

Chicago Tribune TRAVEL



FLICKR RF PHOTO

Homework help is a few clicks away on a smartphone, tablet or laptop for students going away for the holidays.

Students can take tutoring on the road

You're enjoying a pleasant family vacation over the holidays when the dark cloud of homework blocks your sunny disposition. Your high schooler has a calculus problem he can't solve, you've long forgotten what you learned about advanced math, and he informs you he has a test the first day back to school.

Tell your kid to whip out his smartphone, tablet or laptop and log on to a site for one-on-one tutoring on demand.

It's just that easy, said Mandy Ginsberg, CEO of

tutor.com, the leading online tutor service. "The Internet is breaking the barriers of tutoring," she said. Now your young scholar can get help "where you want it, when you want it" even while traveling.

Tutor.com has been around for about a decade, working on contract with military families abroad, public libraries and colleges. In the last year it opened its service to consumers.

During the school year, it averages 6,000 sessions a day, a quarter of them on mobile devices, Ginsberg

said. Usage during school holidays averages 4,000 sessions a day, including students while traveling.

Most of tutor.com's 3,000 tutors are certified teachers, some retired, and are on call 24/7. Appointments aren't necessary. In less than a minute, Ginsberg said, a student is live online with a tutor who uses a white board and interactive chat to communicate.

Tutor.com covers more than 40 subjects, including advanced placement courses. Most users are in high school, though some

are middle schoolers or college students. Packages start at \$40 a month for an hour of tutoring.

Competitor **instaedu.com**, launched in 2012 by Stanford University grads, uses mostly college students from top schools as tutors, with fees starting at \$24 an hour. Kahn Academy has free instructional videos at **khanacademy.org**, but one-on-one tutoring is not an option.

— Katherine Rodeghier,
Special to Tribune
Newspapers