

5 Places on the Internet Where You Can Educate Yourself For Free

By Daniel Korn | [The Plaid Zebra](#)

Everybody is self-taught. Whether you're a guitarist who's never taken a lesson or an engineering undergrad at the University of Wherever; regardless of its level of formality, all education hinges on the student's ability to internalize concepts on their own time.

One of the greatest things about the Internet is how it's made autodidactism (self-education) easier and more accessible than ever. There's been an influx of well-designed educational websites in recent years that cater to the more interactive needs of modern students. Even better, they're all free. As such, here are some of the best places on the Internet for you to get your learn on.

[1. Duolingo](#)



Duolingo is a language-learning service designed by Luis von Ahn of the Carnegie Mellon University, under the belief that everyone should be able to learn a language for free. The site currently offers nine complete language courses, with seven more coming in the next couple years, ranging from French to, erm, Klingon. The courses are divided up into bite-sized chunks, lightly personalized based on parts of the language the user is having trouble with, and gamified with experience points, fake currency, and streak bonuses.

The lessons are very similar to what you'd find in the significantly more expensive Rosetta Stone programs, cycling between listening, writing, and speaking exercises. While it has its faults—sometimes the explanations of grammatical concepts are dense and hard-to-follow—it's a pretty effective approach. Speaking from experience, after six months of daily practice on Duolingo, I can now string together a series of German words into something approximating a full sentence.

[2. Code Academy](#)



Speaking of languages, computer code is one that's

particularly arcane. Coding, when it works, is basically magic—a highly-specific set of words that, when invoked, creates something out of nothing. A more forward-thinking world would look at the increased dependency we have on computers and make coding a mandatory subject in schools. Until then, we've got Code Academy, which offers hands-on courses in standard coding languages like HTML, JavaScript, and Python. They've also recently added lessons on specific APIs like Soundcloud, YouTube, and Twitter.

[3. Coursera](#)



This site offers university-level courses on various topics, using a mix of video lectures, quizzes, and peer-reviewed assignments. There are over 1,000 different courses on the site offered by various reputable institutions, so whether you want to learn about chemistry, music production, or computer programming, you'll probably be covered. You can also turn a string of related courses into something resembling a full semester by “specializing” in a more general topic, like Entrepreneurship or Data Science.

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