



# Little Book of Big Numbers

Inside one of the world's leading global online  
education technology companies

2020 edition





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Part 1:

# Education by the Numbers

The education industry is arguably the single most important sector in the world. While you may have chosen to tuck memories of high school math into the darkest recesses of your mind the day you graduated, the fact is that the educated mind is the starting point for every great inventor, philanthropist, leader, teacher, or entrepreneur, to name just a few.

That's why we are so passionate about our transformative mission to empower and inspire every child for the future. Education is a trillion-dollar industry that extends far beyond the walls of the classroom and all the way back to the very beginnings of human progress ...

# A Glance at Global Education

Education stretches far back into our history and has taken on all shapes and forms through the ages. Some of the earliest recorded institutions and the events that have shaped education as we know it since.

## Approx. 2000 BCE

The first-ever formal schools existed around 4,000 years ago during the Middle Kingdom period in Egypt. That's 2,000 years before paper even existed!

## 551 BCE

Confucius was born in China. One of the most influential individuals in history, Confucius' teaching, shaped many beliefs and education philosophies still in place today.

## 387 BCE

The first higher education institution was established in Athens, Greece. Named simply "The Academy," the institution was founded by Plato and would later be attended by Socrates. Talk about a bigwig alumnus.

## 859 CE

The oldest university still in operation today, the University of al-Qarawiyyin, was established in Fez, Morocco. Just imagine, you can get a degree today from a university that is five times older than the United States itself!

## 1636 CE

Harvard was founded, the oldest university in the United States. Did you know that Harvard has the largest academic library in the world, with over 20 million books, and that there are 371,000 Harvard alumni alive today?

## 1994 CE

The world's first fully online university, the Open University of Catalonia in Spain, opened its "doors" 25 years ago. It took 2,000 years from the invention of paper to the first modern university and just 10 years between the birth of the internet and the first online university!



The **smallest school** in the world is in **Turin, Italy**, and has **only 1 student and 1 teacher**.



The average teacher in the United States works around **12–16 hours per day**. That's if you include commuting, lesson planning, talking to administration, and dealing with Timmy stuck in a tree, again.

The **average brick-and-mortar elementary school** in the United States costs \$16 million to construct. Before even switching on the lights!

**\$16 million**

**4.9 million**

The **largest school** in the world is the **Indira Gandhi National Open University** with **4.9 million enrolled students**. That's the same size as the population of New Zealand!



If you thought climbing out of bed in the morning was tough ... **school kids in Atule'er Village in Sichuan, China, climb 2,600 feet up a cliff every day to reach their school**—one of the most harrowing school commutes in the world.



**20% of the world's population is learning English** ... that's **1.5 billion people** learning English either as a foreign or second language. Wow.

# Comparing Schooling in the United States... and China

The United States and China are similar in more ways than you might imagine. They have the two largest economies in the world, they are almost identical in geographic area, and they even have almost exactly the same number of wealthy people (of the top 10% of wealthy people globally, China has 100 million, while the United States has 99 million).

So, how do they compare in education?

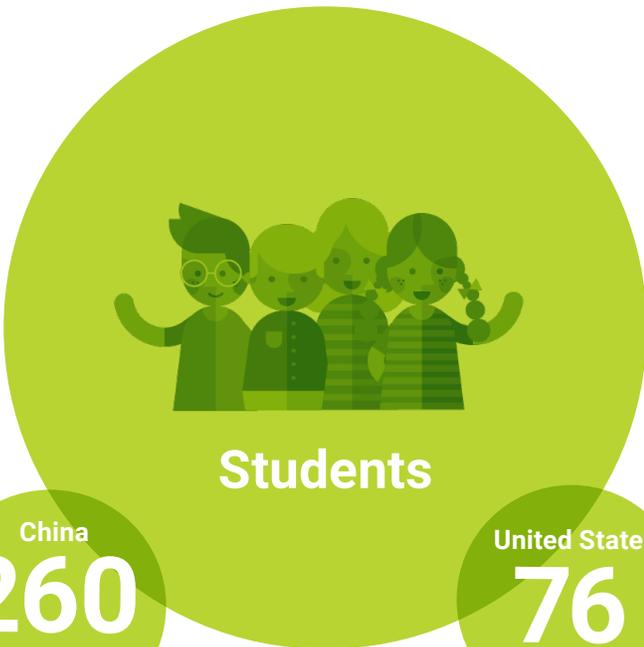




**Public Schools**

China  
**514,000**

United States  
**132,853**



**Students**

China  
**260**  
million

United States  
**76**  
million



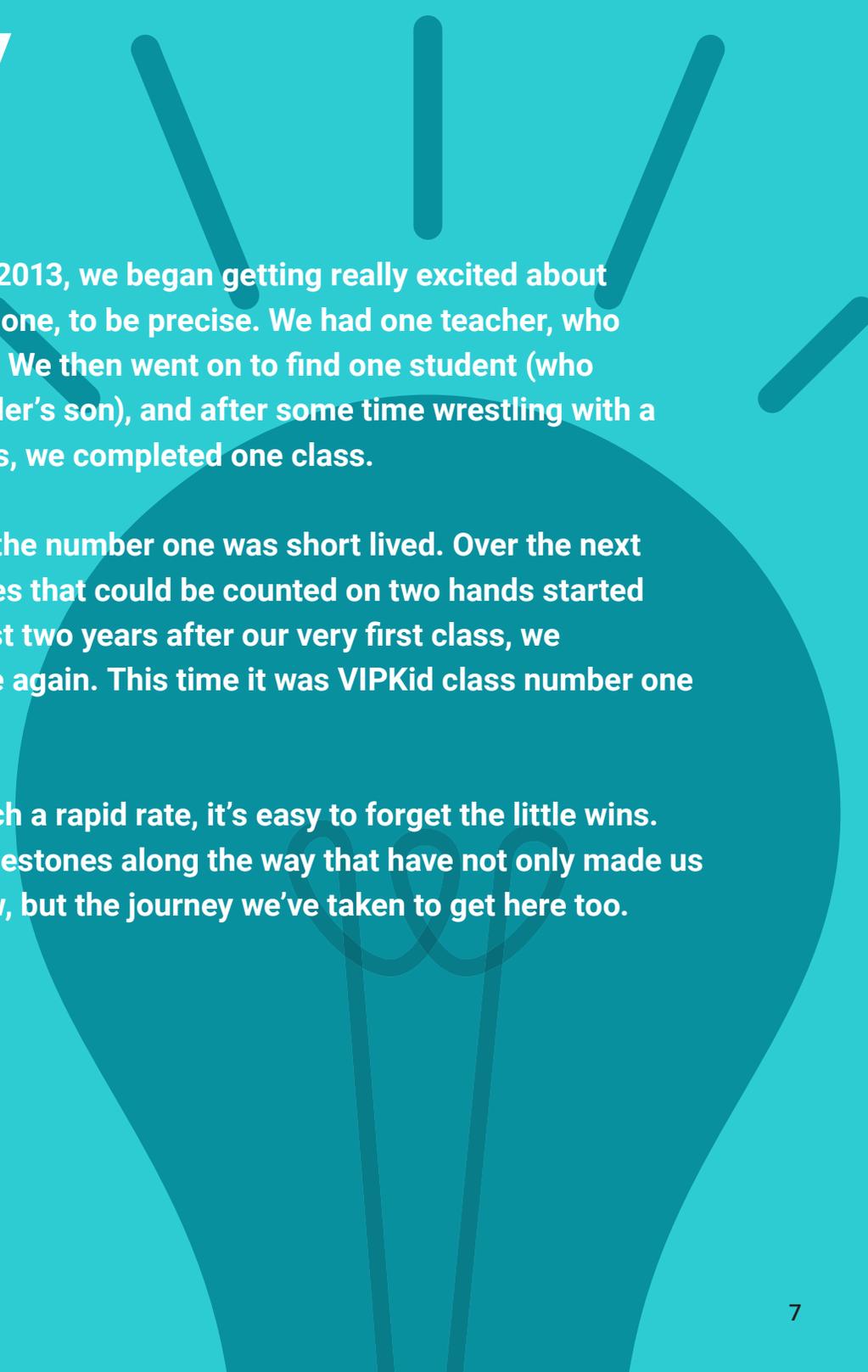
**Teachers**

China  
**15**  
million

United States  
**3.2**  
million

Part 2:

# The VIPKid Story



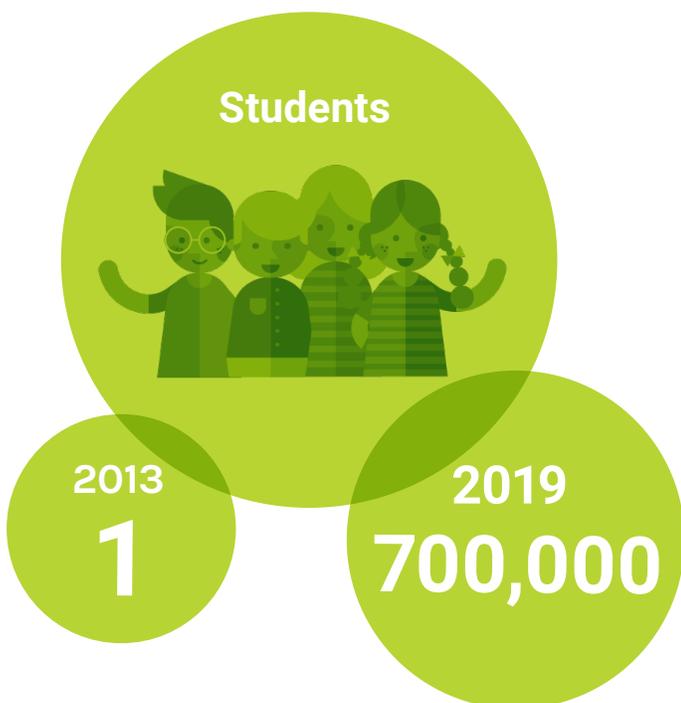
When we founded VIPKid in 2013, we began getting really excited about numbers. About the number one, to be precise. We had one teacher, who helped us create one lesson. We then went on to find one student (who happened to be our co-founder's son), and after some time wrestling with a technology entirely new to us, we completed one class.

But our little love story with the number one was short lived. Over the next six years, the early milestones that could be counted on two hands started multiplying. In a big way. Just two years after our very first class, we encountered the number one again. This time it was VIPKid class number one million.

When growth happens at such a rapid rate, it's easy to forget the little wins. But for us, it's those little milestones along the way that have not only made us appreciate where we are now, but the journey we've taken to get here too.



The **average school** in the United States is **42 years old**, and its corridors are filled with around **500 students**.



**VIPKid** is just **six years old**. But our virtual corridors are already **home to 100,000 schools' worth of kids**. Imagine where we'll be in 36 years' time!

# Our Journey So Far...

Our journey into what was then the unknown has already been filled with adventure. Our little education expedition started with a single crew member, and we soon picked up our first little passenger.

Since then, and a whole lot of new crew members and passengers later, our now not-so-small expedition has already visited 149 planets (countries) and counting

... and yet our mission remains unwavering.

## October 18, 2013

VIPKid takes off

Crew:

1 teacher (the bravest of us all)

1 student (our co-founder's-now fluent-son)

1 Dino (for moral support)

## January 2014

First class takes place.

## January 13, 2015

Our 100th student signs up. This is about the time our sleepless nights began to truly pay off and we realized we were onto something pretty cool.

## August 19, 2015

Student number 1,000 signs up. Yup, that's an average of 4.1 new students per day since student number 100. Things were starting to really take off.

## September 20, 2015

Our one millionth VIPKid class is taught.

We're cruising now.

## October 23, 2015

Not forgetting our teachers, of course, on this date our 100th teacher signs up from Ontario, Canada.

## December 29, 2015

Our 100,000th class is taught. That's a whopping 2.5 million class minutes facilitated through the VIPKid classroom. For perspective, that's like watching the entire 10 seasons of *Friends* 423 times!

## July 14, 2016

The winners of our first Beijing Trip competition come to Beijing. After having known their students only through the screen, this is the first time they've met in real life!

## March 23, 2017

Teacher number 10,000 joins us from Florida as we celebrate having teachers from all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and Canada teaching on our platform.

## March 10, 2018

Our first Journey Event takes place in Salt Lake City, Utah. Since then, Journey has attracted more than 2,464 participants, and former First Lady Laura Bush has even been a guest speaker!

## August 16, 2018

VIPKid fulfills a lifelong dream almost everyone has at some point—by adopting a panda! Mei Lun was born in the Atlanta Zoo, Georgia.

## September 19, 2019

VIPKid has now received enough funding to have built 60 brick-and-mortar schools, enough to house around 30,000 students. But ...

## April 2017

The VIPKid Rural Education Project is launched. The project connects teachers with students, at schools in rural China, who would not normally have access to the VIPKid platform.

## July 7, 2018

We welcome student number 500,000 to our platform. We're now half a million strong!

## October 29, 2018

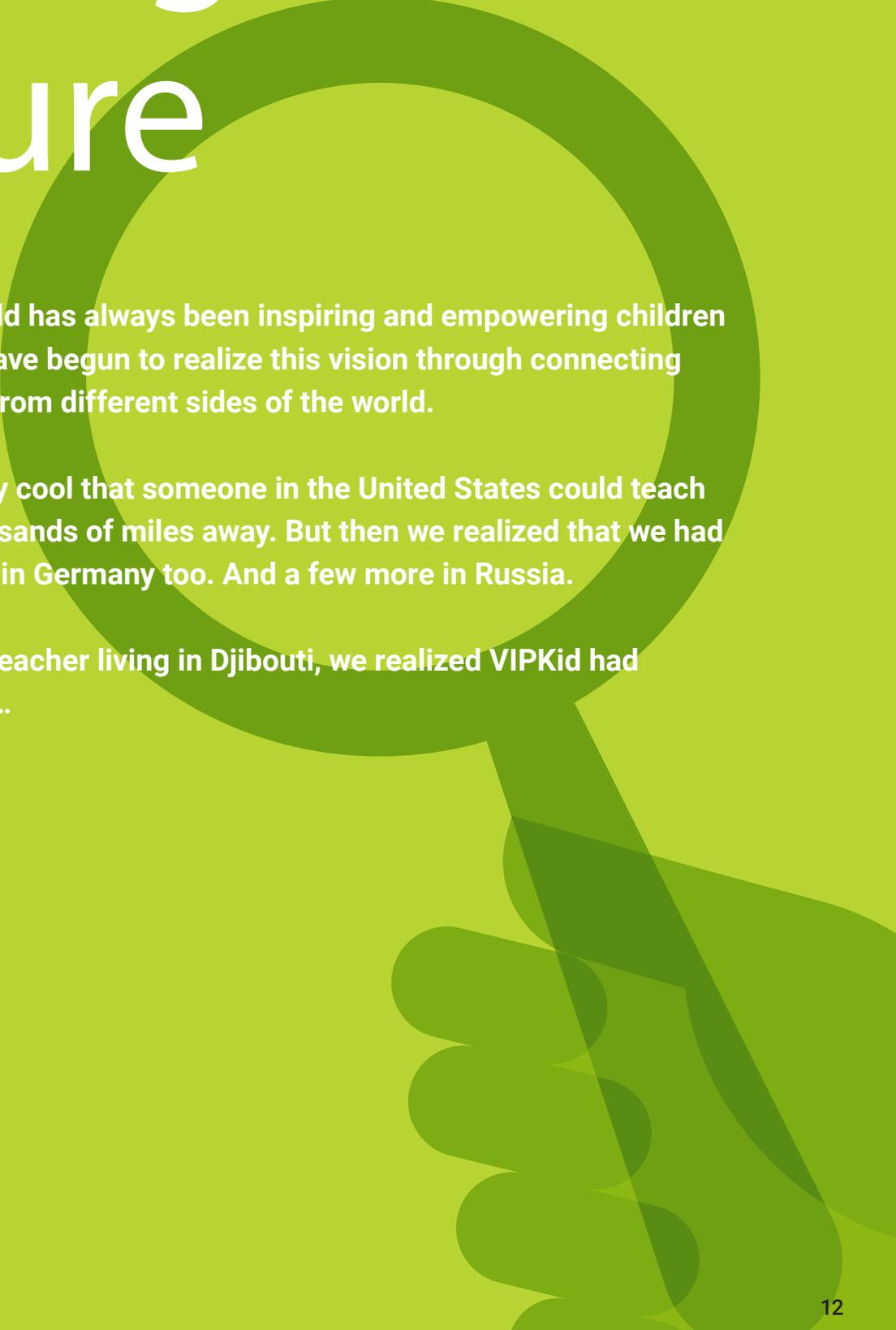
Always trying to keep up with the latest and greatest in technology, on this date VIPKid casually launched a satellite into space. A very real metaphor for our very high ambitions, if you will.

## November 30, 2019

Student number 700,000 signs up and our 100,000th teacher signs up from Alabama. We now have more teachers on the VIPKid platform than the number of teachers in Alabama itself ... more than twice as many, in fact!

Part 3:

# The Big Picture



Our mission for the world has always been inspiring and empowering children for the future, and we have begun to realize this vision through connecting students and teachers from different sides of the world.

We thought it was pretty cool that someone in the United States could teach someone in China, thousands of miles away. But then we realized that we had a few teachers residing in Germany too. And a few more in Russia.

When we discovered a teacher living in Djibouti, we realized VIPKid had become a global affair ...

# The World According to VIPKid

To some, VIPKid is nothing more than the student on their screen in the corner of the living room. For others, it's a 22-floor skyscraper in downtown Beijing, while for others still, it's a window into a world of opportunity thousands of miles away. But for us, it's all of the above and more. That's because VIPKid has connected the world in ways we could never have imagined.

The most classes taught in a single day is approximately

# 200,000

That's like **369 schools' worth of students** each receiving a tailored **one-to-one class** from their own private teacher.



The smallest country a teacher teaches from is **Monaco**. At 0.78 square miles, it's 8,000 times smaller than the area of Beijing!

# 4,430

years

That's the amount of time it would take for a single **teacher to teach every VIPKid class** that has taken place already.

# 6,100

miles

The average distance between students and teachers. That's like the length of our San Francisco office to Budapest, Hungary.



Teachers physically teach from **149 countries**, or **76% of the countries in the world!**

# 37

teachers

are literally on the **other side of the world** from **their students**. That's because the **antipode** (direct opposite point) of **Beijing** is **General Conesa, Argentina**, at 12,300 miles.

# If VIPKid Were a School

Well, VIPKid is a school. Kind of. We just have 100,000 classrooms ... slightly scattered about. But it's fun to imagine what it would be like if we were just a regular school, complete with big "orange" buses, the largest cafeteria known to mankind, and a school mascot named Dino.

Here's what that would look like:

**7,700** school buses



Just spare tires alone would cost **\$3.08 million**.

We could enroll all the primary school kids in Belgium!



We'd spend **\$1.63 million** per day on school lunches! That's **43,750 gallons** of lunch time milk cartons ...



We'd need **31 million square feet** of classroom space alone! Try throwing a paper plane from one end of that class to the next.

We'd have a

**14** million sq. ft.

staff parking (half the size of Central Park!)

We'd need a school hall as big as

**16** Yankee stadiums

Even the biggest stadium in the world, in Pyongyang, would be **8 times** too small.

## Part 4:

# Teachers

Finding the very first teachers to teach on the VIPKid platform was no easy feat. We had to change their worldview. We had to assure them that learning could occur through a screen. And that 25 minutes could have a real impact on a student's life. And, of course, that they could make a living teaching from home.

It worked.

Teachers have since become the life and soul of VIPKid. Numbering in the thousands, and teaching from every corner of the world, teachers have helped propel our humble two-person classroom into the largest one-to-one online education platform in the world!

And while numbers are the name of the game in this eBook, teachers are far from just numbers. With hundreds of meet-ups taking place around the world, Journey Conferences, and unique trips to Beijing, we like to think of the teacher community as a (very) big family.

That happens to be 100,000 strong...



# Teachers ... More than a Number

In 1933 a baby was born. It was a year most of us cannot picture even if we tried. Franklin D. Roosevelt was president of the United States. Color television was not even an idea yet. And a three-minute call from New York to LA cost around \$15 (the equivalent of \$220 today).

The changes that would occur during that baby's lifetime would be unfathomable at the time. That baby saw the invention of space flight. She watched a man walk on the moon. Experienced the invention of the internet. And today, she teaches with VIPKid.

100,000

teachers



That's more than the total number of public school teachers in Maine, Utah, Oregon, and Nevada combined!

67 years

is the age difference between our oldest and youngest teacher! For perspective, our oldest teacher was born 50 years before the internet, while our youngest teacher was born around the time the first episode of *SpongeBob SquarePants* came out.

The most classes taught by a single teacher is an incredible

25,000

That's 520 straight days of teaching!

50 states, D.C., and Canada ...

Our teachers hail from every conceivable corner of the United States and Canada.



There have been 1,377 official teacher-organized meet-ups that have happened around the world, with over 12,000 teachers attending them in total. That means VIPKid is probably the most successful disseminator of the color orange that the world has ever experienced. Probably.

## JOURNEY

VIPKid's Journey Conference in Washington, D.C., had over 600 teachers in attendance from 42 states, D.C., and Canada ... among them they'd taught a whopping 1.2 million classes!



## Part 5:

# Students

And, finally, we come to our students—the ones we do all this for in the first place. Just like the teachers on our platform, our student numbers have blossomed over our six short years in existence, and for many of them, VIPKid has opened the door to a whole new world.

VIPKid means the ability to connect students with teachers no matter where they live. From the megacities of Beijing, Shanghai, and Chongqing to the villages of Gansu or Anhui, students are connecting with teachers in ways never before possible. For these students, a one-to-one connection with their very own teacher is not just a class, it's a way to connect with a different culture. It's the chance to have undivided attention in learning. Or the freedom to not feel shy in their own personal education journey.

We believe that every single student can benefit uniquely from this connection.

And there are 700,000 students who might agree.

# Inspiring and Empowering the Many

There is something special that happens every time a student sees their teacher on the screen. Their eyes light up. Their excitement peaks. Their day is basically made. And why not? Their mentor and friend have just arrived in their living room.

Although learning happens between individuals who couldn't be farther apart, when class begins, it's hard to believe it's not happening in the same room. The online classroom becomes a place where genuine connections are not just built but thrive as students and teachers embark on their journey together.



700,000 students of a new generation. VIPKid reaches almost a million students with access to private, one-to-one English schooling, and counting.



1,534 students

are learning in the town where Confucius was born (Qufu). That's how many active students are based in Jinin, the closest city to Qufu.

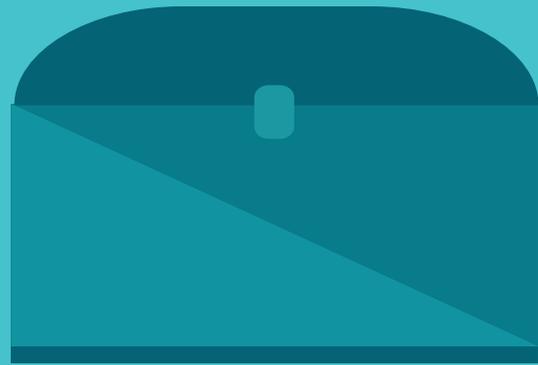


Our most veteran active student signed up just a month after our first class! The student who's been with us the longest signed up on February 17, 2014!

Dedication is

2,278

That's the number of classes taken by our most knowledge-hungry student since April 27, 2017. At 25 minutes per class, that's like 39 straight round-the-clock days of learning English.



9,703 VIPKid students are named BaoBao, or "Little Treasure." Many Chinese kids have family nicknames like this, which can stick around even until adulthood (Mom will never let go of a good, cringeworthy nickname). And the most common student name overall? Amy, at 11,801!



180,000 classes take place every day

That's 180,000 moments of unique cross-cultural interaction between a teacher and a student from opposite ends of the world. Talk about bridging cultures!

# Conclusion

And that brings to a close our little book of BIG numbers. You've now looked at enough numbers to fill a math exam, but when all is said and done, it all comes down to just a single number.

**The number ONE.**

Just as we began our journey focused on the number one; today, millions of classes later, the number one remains as important to us as it's ever been. One student. One teacher. One life-changing educational experience.

As we continue on our journey to inspire and empower every child for the future, our growth, as well as the growth of online learning at large, will continue to be a story in itself. The online classroom is not a novel way to learn a language; it's the start of an evolution in the way we experience education.

**But at the center of it all, is always ONE.**



### Where's Dino?

If you're not already familiar with our fluffy mascot, you will be soon.

There are already 15,126 Dino mascots all over the world. Keep your eyes peeled!

## Over the past five years

VIPKid has been on a journey that has fundamentally changed the lives of students and teachers everywhere. We grew from just a single teacher in 2014, using a patchy Skype connection reminiscent of the late '90s, into the 100,000+ teachers we are today. We teach nearly a million kids and, would you believe it, we teach every student one to one.

Learn more at:  
[VIPKid.com](https://VIPKid.com)