BYOM Online Instructor Training Guide

Virtual Tutoring Excellence

russianmathtutors.com

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Welcome to Russian Math Tutors

Congratulations on joining Russian Math Tutors! You are now part of a team dedicated to transforming how children learn mathematics through our online platform. This guide will prepare you to deliver our BYOM (Build Your Own Math) curriculum with confidence and effectiveness in a virtual environment.

Our approach is fundamentally different from traditional tutoring. We don't help students memorize procedures—we guide them to **discover mathematical principles for themselves**. This distinction is at the heart of everything we do.

About Russian Math Tutors

Russian Math Tutors serves over 2,000 students worldwide, offering rigorous mathematics education through our proprietary BYOM program. Our work has been featured in:

- The Wall Street Journal
- The Times of London
- New York Post
- Daily Mail
- Town & Country

This media recognition reflects the effectiveness of our methodology and the results our students achieve. You are joining a team that has earned trust through demonstrated outcomes.

The Online Advantage

Our online platform allows us to serve students globally, connecting families with expert BYOM instructors regardless of geography. As an online instructor, you have unique opportunities:

- **Flexible scheduling**: Work with students across time zones
- **Digital tools**: Virtual whiteboards enable clear mathematical visualization
- **Session recordings**: Students can review lessons for reinforcement
- **Global reach**: Connect with motivated families worldwide

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The BYOM Philosophy

BYOM stands for "Build Your Own Math." This name captures our core belief: students should construct their mathematical understanding through guided discovery, not passive reception of rules and formulas.

The Peterson Activity Method

Our curriculum is based on the work of Dr. Lyudmila Georgievna Peterson, a Russian methodologist and Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences. Since 1975, Dr. Peterson collaborated with leading Soviet mathematicians to develop a comprehensive mathematics curriculum spanning ages 3 through grade 9.

> *"Not a student for mathematics, but mathematics for a student."*

This principle means that mathematics should serve the student's development—not the other way around. We don't force students to conform to arbitrary procedures; we help them discover why mathematics works.

Three Stages of Mathematical Knowledge

Every mathematical concept progresses through three stages:

1. **Mathematization**: Building a mathematical model from real-world situations
2. **Model Study**: Constructing mathematical theory within the model
3. **Application**: Applying results back to the real world

Traditional education often skips stage 1, presenting abstract rules without grounding. BYOM never does this. Every concept begins with a concrete situation that students can understand and relate to.

The 12-Step Lesson Structure

Each BYOM lesson follows a structured sequence designed to maximize student engagement and retention:

1. **Motivation**: Establish purpose and self-determination for learning
2. **Activate Prior Knowledge**: Connect to what students already understand
3. **Trial Action**: Attempt a challenging problem that creates productive difficulty
4. **Identify Difficulty**: Locate the specific obstacle blocking progress
5. **Construct Project**: Design a path to overcome the difficulty
6. **Implement Project**: Execute the solution approach
7. **Verbalize**: Articulate the discovery in external speech
8. **Independent Work**: Practice with self-checking
9. **Integration**: Connect new knowledge to existing understanding
10. **Review**: Consolidate and reinforce
11. **Reflection**: Metacognition about the learning process
12. **Summary**: Capture key takeaways

Seven Didactic Principles

Seven principles guide all BYOM instruction:

1. **Activity**: Students construct knowledge through doing, not receiving
2. **Continuity**: Learning builds seamlessly on prior understanding
3. **Holistic Worldview**: Mathematics connects to reality and other subjects
4. **Minimax**: Each student works at their optimal level (see detailed explanation below)
5. **Psychological Comfort**: Learning environment feels safe and supportive
6. **Variability**: Multiple approaches to problems are encouraged
7. **Creativity**: Students become co-creators of mathematics

Understanding Minimax: The Heart of Differentiation

The Minimax principle is one of BYOM's most powerful—and most misunderstood—concepts. It answers the question every instructor faces: "How do I teach students with different ability levels?"

What Minimax Means

Minimax has two parts:

- **Maximum**: We present content up to the highest difficulty level. Every student is *exposed* to challenging, advanced material.
- **Minimum**: We only *require* mastery of an acceptable baseline. Not every student must solve every problem.

This is fundamentally different from "teaching to the middle." In traditional classrooms, advanced students are bored and struggling students are lost. With Minimax, everyone engages with the same rich content, but expectations for individual mastery are calibrated to each student's current level.

Minimax in Online Practice

Imagine you're teaching a 1-on-1 online lesson on fractions:

- **The lesson includes**: basic fraction concepts, operations with like denominators, operations with unlike denominators, and a challenge problem involving fraction equations.
- **You present all levels.** Even if the student struggles with unlike denominators, you still show the challenge problem. They see what's possible.
- **Why exposure matters**: The student isn't "protected" from hard problems. They observe thinking strategies. When they encounter this content later in the spiral, it won't be foreign.

> *"Present everything. Require the minimum. Let each student reach their maximum."*

What Minimax Is NOT

- **Not "dumbing down"**: We never simplify content. We adjust expectations for individual mastery.
- **Not tracking**: Students aren't separated by ability. Everyone learns together.
- **Not letting students off the hook**: Every student must achieve the minimum. We support them until they do.

Discovery vs. Memorization: A Concrete Example

Consider how multiplication is taught:

Traditional Approach: The teacher writes 5 + 5 + 5 on the board, says "this can be written more simply," introduces the multiplication sign, and explains the rules. Students memorize: "multiplication is repeated addition."

BYOM Approach: The teacher presents a problem: "A school has 856 students. The school decides to buy each student a book for $120 as a holiday gift. How much does the purchase cost?" Students try to write 120 + 120 + 120… but quickly realize this won't work—it's too slow. They *need* a better way. Through guided exploration, they essentially reinvent multiplication.

> *The student who discovers multiplication owns it. The student who memorizes it rents it.*

Curriculum Overview

The BYOM curriculum follows a spiral structure. Concepts are introduced at an appropriate level, then revisited multiple times at increasing depth. This differs fundamentally from linear "mastery" approaches where topics are completed and left behind.

The Spiral Progression

Understanding the spiral is critical. When a student struggles with a concept, it doesn't mean they're "behind"—it means they need more time at this layer of the spiral. The concept will return, and each encounter deepens understanding.

Example: Sets Across Grades

Grade	Set Concepts
Grade 1	Groups of objects, comparing groups, more/less/equal
Grade 3	Formal notation (∈, ∉, ⊂), Euler-Venn diagrams, intersections, unions
Grade 7	Proof by contradiction using Euler-Venn diagrams
Grade 8	De Morgan's laws, countability, one-to-one correspondence

Example: Functions Across Grades

Grade	Function Concepts
Grade 4	Motion graphs, coordinate systems, plotting points
Grades 5-6	Functional dependencies, direct/inverse proportionality, tables/graphs
Grade 7	Formal function concept, linear functions, piecewise functions

Grade	Function Concepts
Grade 8	Quadratic functions, transformations, domain/range, max/min

Assessment and Progress Monitoring

BYOM does not use traditional tests or grades. This is not a gap in our system—it's a deliberate design choice based on decades of research into how children learn mathematics. Understanding our approach is essential for your success as an instructor and for communicating effectively with parents.

Why No Traditional Tests?

Traditional tests create several problems that undermine mathematical learning:

- **They encourage memorization over understanding.** Students cram formulas before tests, then forget them. BYOM builds lasting understanding.
- **They create anxiety that blocks learning.** Fear of failure makes students avoid challenges. BYOM requires productive struggle.
- **They snapshot a moment, not a journey.** A test score tells you nothing about how a student thinks. BYOM tracks thinking development.
- **They rank students against each other.** BYOM measures each student against their own prior performance.

What We Use Instead: Self-Assessment

In BYOM, students assess their own work using a simple system: **+ (plus)** means "I got this right and understand it." **− (minus)** means "I made an error or I'm not sure I understand."

This isn't about being "easy" on students. Self-assessment is actually *harder* than traditional grading because it requires metacognition—students must honestly evaluate their own understanding.

How Self-Assessment Works Online

1. **Student completes independent work.** After the discovery and verbalization phases, students work on problems independently while you observe via screen share.
2. **You provide standards for comparison.** Show correct solutions on the whiteboard. Students compare their work.
3. **Students mark their own work + or −.** They evaluate each problem honestly. This builds ownership and self-awareness.
4. **You facilitate correction, not judgment.** When a student marks −, your job is to help them understand why and guide them to correct understanding.

What To Do When a Student Marks Themselves −

A minus is not a failure—it's valuable data. Here's how to respond:

- **First, acknowledge**: "Good catch. You noticed something didn't work. That takes honesty."
- **Then, investigate**: "Walk me through your thinking. Where did it start feeling unclear?"
- **Identify the specific gap**: Was it a careless error? A misunderstanding of the concept? A gap in prior knowledge?
- **Guide to correction**: Don't just give the right answer. Ask questions that lead the student to discover their error.
- **Celebrate the correction**: "Now you've got it. That understanding is stronger because you found the mistake yourself."

> *"Errors are working situations that require correction, not failures that require punishment."*

Platform Quizzes for Formal Assessment

While BYOM emphasizes self-assessment during lessons, the platform provides a **Quiz System** for more formal progress checks:

- **Auto-Graded Quizzes**: Single/multiple choice questions with instant results
- **Non-Graded Quizzes**: Include text questions for detailed responses you review manually

Use quizzes to: - Assess new students for proper placement - Check retention between lessons - Prepare students for math competitions

For detailed instructions on creating and managing quizzes, see the **Help Center** or ask the **Digital Assistant**.

What We Report to Parents

Parents expect to know how their child is progressing. Without grades, what do we tell them? We report on *development*, not scores.

Monthly Progress Narratives

Each month, provide parents with a brief narrative (3-5 sentences) covering:

1. **Concepts explored**: What mathematical territory did we cover this month?
2. **Thinking development**: How is the student's mathematical reasoning evolving? Are they asking better questions? Making connections?
3. **Self-assessment accuracy**: Is the student developing honest self-awareness about their understanding?
4. **Areas of strength**: Where does this student shine?
5. **Growth opportunities**: What concepts need more time in the spiral?

Sample Progress Narrative

> *"This month, Sofia explored fraction operations with unlike denominators. Her ability to find common denominators has strengthened significantly—she now approaches these problems with confidence rather than hesitation. I've noticed her asking 'why does that work?' more often, which shows developing mathematical curiosity. Sofia's self-assessment has become more accurate; she catches her own errors before checking answers. Next month, we'll revisit motion problems, which will reinforce her fraction skills in applied contexts."*

What We Don't Report (And Why)

- **No letter grades**: A "B" tells parents nothing about what their child understands or how they think.
- **No percentages**: "85%" measures test performance, not mathematical development.
- **No comparisons to other students**: Each child's journey is unique. Comparing them is meaningless and harmful.
- **No "grade level" labels**: BYOM's spiral means a 4th grader might be doing "6th grade" content in one area and "3rd grade" content in another. That's normal and healthy.

Online Platform and Technology

Effective online instruction requires mastery of your digital tools. This section covers the technology essentials for delivering BYOM lessons virtually.

Required Equipment

- **Reliable internet connection**: Minimum 10 Mbps upload speed. Wired connection preferred over WiFi.
- **Quality microphone**: Clear audio is essential. A USB headset or external microphone eliminates echo and background noise.
- **Webcam**: Students should see your face during explanations. Built-in laptop camera is acceptable.
- **Writing tablet (recommended)**: A graphics tablet (Wacom, XP-Pen, Huion) dramatically improves whiteboard work. iPad with Apple Pencil also works well.
- **Quiet, professional environment**: Minimize distractions. Use a neutral background or virtual background.

Your Dashboard

Your teacher dashboard is your command center. Key sections include:

- **Lessons**: View scheduled, unscheduled, completed, and issue-reported lessons

- **Students**: Manage your student roster and send messages
- **Group Classes**: Create and manage group sessions (Math Circles)
- **Quizzes**: Build assessments and review student results
- **Wallet**: Track earnings and request withdrawals
- **Account Settings**: Manage your availability, profile, and address for offline lessons
- **Teacher's Cabinet** (under Others menu): Your personal meeting room

Offline Lessons

If you want to offer **in-person lessons**, you can add your address in **Account Settings**. Students searching for local tutors will be able to find you. This is optional—you can teach online-only if you prefer.

Your Introduction Video

A great introduction video boosts your profile ranking and helps attract students. Tips:

- **Keep it brief**: 30 seconds to 1 minute
- **Hold phone horizontally** for full-screen format
- **Focus on teaching approach**: Talk about your lesson structure and teaching technique, not just credentials
- **Speak naturally**: Don't read from a script—it shows on video
- **Watch top tutors' videos** for reference

Upload your video to the corporate Google Drive and request admin to post it.

Full guide: How to Make Outstanding Introduction Videos

Teacher's Cabinet

Your **Teacher's Cabinet** is a free meeting room available 24/7 under **Others** in the Dashboard. Use it for:

- **Practice**: Test the whiteboard before lessons
- **Introductory meetings**: Meet prospective students before they purchase
- **Technical troubleshooting**: Fix audio/video issues before a scheduled lesson
- **Quick parent conferences**: Discuss progress without using a paid lesson

Students can enter your Cabinet from your profile on the Teachers List. Always coordinate via messenger before meeting there.

Managing Your Availability

The platform has a **two-tier availability system**:

General Availability (Your Default Schedule)

- Set your recurring weekly availability
- Applies indefinitely going forward
- Example: Available Mon-Fri 3-8 PM

Weekly Schedule (Temporary Overrides)

- Block specific dates for appointments, vacations, etc.
- Only affects that particular week
- Does NOT change your General Availability

Important: Use Weekly Schedule for temporary conflicts. Only change General Availability for permanent schedule changes.

Google Calendar Sync

You can connect your Google Calendar to automatically block times when you have events. See the Help Center for setup instructions.

Virtual Whiteboard Mastery

The virtual whiteboard is your primary teaching tool. Excellence here directly impacts student learning.

Whiteboard Best Practices

- **Write large and clearly**: Students may be viewing on small screens. Err on the side of bigger.
- **Use color strategically**: Different colors for different elements (blue for given information, red for unknowns, green for solutions).
- **Organize space**: Don't crowd. Use multiple pages/slides rather than cramming everything on one.
- **Save your work**: Export whiteboard pages after each lesson. Share with students for review.
- **Practice writing with your tablet**: Your handwriting will be worse on a tablet at first. Practice until it's legible.

Reviewing Student Homework on Whiteboard

When students complete homework on paper: 1. Have student hold homework in front of camera 2. Fullscreen their video and wait 2-3 seconds for quality to improve 3. Take a screenshot 4. Upload screenshot to whiteboard 5. Annotate and review together

Engaging Students Online

Online instruction presents unique engagement challenges. Students face more distractions and may feel disconnected. These techniques maintain focus and energy.

Attention Management

- **Shorter segments**: Break lessons into 10-15 minute chunks with different activities.
- **Frequent interaction**: Never go more than 2-3 minutes without asking a question or requesting student input.
- **Use names**: Address students by name frequently. It signals you're paying attention to them specifically.
- **Cameras on**: Encourage students to keep cameras on. Visual connection improves engagement.
- **Vary your vocal tone**: Monotone is deadly online. Use enthusiasm, pauses, and emphasis.

Building Rapport Remotely

- **Start with connection**: Spend 1-2 minutes at the start asking about their day, school, or interests.
- **Celebrate wins vocally**: "Yes! That's exactly right!" matters more online where they can't see your full reaction.
- **Remember details**: Reference things they've told you in previous sessions. It shows you care.
- **Be patient with silence**: Audio lag means students need extra time to respond. Count to 5 before prompting again.

Handling Technical Issues

- **Have a backup plan**: Know how to switch to phone audio if video fails. Have alternate whiteboard ready.
- **Test before sessions**: Join 5 minutes early to verify audio/video working.
- **Stay calm**: Technical problems happen. Model patience and problem-solving.
- **Document recurring issues**: If a student consistently has connection problems, communicate with parents about solutions.

Online Lesson Delivery

60-Minute Online Lesson Structure

A typical 1-hour 1-on-1 online lesson follows this structure:

1. **Connection & Homework Review (5-10 min)**: Brief personal check-in. Review any homework questions. Establish today's goal.

2. **Warm-up (5 min)**: Review exercise activating prior knowledge. Student works on whiteboard while you observe.
3. **Challenge (10-15 min)**: Present problem that creates productive difficulty. Let student struggle productively.
4. **Discovery (10-15 min)**: Guide student toward insight through questions. Use whiteboard to visualize their thinking.
5. **Verbalization (5 min)**: Student explains discovery in their own words. Have them write key insights on whiteboard.
6. **Practice (10-15 min)**: Independent work with self-checking (+/−). Student shares screen so you can monitor.
7. **Closing (5 min)**: Summary, preview next lesson, assign homework. Export whiteboard for student review.

Questioning Techniques

Your questions guide discovery. Avoid telling; ask instead:

- "What do you notice?" (observation)
- "What have we tried so far?" (reflection)
- "What's making this difficult?" (identify obstacle)
- "What would help us here?" (construct approach)
- "Can you explain why that works?" (verbalization)
- "How is this similar to what we learned before?" (integration)

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- **Telling too quickly.** Productive struggle is essential. Wait longer than feels comfortable. Silence online feels longer—resist filling it.
- **Rushing to "complete" topics.** The spiral brings concepts back. Depth matters more than speed.
- **Treating errors as failures.** Errors are data. They reveal what needs attention.
- **Procedural shortcuts.** Never say "just memorize this." Find the conceptual path.
- **Giving grades or scores.** Use +/− self-assessment and progress narratives only.
- **Lecturing without interaction.** Online attention spans are shorter. Keep dialogue flowing.

Homework Assignment

Use the Homework Module — NOT Messenger

Important: Always assign homework through the platform's **Homework Module**, not through the messenger.

Why Use the Homework Module?

- Student receives automatic email notification
- Homework is linked to the specific lesson
- Easy to track what was assigned and when
- Professional record-keeping

How to Assign Homework

1. Navigate to the lesson in your dashboard
2. Click **“Add Homework”**
3. Fill out the form:
    - **Title**: Clear description (e.g., “BYOM G4 - Fractions Practice”)
    - **Description**: Include specific problem numbers
    - **Attachment**: Upload PDF with problems (not PowerPoint with solutions)
4. Click **Save**

Timing Rule

Prepare and assign homework **before or immediately after the lesson**—not a whole day later.

How Students Submit Homework

Students can: - Upload scanned/photographed work via messenger before the next lesson - Hold completed work in front of camera during lesson for you to screenshot and review

Providing Feedback on Homework

You must provide meaningful feedback for all required sections of the homework module. Generic placeholders like “.”, “ok”, “good”, or other short meaningless text are not acceptable.

Your feedback should: - Acknowledge specific work the student did well - Point out errors and explain the correct approach - Suggest areas for improvement

Warning: Admin reviews homework feedback quality. If you are caught using placeholder text instead of genuine feedback, your instructor ranking will be reduced.

For detailed instructions, see the **Help Center** or ask the **Digital Assistant**.

Competitive Positioning

Parents will ask how BYOM differs from alternatives. Here’s how to position our services.

BYOM vs. Generic Online Tutoring

Aspect	Generic Tutoring	BYOM
Method	Homework help, test prep	Guided discovery
Goal	Pass the next test	Deep understanding
Curriculum	Follows school textbook	Spiral progression
Tutor Role	Explains solutions	Guides discovery
Long-term Impact	Short-term improvement	Lasting mathematical thinking

> *"A generic tutor helps your child pass tomorrow's test. BYOM builds the mathematical mind that succeeds for life."*

BYOM vs. RSM (Russian School of Math)

- **RSM**: Large institution, WASC accredited, curriculum diluted by US/UK standards to meet accreditation requirements.
- **BYOM**: Authentic Peterson methodology, original Soviet mathematical tradition, not constrained by institutional requirements.
- **Class size**: RSM teaches groups of 15-20. BYOM offers 1-on-1 and small groups of 4-5.
- **Flexibility**: RSM has fixed schedules at physical locations. BYOM offers flexible online scheduling.

BYOM vs. School Math

- **School**: PEMDAS memorization, procedural fluency, fractions dreaded in 6th grade
- **BYOM**: Conceptual understanding, fractions with "joy and enthusiasm" in 4th grade
- **By 8th grade**: BYOM students at Algebra 2/Pre-Calc level vs. typical Algebra 1

Your Training Schedule

Week 1: Philosophy and Methodology

1. Read this entire Training Guide
2. Read BYOM Q&A document thoroughly

3. Review 2-3 grade-level workbooks cover to cover (available at https://russianmathtutors.com/russian-math-books)
4. Watch VSL and YouTube content to understand our messaging
5. Study the 12-step lesson structure and understand why each step matters
6. Set up your teaching environment: test webcam, microphone, whiteboard software
7. Complete self-assessment: “Can I explain BYOM vs. generic tutoring in 2 sentences?”
8. Complete self-assessment: “Can I explain why we don’t use grades?”

Week 2: Practical Application

1. Observe 2-3 recorded lessons from experienced BYOM tutors
2. Practice-teach sample lessons via Zoom (trainer plays student role)
3. Learn the assessment process for placing new students
4. Practice virtual whiteboard techniques until writing is clear and organized
5. Practice parent communication scripts
6. Practice facilitating self-assessment (+/−) with mock students
7. Receive feedback on practice sessions and refine approach

Week 3: Supervised Teaching

1. Teach first real students with trainer observing (they join silently)
2. Debrief after each session via video call
3. Refine approach based on feedback
4. Write your first practice progress narrative
5. Begin independent teaching with periodic check-ins

Parent Communication Scripts

These scripts help you communicate our value proposition and address common concerns in the online context.

Initial Consultation

> *“Your child won’t just learn math facts. They’ll understand where those facts come from and why they work. By the time most students are dreading fractions in 6th grade, BYOM students have been working with them confidently since 4th grade. And because we work online, you get access to expert BYOM instructors regardless of where you live.”*

Explaining Our Assessment Approach

> *"We don't use traditional grades because they measure the wrong things. Grades tell you how your child performed on one particular day. We track how your child's mathematical thinking develops over time. You'll receive monthly progress narratives describing what concepts we explored, how your child's reasoning is evolving, and where they're gaining strength."*

When Parents Ask About Online Effectiveness

> *"Online 1-on-1 tutoring is actually more focused than in-person group settings. Your child gets my complete attention for the entire session. I can see their work in real-time through screen sharing, pause and zoom in on specific problems, and we can save our whiteboard work for them to review later. Many of our students prefer online because there's no commute time and they're in their comfortable learning environment."*

When Parents Want Grades

> *"I understand wanting concrete measures. Here's what we track: Can your child explain their reasoning? Do they catch their own errors? Are they asking deeper questions? These abilities predict long-term success far better than any letter grade. And when they take school tests, you'll see the results of this deeper understanding."*

When Parents Worry About Screen Time

> *"I share that concern. The difference is that our sessions are active, not passive. Your child isn't watching videos—they're solving problems, explaining their thinking, and interacting with me constantly. It's more like a conversation than screen time. We also break up sessions with mental challenges that don't require looking at the screen continuously."*

When Parents Worry About School Alignment

> *"BYOM complements school math beautifully. Students who understand WHY mathematics works perform better on any curriculum. We also incorporate Common Core tasks when helpful, ensuring your child succeeds in their classroom while building deeper capabilities."*

Platform Rules and Best Practices

As an RMT tutor, you're part of a larger ecosystem. These rules ensure a great experience for students and maintain our platform's quality.

Lesson Completion

- **Mark lessons complete promptly** after they occur
- Payment processes **48 hours after completion** (this window allows students to report issues)
- Use **"Request Reschedule"** if you need to move a lesson (lets student pick new time)
- Avoid canceling lessons—students may lose bulk package pricing

Wallet & Withdrawals

Your earnings accumulate in your Wallet. To withdraw:

- **Minimum withdrawal**: $50 USD
- **Frequency**: Once every 20 days
- **Payment methods**: Wise (recommended for non-US tutors) or PayPal
- **Processing time**: 1-4 working days
- **Setup**: Enter your Wise or PayPal email in Account Settings > Payment

All withdrawals are in US Dollars. See Help Center for detailed instructions.

Refer & Earn

Earn **Reward Points** by referring new students to the platform. Find your referral link in **Dashboard > Refer & Earn**. See Help Center for details on how points work.

Encourage Reviews

When parents are happy with your teaching, encourage them to leave reviews on **Google** and **Trustpilot**. External reviews help build trust with prospective families and strengthen our platform's reputation.

How to Leave Reviews

- **Google Reviews**: Parents can leave a Google review directly from the top of our home page at russianmathtutors.com—just click the star rating displayed there
- **Trustpilot Reviews**: Students automatically receive Trustpilot review invitations via email after lessons, so simply remind them to check their inbox

When to Ask

- After a successful lesson or when a parent expresses satisfaction
- A simple “If you’re happy with the lessons, we’d really appreciate a review—you can click the stars on our homepage for Google, or check your email for the Trustpilot link” goes a long way
- Reviews help other parents discover quality BYOM instruction

Encourage Subscriptions

Always encourage students to subscribe rather than make one-time purchases. Subscriptions benefit everyone:

Benefits for students: - **10% discount** on all lessons (paid by RMT, not deducted from your earnings) - **Rate lock** - price stays the same even if you raise rates later - Automatic purchases every 4 weeks (no forgotten renewals) - Priority access to your time slots

Benefits for you: - Predictable, recurring income - Reduced student churn - Students can ask you to schedule lessons for them - Higher student commitment = better learning outcomes

How it works: Students toggle “Subscription” ON during checkout. Lessons auto-renew every 4 weeks in multiples of 4 (4 lessons for weekly, 8 for twice-weekly, etc.).

When You Can’t Serve a Student

Rule: If you are unable to teach a particular student (scheduling conflict, subject mismatch, capacity limits), **always recommend other RMT tutors**.

How to help students find another tutor: 1. Direct them to our Teachers page at https://russianmathtutors.com/teachers 2. Show them how to filter by subject, grade level, and availability 3. If you know a specific tutor who would be a good fit, recommend them by name 4. Never let a student leave without a path forward—we want to keep them in the RMT family

Getting Help with the Platform

For any platform questions—scheduling, technical issues, feature how-tos—use these resources:

- **Help Center** (? icon): Comprehensive articles and tutorials at russianmathtutors.com/docs/
- **Digital Assistant** (Chat icon): Available 24/7 on the bottom right of front pages. Ask it anything about the platform.

These resources have detailed, up-to-date information. Use them before contacting support.

Assessments: A Critical Tool

Rule: Always recommend assessments to students. Assessments help place students correctly and track their progress.

Two ways to use assessments: - **Platform assessments**: Direct students to https://russianmathtutors.com/assessments for standardized placement tests - **Imported quizzes**: Import quizzes from tutor Alexander Kolchinsky's library and assign them to your lessons

Writing Your Own Quizzes

You are encouraged to create and assign your own quizzes to lessons. This benefits both students and you:

- **For students**: Custom quizzes reinforce exactly what was covered in their lessons
- **For you**: You earn additional ranking points for every question you create

> **Ranking Bonus**: 5 quiz questions = 1 review equivalent for your tutor ranking

This means creating quality quiz content directly improves your visibility on the platform. Invest time in building a library of good questions for each grade level you teach.

Group Classes (Math Circles)

You can create group classes with 4-5 students for Math Circle-style instruction. Key points:

- Classes auto-renew weekly if students are enrolled
- Quizzes attached to group lessons assign to all students automatically
- Use clear naming: "Russian Math 6th Grade" (not "Q4 Grade 6 Class")

Important timezone note: The starting date/time is in YOUR timezone, but the "Lesson Days" field uses North America timezone. If you're in Europe or CIS, your starting date may need to be one day forward to match the correct day-of-week for US students.

See the Help Center for detailed setup instructions.

Resources

Curriculum Materials

- **BYOM Workbooks**: Available for download at https://russianmathtutors.com/russian-math-books
- **Full Lesson Slides**: 90-100 lessons per grade available in the platform. Complete slide decks for each BYOM grade level.
- **Tutor Intro Slides**: Standard introduction slides for new student onboarding
- **BYOM Q&A Document**: Detailed explanation of the Peterson methodology
- **Grade-level syllabi**: Request from your training coordinator

Lesson Recordings

All lessons are automatically recorded. This protects both teachers and students and ensures quality.

- Admin will share a **Google Drive folder** with you containing your lesson recordings
- Recordings are used for quality assurance, dispute resolution, and training
- You can review your own recordings to improve your teaching

Example recordings from experienced BYOM tutors are available upon request from management for training purposes.

Strict Platform Rules — Immediate Expulsion

The following actions will result in immediate termination from the platform:

- **Exchanging personal contact information** (emails, phone numbers, social media)
- **Arranging meetings outside the platform** (Zoom, Skype, in-person, etc.)
- **Making payment arrangements outside the platform** (Venmo, PayPal direct, cash, etc.)
- **Soliciting students to leave RMT** for private tutoring

These rules exist to protect students, ensure fair compensation, and maintain platform integrity. All lessons are recorded and communications are monitored. Violations are taken seriously with no exceptions.

Platform Tools

- **Help Center**: Click the ? icon or visit russianmathtutors.com/docs/ for FAQs and tutorials
- **Digital Assistant**: Chat icon on bottom right of front pages — 24/7 AI assistant for platform questions
- **Assessments**: https://russianmathtutors.com/assessments
- **Quiz Library**: Import from Alexander Kolchinsky's quizzes or create your own

- **Teacher Search**: https://russianmathtutors.com/teachers (for referring students)

Contact Information

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Welcome to the team!

Your work will shape how children understand mathematics.

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