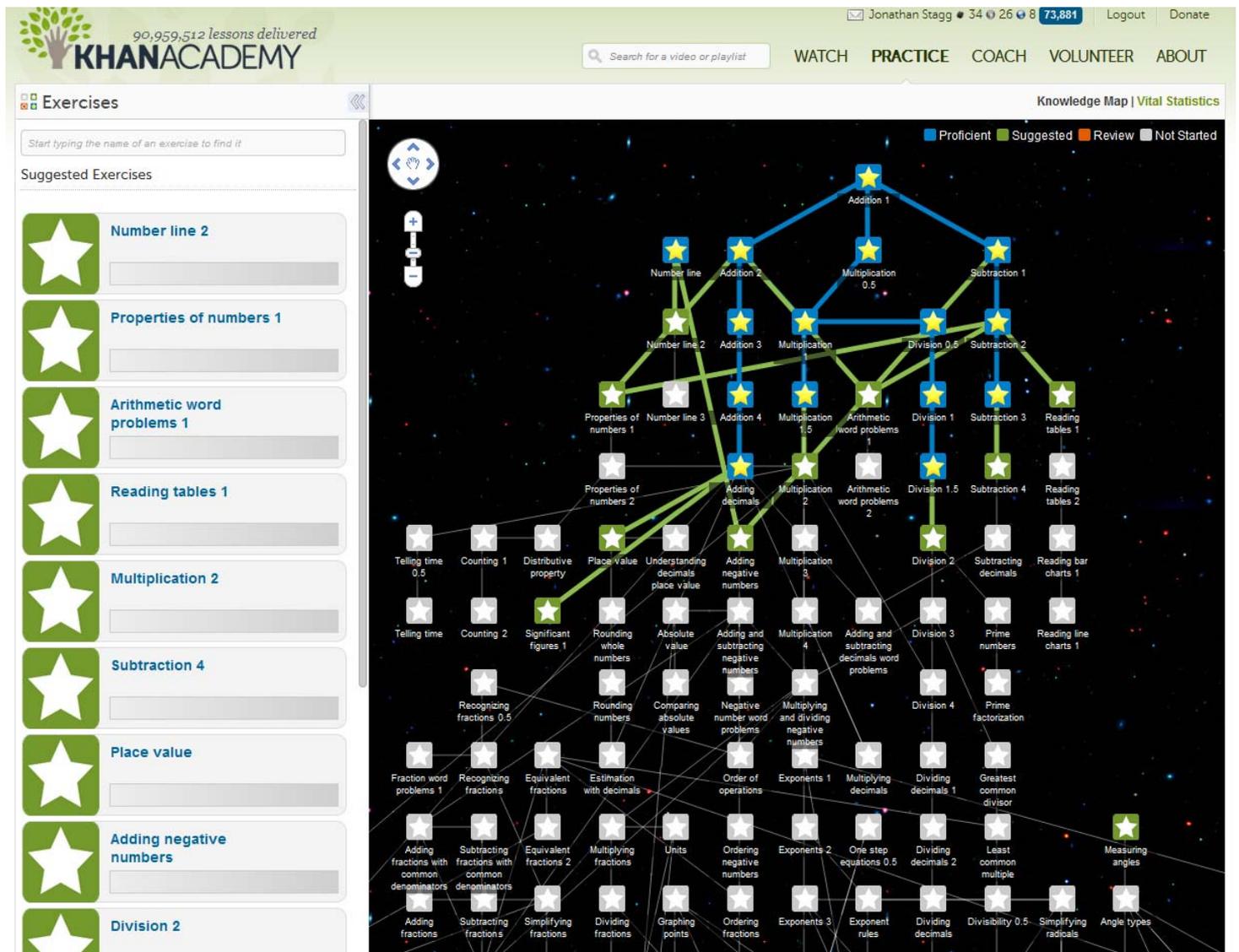
Listed below are the subject areas at the Khan Academy (as of December, 2011):

Algebra (and Pre-Algebra)  
 American Civics  
 Arithmetic  
 Art History  
 Banking and Money  
 Biology  
 Brain Teasers  
 Calculus (and Pre-Calculus)

Chemistry  
 Computer Science  
 Cosmology and Astronomy  
 Developmental Math  
 Differential Equations  
 Economics  
 Finance  
 Geometry

Healthcare and Medicine  
 History  
 Linear Algebra  
 Organic Chemistry  
 Physics  
 Statistics  
 Trigonometry  
 Valuation and Investing

Aside from these content areas, the Khan Academy also has a series of video tutorials specifically aimed at helping people prepare for important tests like the SAT and GMAT (and the already posted videos will help with preparing for the portions of the GRE and MCAT).



A screen shot of the Khan Academy math “Knowledge Map.” Starting with basic skills up top (e.g., simple addition) to calculus tutorials at the bottom of the map (not pictured). The math software is perhaps the most compelling part of the Khan Academy, but as the organization is branching out, the content will surely cover the humanities and literature in more depth as well. *“The Khan Academy is an organization on a mission. We’re a not-for-profit with the goal of changing education for the better by providing a free world-class education to anyone anywhere.”*