MKT 4555 Project | Group 7

Khan Academy Digital Marketing Plan: *Sections 5 & 6*

Introduction

a. Product

Khan Academy is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in the education industry. It was founded by Sal Khan in 2008, and its mission is to "provide a free, world-class education to anyone, anywhere" (Khan Academy, "About"). The Nation's Report Card shows that many U.S. students struggle with math (National Assessment of Educational Progress), and Khan Academy aims to help more of them succeed. The platform provides a digital ecosystem that offers lessons in a variety of subjects, including math from early grades through calculus and college-level courses, sciences such as biology, chemistry, and physics, computing, arts, economics, test preparation, and life skills. It also features partner content, such as astronomy courses developed with NASA and financial literacy modules (Khan Academy, "Annual Report").

Khan Academy is available in more than 55 languages and 190 countries and serves over 227 million registered users worldwide (Khan Academy, "About"). The organization also partners with school districts in the United States and with school systems in a total of eight countries, supporting about 7 million students globally. Its free app for young learners, Khan Academy Kids, has been downloaded over 43 million times (Khan Academy, "Annual Report").

The platform offers more than 840 free courses, along with adaptive tools that evaluate student performance, track skill levels, and use a scoring system to encourage students to keep learning (Khan Academy, "About"). In addition, the platform works on both desktop and mobile, with apps for iOS and Android. As artificial intelligence continues to grow, Khan Academy has integrated AI tutoring through Khanmigo, which is designed to assist students with guided problem-solving (Khan Academy, "Khanmigo").

b. Business Model

Khan Academy's value proposition is to provide free, high-quality education to anyone, anywhere. Operating as a nonprofit organization, Khan Academy offers students, teachers, and parents access to video lessons, practice exercises, and progress tracking at no cost (Khan Academy, "About"). This distinguishes the platform from competitors such as Coursera, which emphasizes paid certificates, and from offline tutoring services such as Baruch's SACC, which require scheduled appointments. As a result, Khan Academy allows students to learn independently, at their own pace, and without financial barriers.

Since its core services are free, Khan Academy operates on a nonprofit revenue model. Most of its funding comes from philanthropic donations and grants provided by foundations, corporations, and individual supporters (Khan Academy, "Our Supporters"). The organization also generates revenue through Khan Academy Districts. This program offers paid partnerships that give more than 600 school districts access to additional tools, teacher training, and support (Khan Academy, "Districts"). In addition, Khan Academy offers Khanmigo, an AI-powered tutor available to learners and families for $4 per month; districts receive custom pricing (Khanmigo). Together, these revenue sources allow Khan Academy to keep its primary platform free for students.

c. Why Digital?

An internet marketing campaign is a natural fit for Khan Academy because both its product and its core consumers exist online. All of Khan Academy's services are delivered through its website and mobile app, and its audience of young learners spends a significant portion of the day online. According to Common Sense Media, tweens ages 8 to 12 spend an average of five and a half hours per day on screen media, while teens ages 13 to 18 spend more than eight and a half hours (Rideout et al.). Among teens ages 13 to 17, 46% report being online "almost constantly," with 90% using YouTube, 63% using TikTok, and 61% using Instagram (Faverio and Sidoti).

By reaching consumers online, Khan Academy would gain greater brand awareness at a relatively low cost. This is especially important for a nonprofit organization with a limited

budget. Search engine optimization (SEO) and search advertising would position Khan Academy as the solution at the exact moment a student's need arises, such as when they search for help with a specific subject or homework problem. While search captures students who are already looking for help, social media would build awareness among those who are not yet searching. For example, short-form videos on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube Shorts could show brief lessons and study tips that give students a preview of the platform's value. Together, these channels would help Khan Academy grow its user base, encourage students to return regularly, and attract new donors who support its free model.

Primary Research

a. Research Setup

Khan Academy has expanded access to educational technology for students, teachers, and academic professionals since 2008. To better understand how audiences discover and interact with the platform, our team conducted a quantitative survey using Google Forms. The 14-question survey examined respondents' demographics, study habits, use of Khan Academy and competing resources, online search behavior, and social media usage. Although Khan Academy is an international organization, this survey targeted college students. The sample included both current users and potential users who have not yet used the platform. We conducted the research as a descriptive survey using convenience sampling. We gathered responses from 25 participants, 20 of whom are current college students. The results provide insights into how students discover Khan Academy, why they use it, how they evaluate the website, and which digital channels are most effective for reaching them.

b. Primary Research Results and Data Compilation

Our Google Form received 25 responses, and 80% of the people who answered are college students. Most of them (80%) have used Khan Academy before, but not very often. Half said they use it rarely, and 35% said they only use it before exams. Students mostly go on Khan Academy to review concepts (45%) or study for exams (40%), so they seem to use it when they need help with something specific. We found that teachers are the main way students find out about Khan Academy, since 55% of users heard about it from a teacher or professor. Most users

said the website is easy to use, with 85% rating it a 4 or 5, and 90% use it on a laptop or desktop. The features people found most helpful were practice questions (55%) and video lessons (40%). However, 65% of users had never heard of Khanmigo, so a lot of students do not know about the AI tutor. Besides Khan Academy, people use Quizlet (76%), YouTube channels (68%), and ChatGPT or other AI tools (68%) to study. When they need help with a topic, most of them just type the topic name into Google. YouTube (72%) and Instagram (64%) were the apps people use the most, and they were most interested in study tips (80%) and quick lesson clips (72%). Some of these questions let people choose more than one answer, so the percentages add up to more than 100%. Based on these findings, our team concluded that Khan Academy should build on its connection with teachers, raise awareness of Khanmigo, and post short study content on YouTube and Instagram. These steps could help turn occasional users into regular ones.

Situational Analysis

a. Target

The primary target market for Khan Academy is K–12 students (see Maya), who care about improving their understanding of class material and their academic performance. Since Khan Academy is available in more than 190 countries, this market includes any student with internet access and a compatible device (Khan Academy, "About"). The market is large, with about 49.5 million students enrolled in U.S. public schools alone (National Center for Education Statistics). Demographically, these students come from a wide range of schools and from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Psychographically, they are motivated to perform well and value learning at their own pace. While younger students may not use social media as often, teens are highly active on YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram, as noted in the Introduction. Their income depends on their parents or guardians, who span all income brackets.

The secondary target market is parents of K–12 students (see Jennifer) who closely follow their children's academic progress. This group ranges from higher-income parents who regularly invest in private tutoring to budget-conscious families who rely on free resources such as Khan Academy. Their location matches that of the primary target market, though the market is smaller since it consists of parents rather than students. Demographics and income are similarly diverse, spanning all racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. Psychographically, these parents

value their children's education, achievements, and future opportunities. They are most active on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, where they often seek educational and parenting content (Pew Research Center).

Student Persona: Maya Rodriguez



Demographic Traits

Age: 16
Location: Brooklyn, New York
Occupation: 11th-grade high school student
Household Income: $65,000–$85,000 annually
Status: Lives with family; wants to attend college after graduation

Goals

- Improve grades in challenging subjects
- Prepare for exams and college entrance requirements
- Understand difficult concepts without feeling embarrassed to ask questions
- Become more confident and independent in her studies
- Find free educational resources that fit her busy schedule

Personality Traits

- Academically motivated
- Prefers short, engaging explanations
- Uses digital content to learn and relax
- Wants to learn at her own pace

Challenges

- Struggles with algebra and chemistry
- Teachers move quickly through lessons
- Feels uncomfortable asking questions in class
- Balances school with extracurricular activities
- Prefers free resources over paid tutoring

Opportunities

- Promote short educational videos on TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts
- Share quick math explanations and exam preparation tips
- Use relatable content about common academic struggles
- Emphasize learning at her own pace for free

Preferred Brands/Platforms (3-4)

- TikTok (short, engaging videos)
- YouTube (lesson explanations)
- Instagram (study and lifestyle content)
- Khan Academy (free lessons and practice)

Parent Persona: Jennifer Thompson



Demographic Traits

Age: 42
Location: Queens, New York
Occupation: Office administrator
Household Income: $90,000–$115,000 annually
Status: Married with two children, ages 10 and 15

Goals

- Help her children improve grades and understand difficult subjects
- Provide academic support outside school hours
- Prepare her children for future educational opportunities
- Reduce the cost of private tutoring
- Find reliable resources for independent learning

Personality Traits

- Family-centered and responsible
- Values education and future opportunities
- Practical and budget-conscious
- Seeks trustworthy, easy-to-use resources

Challenges

- Limited time to help with homework due to work
- Sometimes struggles to explain school concepts
- Private tutoring can be expensive for two children
- Unsure which online educational resources are trustworthy

Opportunities

- Reach parents through Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram
- Share practical tips for supporting homework routines
- Demonstrate how Khan Academy supplements classroom instruction
- Emphasize free resources and independent practice

Preferred Brands/Platforms (3-4)

- Facebook (parenting communities and recommendations)
- YouTube (educational demonstrations)
- Instagram (family and learning content)
- Khan Academy (free educational resources)

b. Competitors

Khan Academy competes with online learning platforms and offline academic support services that help students review concepts, practice skills, and prepare for exams. Using a rating system from 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent), this audit evaluates competitors' websites based on navigation, organization, clarity, design, and usefulness. It also examines their social media content and relevance to students.

IXL's website receives an 8/10 because it organizes learning materials by subject and grade level, helping students locate relevant practice skills (IXL Learning, "IXL"). Its bright green-and-white design is clean and easy to scan. However, the long lists of skills can make the website hard to browse. Since IXL mainly focuses on K–12 students, college students may not know where to start. IXL's social media receives an 8/10 because it shares puzzles, learning contests, tips for using IXL, and resources for parents and teachers on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube (IXL Learning, "Follow IXL"). These posts give followers useful tips and activities to try. However, many posts are aimed at parents and teachers, so they may be less helpful for college students reviewing on their own.

Coursera is an indirect competitor because it offers structured online courses rather than primarily short explanations and practice exercises. Its website receives an 8/10. The search bar and subject categories make it easy to find courses, and partnerships with well-known universities and companies help build credibility (Coursera, "Online Courses"). Its blue-and-white layout looks professional and reinforces this credibility. However, Coursera focuses on certificates, job skills, and paid plans, so it may not be the best choice for students who need a quick exam review. Its social media receives a 7/10 because it shares students' stories and encourages people to join the conversation. For example, its #RedefinePossible campaign asked students to share their experiences on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram (Coursera, "Redefine"). These stories can help people trust Coursera and connect with other learners, but they offer less help with schoolwork than short lessons or practice questions.

An offline alternative is Baruch College's Student Academic Consulting Center (SACC), which provides both on-campus and online tutoring. Its website receives a 7/10 because it clearly presents operating hours, contact information, and appointment instructions (Baruch College, "Student Academic Consulting Center"). Its design follows Baruch's standard template, which is functional but visually plain. The homepage mainly shows tutoring hours and booking instructions, so students need to schedule a session to get help. SACC's social media is harder to review. Baruch has Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn accounts, but this audit could not find a separate SACC account (Baruch College, "Social Media"). Therefore, this audit does not assign SACC a social media score. Making social media links more visible and sharing tutoring reminders, exam-review announcements, and study tips could improve service discovery.

These comparisons suggest that Khan Academy should emphasize convenient access to free learning resources and make subject-specific videos and practice questions easy to find. Its social media could feature short concept explanations, interactive practice questions, and exam-review tips linked directly to relevant lessons. This recommendation connects with our survey findings, which show that respondents most often search by topic name and that users find practice questions (55%) and video lessons (40%) most helpful (see Appendix).

c. SWOT Analysis

Strengths • Free and accessible to everyone • Trusted, well-known brand • Content for nearly every grade and subject • Partnerships with schools and districts	**Weaknesses** • Relies heavily on donations • Self-paced learning requires motivation • Requires internet and device access
Opportunities • Growth of Khanmigo, its AI tutor • More school partnerships through Khanmigo	**Threats** • Rise of AI tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Copilot • Free study resources such as Quizlet and YouTube

Khan Academy's biggest strength is its credibility. The platform has more than 227 million registered users (Khan Academy, "About") and partnerships with over 600 school districts (Khan Academy, "Districts"). This positions it as one of the most recognized names in online education. One of its other strengths is that Khan Academy is free. This is important to its business model because the lack of cost makes it accessible to everyone. Because it is accessible to everyone, more people have tried the platform and have seen firsthand how it can help them understand their schoolwork. Further, Khan Academy has material for nearly every grade level and subject, which allows it to serve different age groups, students, and teachers. Lastly, its partnerships with schools help it reach more people. Our survey supports this, as 55% of users first discovered Khan Academy through a teacher or professor (see Appendix).

Moving on, one of Khan Academy's biggest weaknesses is that it relies heavily on donations. Since the platform provides free learning tools for everyone, depending on outside funding is risky because financial support could decrease at any time. Further, because Khan Academy is a self-paced platform, students must progress at their own rate, and not all students

will have the drive to keep coming back. Our survey supports this, as 85% of users reported using Khan Academy only rarely or before exams (see Appendix). Also, Khan Academy requires a reliable internet connection and access to technology, which may not always be possible, especially on a global level.

When it comes to opportunities, it is vital that Khan Academy continues to invest in its AI tutor, Khanmigo. Unlike other AI tools, Khanmigo does not directly give students the answer. Instead, it helps them think critically through the problem. This makes Khanmigo a smart way for parents and teachers to let kids use AI without worrying that they will become dependent on it. Khanmigo is also free for teachers (Khanmigo), which gives Khan Academy a strong opportunity to expand its partnerships with schools. Since many students use AI for schoolwork anyway, Khanmigo could allow them to do so in a way that is not cheating. However, according to our survey, only 35% of users had heard of Khanmigo, which shows a clear opportunity to increase awareness (see Appendix).

Lastly, Khan Academy's biggest threat is the rise of AI. Previously, its main competition came from free study resources such as Quizlet and YouTube, which are still widely used. However, students are increasingly relying on AI tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Copilot. Instead of learning new content or putting in the effort to go through a course, many students would rather get a quick answer to their homework. Our survey found that 68% of respondents already use ChatGPT or other AI tools for study help (see Appendix).

Digital marketing can help Khan Academy build on its strengths and address its weaknesses and threats. To make the most of its free, trusted content, Khan Academy should use SEO to appear when students search for help with specific topics. To address low student motivation, social media content such as quick lesson clips and study tips can encourage students to return to the platform more regularly. Social media storytelling can also attract new donors and reduce the risk of relying on a limited number of supporters. Once again, to compete with AI tools, Khan Academy should use search ads and social media to market Khanmigo as an AI tutor that helps students learn rather than just giving them the answer. Overall, Khan Academy has a strong foundation, and people already trust it as a reliable source. Still, to stay relevant, it must show students, parents, and teachers that it offers a better way to use AI for learning.

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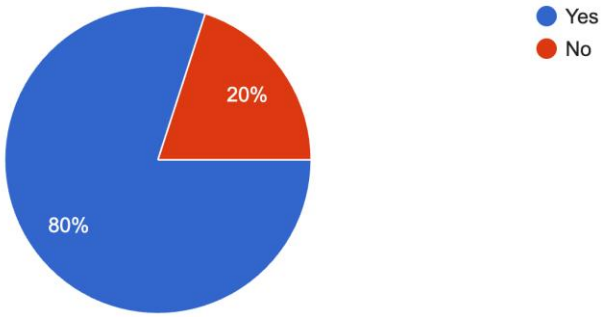
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Appendix

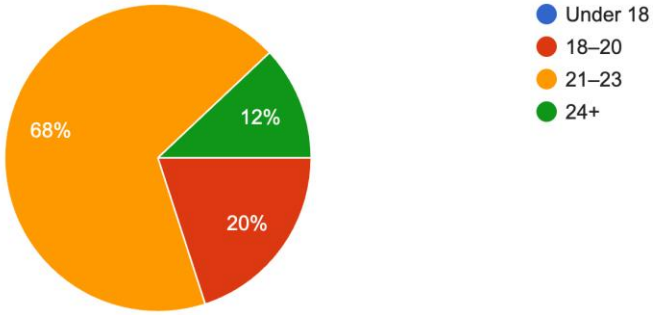
Are you currently a college student?

25 responses



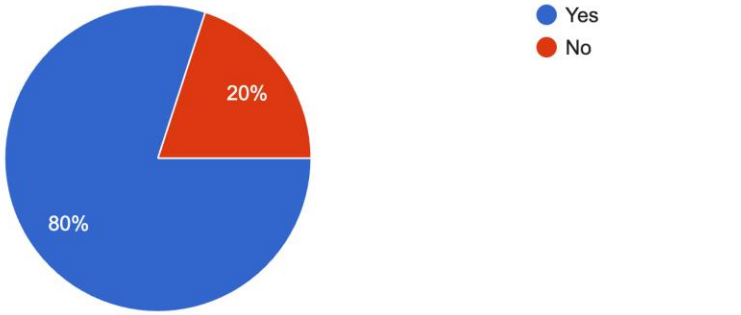
What is your age?

25 responses



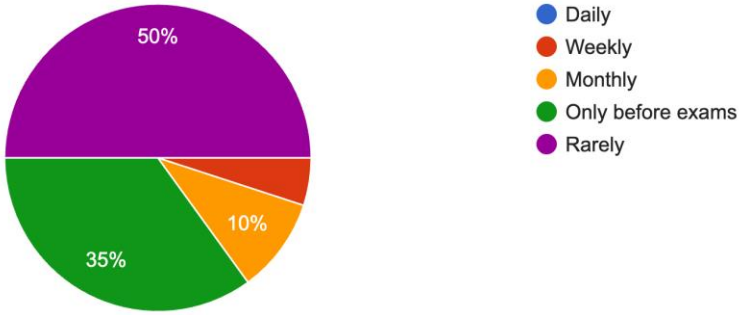
Have you ever used Khan Academy?

25 responses



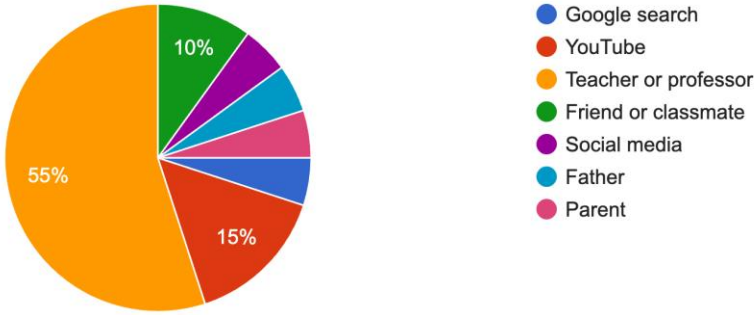
How often do you use Khan Academy?

20 responses



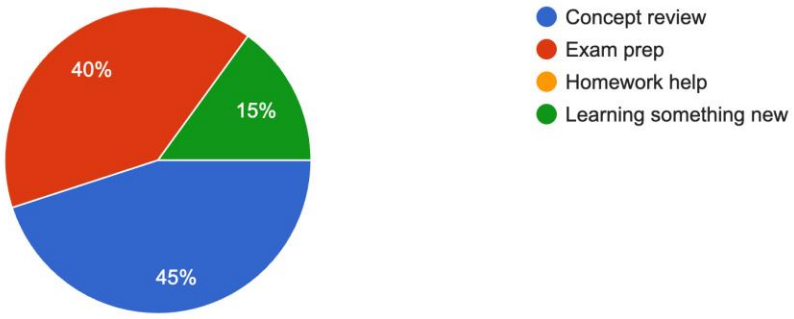
How did you first discover Khan Academy?

20 responses



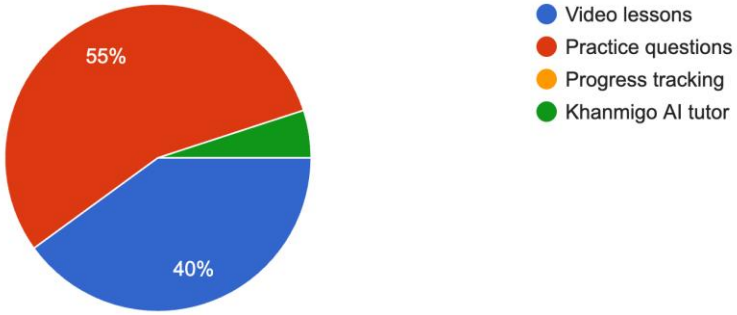
What is your main reason for using Khan Academy?

20 responses



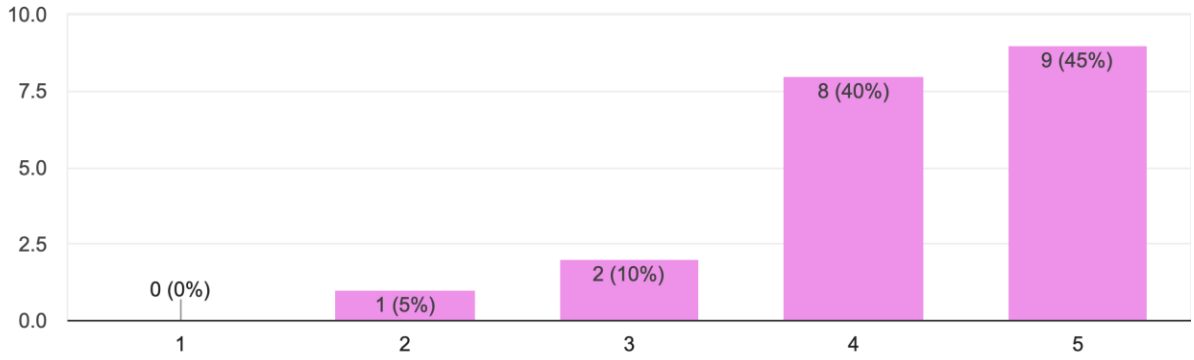
Which feature do you find most helpful?

20 responses



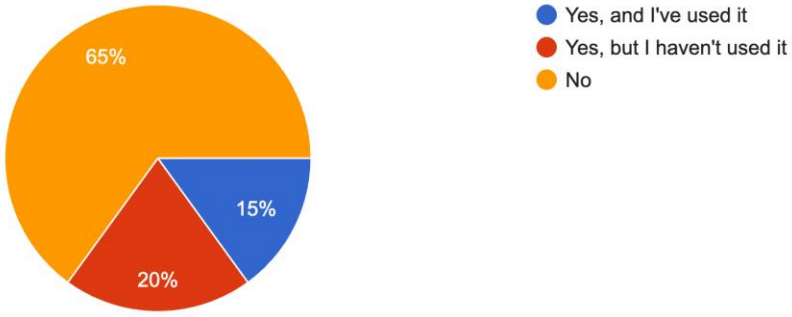
How easy is the Khan Academy website to navigate?

20 responses



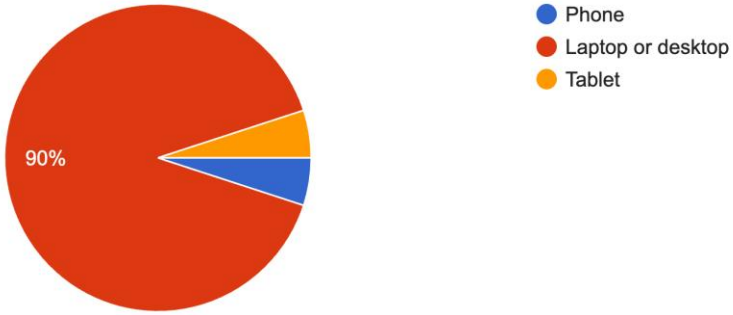
Have you heard of Khanmigo, Khan Academy's AI tutor?

20 responses



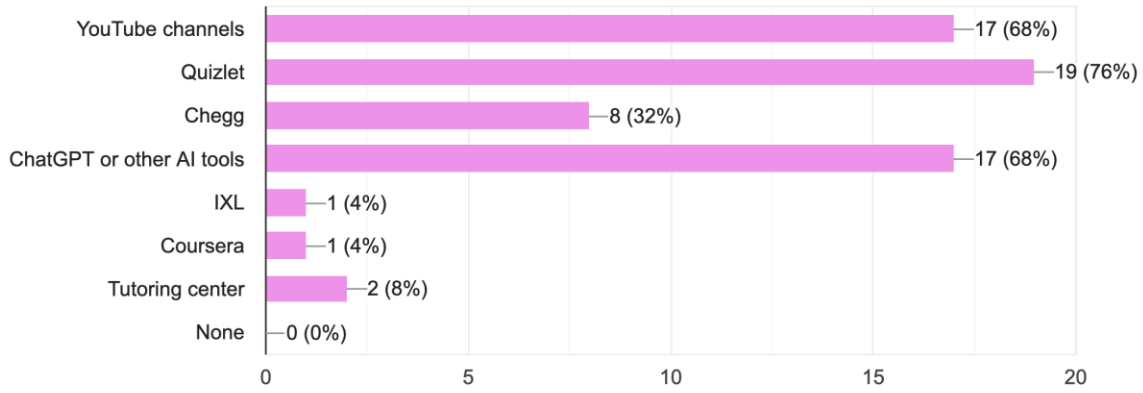
What device do you mostly use Khan Academy on?

20 responses



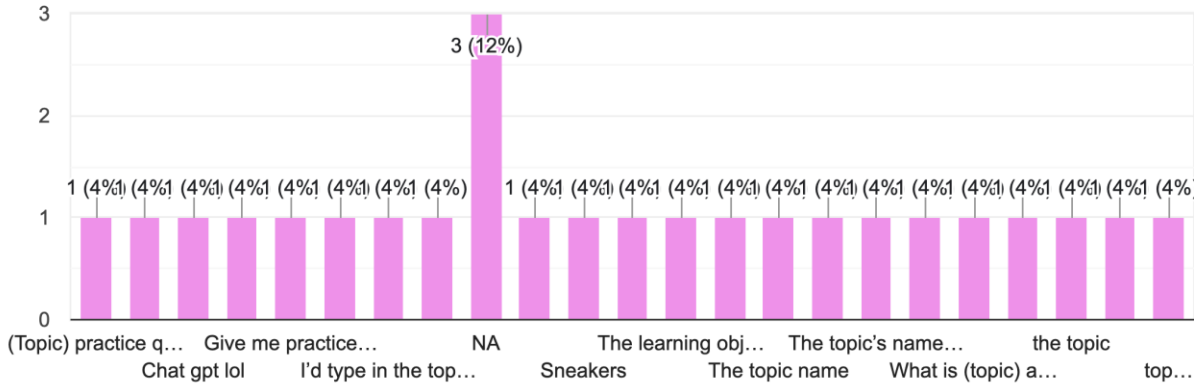
What else do you use for study help? (Select all that apply)

25 responses



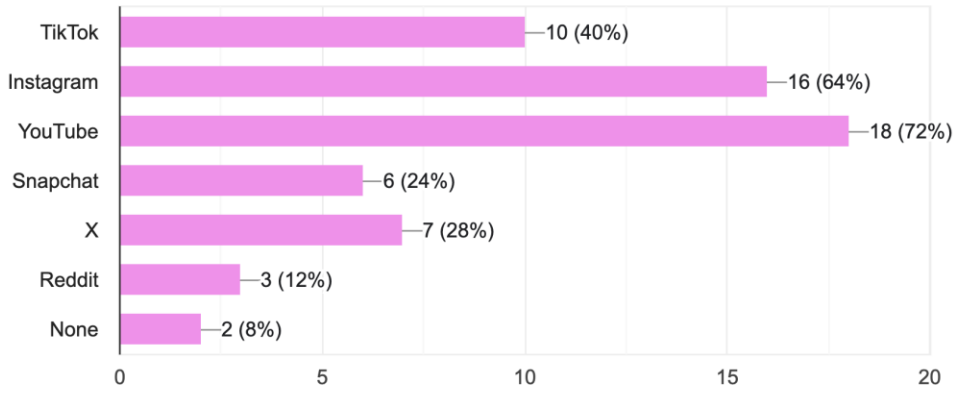
If you needed help with a topic, what would you type into Google?

25 responses



Which platforms do you use daily? (Select all that apply)

25 responses



What study content would you engage with on social media? (Select all that apply)

25 responses

