

## Module 13 – Finding Work

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## I. Types of language teaching institutions

In this module you will find a wealth of information on getting your first job overseas and the teaching opportunities in different countries.

There are several types of institutions and language schools you could be working for.

### **Language Schools/Academies/Institutes**

Language Schools/Academies/Institutes are generally for-profit businesses. They can be small or large with branches located in one city or around the world. They are probably the most widespread of institutions and the easiest places to find work. Most will require teachers to hold a TEFL/TESOL certificate but will not require a degree in education. Such institutions do not always offer the best salaries but they are excellent places to start out. You can learn a great deal having to work with a wide variety of students – children and adults – and with other experienced teachers from around the world.

### **Summer Programmes**

Summer programmes may be affiliated with a language school/academy or even a public or private institution. Others are businesses that run only during the summer months and offer programmes both in the students' home country and/or abroad. These programmes are usually set up to offer English classes in the morning and sports/social activities in the afternoon. Teachers are usually required to organise or take part in the afternoon activities. These schools can also be residential.

### **International Schools**

International schools are usually private institutions with a mixed population of both expatriate and local children. Since these schools are usually accredited with different national and international educational organisations or government offices, they may have stricter hiring policies. In most cases, they will require a PGCE, QTS or State Board Teacher Certification for a full-time position. However, they may offer contracts for part-time work or extracurricular English classes. Moreover, in countries where there is a shortage of English teachers, a TEFL/TESOL certificate will most likely be sufficient for a full-time teaching position.

### **Universities**

Work at a university is usually better paid but harder to come by. It is often offered on a short-term or course-by-course basis. Part of the reason for this is that most countries require higher degrees of their university professors. Moreover, the degrees often need to be officially translated and evaluated by a governing body before a longer term contract can be offered.

### **Service Schools**

Service Schools are schools for children of people in the military services (often primary and junior age). As these schools usually follow the official curriculum of whatever country they serve, teacher certification is usually required.

**Expatriate Schools**

Expatriate Schools are schools run in a similar way to schools in the UK or the US. Like International Schools, they are usually accredited with national and/or international educational organisations and tend to have stricter hiring policies.

**Working for Large Companies**

Multinational companies such as British Petroleum and several large banks employ teachers/language trainers, often on a freelance basis. Knowledge of and background in the subject are often prerequisites for the job.

**Private Teaching**

Working for yourself can be the most lucrative (as it's often cash-in-hand) though it can be unreliable. Work is found through word-of-mouth, local advertisements and recommendations. It is usually easy to find work as a private teacher if you are in a place that lacks native English speakers and the demand for English is high.

## II. Applying for a teaching position

### 1. Your CV/résumé

Your CV (curriculum vitae), together with your letter of application, is often your first contact with a potential employer. It is therefore important to get it right and make a good first impression. Many schools receive hundreds of CV's each year, so if yours isn't up to scratch, it will probably end up in the bin. A CV is usually referred to as a résumé in the USA.

As with any job, a professional résumé is a must. Nowadays, many schools prefer you to e-mail your application and attach your résumé. The advantage of this is that it is quick, cheap and easy.

For your résumé to be a success it needs to have several important characteristics:

#### **Make it look professional**

It is important that your CV looks professional. Use a proper word processing program; don't cobble something together in your own handwriting on a few pieces of paper.

#### **Choose a good photo**

Some schools will ask you to send a photograph with your application. Ensure that the photo you send of yourself is a good one - a clear professional snap. You have only one opportunity to visually show your personality, and a smiling, energetic face on a photograph beats a dowdy passport snap, hands down.

#### **Personalise it**

Try to personalise your CV to the job being offered. If you will be teaching business English, emphasise that stint you had working in an office. If you will be teaching young kids, mention that you have younger siblings.

#### **Remember to check**

Be sure to check your CV before you send it out. Perhaps you can get a friend to double-check it for you.

#### **Good English is important!**

Remember that you are applying for an English teaching job; the last thing your employer wants to see is sloppy spelling and grammar!

Here is a sample résumé with some guidance notes. Don't just copy this sample – it is important that your own personality and skills shine through. However, do re-fresh your résumé regularly and ensure that it gives the best possible impression of you to who you hope will be your new employer.

### **Finally, let's take a look at the following tips for writing a CV/résumé**

- You CV shouldn't be more than 2 pages in a 10 point font!
- Don't waffle – most recruitment officers spend no more than 1 minute skimming through a CV. If you write too much you will end up cast to one side within a minute.
- Sell yourself – your CV is a reflection of your skills and abilities and the first step on your way to a new life teaching overseas.
- However, DON'T lie – you will get found out eventually and there is little satisfaction to be gained from getting a job on anyone else's merits other than your own.
- Continually update your CV – there is nothing worse for a school than receiving a CV that is 2 years out of date.
- Don't write a cover letter the size of a holiday novel! No more than 1 side of paper and keep it to the point.
- Check your CV for typing and grammatical errors.
- Take some time over your CV and get some friends to look over it and give you feedback.

## **2. Your letter of application**

Remember that the letter of application is your first contact with a potential employer, and care must be taken in drafting your letter, especially if it is for a teaching position. Your letter should:

- be typed
- be relevant to the job you are applying for (unless it is a speculative letter in which case it should be relevant to the sort of job you would like with the organisation)
- show that you are enthusiastic
- be concise
- have no spelling mistakes

## **3. The job interview**

Now that you have impressed the school with your professional résumé, the next stage is an interview. Depending on your circumstances, this may take place in person or over the phone.

### **For your interview to be a success keep the following in mind:**

- First impressions are important. Have a friendly manner.
- For a face-to-face interview dress appropriately. Don't look too informal.
- Be honest with the interviewer. Don't lie.
- If they ask you a question and you don't know the answer, admit it but add that you are willing to learn and that the only way that you get real teaching experience is to stand in front of a class.

- Inject a bit of humour into the interview if you can. Language school owners appreciate teachers with a cheerful disposition because humour is an important part of a good lesson.

The interview is your best chance to sell yourself to an employer. Therefore, preparation is hugely important. Practise answering the following questions before the interview. Here are some questions commonly asked by employers.

### **Experience, interests and skills**

- Where were you born? Which countries have you lived in?
- What are your hobbies and interests?
- Do you speak other languages?
- What special skills do you have that will help you in teaching?
- What are some of your strengths and weaknesses and how could they affect your work as an English teacher?

### **Motivation**

- Why did you choose to teach?
- Why do you want to work as an English teacher?
- Why do you want to live and work in this country?
- Why do you want to work at this school?
- Which levels would you prefer to teach? (e.g. Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced)
- Would you prefer to teach adults or children?

### **Teaching methods and techniques**

- Do you prefer to use textbooks or your own materials? Which textbooks have you used?
- Have you ever taught or what do you know about examination classes? (e.g. PET, KET, First Certificate)
- How would you interest a group of adolescents?
- How would you settle a group of lively/rowdy students at the beginning of a lesson?
- How would you present/teach the present perfect simple tense (or another language point)?

### **Future plans**

- How long do you intend to stay in the country?
- Where do you see yourself in 2/5/10 years?
- Do you plan to stay in teaching long-term?

Turn the tables and ask the interviewer some of your own questions. It shows that you're interested and helps you to find out as much about the school as possible.

### **Here are some questions you may consider asking the interviewer:**

- How many contract hours will I have?
- What is the salary (and how much is it after deductions)?

- How well equipped is the school/institution? Do the students use a course book/language lab/computer room?
- Am I expected to take part in any extra-curricular activities?
- Will you help me with my visa?
- What will I have to do exactly (or words to this effect)?
- Will I have anything else to do apart from teaching?
- Is there any sick/holiday pay?
- How much notice do I have to give if I don't like the job?
- Is it easy to get a work permit?
- Will I get a contract and if so what type?
- What kind of health insurance do teachers have?
- How many of my contract hours are contact/teaching hours and how many are allotted for lesson preparation, materials development and/or training?
- Is there any in-house training?

### III. Teaching destinations

#### 1. What to consider before choosing your destination

TEFL jobs are available worldwide, however in some places the demand for teachers is higher than in others. When choosing the country where to teach, apart from its general attractiveness you should consider:

- the salary
- the taxes
- the accommodation
- the cost of living
- the qualification requirements for teachers
- the teaching conditions
- the visa requirements

We shall now take a brief look at some popular teaching destinations. They are all exciting places to visit and working, but each of them has its own unique features.

#### 2. China

Why choose China?

- Beautiful and fascinating with plenty to see
- The chance to experience a country undergoing major cultural change
- The food!
- High wages and low living costs
- Lots of teaching posts

China is one of the world's oldest civilisations but one of its newest industrial powerhouses. Its attractions lie as much in the past as they do the future, from the ancient sights of the Forbidden City and the Great Wall to the buzz of Beijing.

The demand for TEFL teachers in China is very high. There are over 400 million English language students across this vast country.

#### Regions and contracts

TEFL jobs are available all year round and can last from 1 month to 12 months and longer.

The main TEFL regions in China are: Shanghai, Guiyang, Hangzhou, Kunming, Yinchuan, Yan'an, Yanliang, Weinan, Xianyang, Lianyungang, Wuhan, Zhengzhou, Dalian, Jinan, Xian, Dandong, Shenyang, Tangshan, Beijing; and many other smaller towns and cities and rural areas.



## Schools

The following is a list of institutions you can teach at in China:

- State and private secondary schools: General English
- Colleges and universities: General English, Business English
- State and private primary schools: General English, English for Younger Learners
- Foreign language institutes: General English, Business English
- Teacher training colleges: General English, English for Specific Purposes (ESP)
- In-house company training: General English, Business English, ESP
- Private tuition: General English, Business English, ESP

## 3. Japan

### Why Choose Japan?

- Polite, friendly people
- Safe
- Fascinating culture
- Enigmatic mix between the modern and the traditional
- Plenty of teaching opportunities

Mount Fuji is the perfect analogy for modern Japan: symmetrical, beautiful, but with a fiery heart raging under the surface. Walking around the sanitised streets and grand shopping centres, you're never far from a sight that will get your heart racing – whether it's the magnificent imperial palace or a man in a green dress casually shopping for food.

The demand for TEFL teachers in Japan is very high.

### Regions and contracts

The main TEFL regions of Japan are Tokyo, Osaka, Fukuoka, Kobe and Kyoto. The academic year starts in April, which is also when most 12-month contracts start. Usually teachers get a 6-12 month contract, although there is a range of short-term jobs that can be arranged in-country.

### Schools

There are several places where you could teach in Japan, these are:

- Private language schools: General English, Business English
- State and private schools: General English
- State and private kindergartens: English for Young Learners
- Corporate in-house Language Programs: General English, Business English
- Private tutorials (conversation lounges, "ladies' classes", etc.): General English, English for Specific Purposes

## 4. South Korea

### Why Choose South Korea?

- Rich culture with friendly people
- A very safe place to live
- Easy to get around
- Low cost of living with high salaries

South Korea is on the rise having developed from being one of Asia's poorest countries to one of its richest. The country's economic success is matched by its cultural richness and nowhere is this more evident than in Seoul. Amongst the skyscrapers and hotels, centuries-old palaces and shrines remain intact and there's a sense of history that goes back to the Joseon Dynasty of the 14th century. Added to all this is its lively social scene and breadth of shopping opportunities.

There is a very high demand for native English and especially American teachers in South Korea.

### Regions and contracts

The main TEFL regions in South Korea are Seoul and Pusan. There are teaching jobs available all year round and the contracts usually last from 6 – 12 months.

### Schools

There are several institutions in South Korea where you could teach, these are:

- Private English language institutes (hagwans): General English, Business English
- University academic departments: General English, English for Specific Purposes (ESP)
- Government & private research institutes: General English, ESP
- Corporate in-house language programs: General English, Business English
- State & private kindergartens: English for Younger Learners

## 5. Hong Kong

### Why Choose Hong Kong?

- Vibrant, 24-hour city
- Exciting events year-round
- Easy access to other East Asian countries
- High salaries and good job opportunities

As an ex-British colony and gateway to China, Hong Kong is a city of contrasts perfectly demonstrated by its trade history: from soft silk in the 16th century and intoxicating opium in the 18th and 19th centuries, to the hi-tech electronics of today.

The demand for English teachers is high in Hong Kong.

## Contracts

Since being handed back to China in 1997, Hong Kong's Chinese-speaking state school system has adopted the Native English Teacher (NET) scheme, which recruits many overseas teachers. You can get a contract for 3 months up to 24 months.

## Schools

There are several institutions where you can work in Hong Kong, these are:

- Private language schools: General English, Business English
- In-company: General English, Business English
- English-medium schools: General English, English for Younger Learners
- 'English clubs': General English, Conversation English
- State secondary schools: General English

## 6. Taiwan

### Why Choose Taiwan?

- Plenty to do, whether you prefer the city or the countryside
- Excellent public transport
- Lots of teaching posts
- Good opportunity to save money

Being controlled by the Chinese, Dutch and Japanese at different points has left a country in search of its own identity. Gleaming metropolises with bright neon signs have risen from the ashes of dictatorship, making Taiwan the model for progress in Asia, but with a great respect for its history.

The demand for TEFL teachers in Taiwan is high. There is a preference for North American teachers, but reputable schools will employ other nationalities as long as they speak clearly.

### Regions and contracts

The main TEFL regions in Taiwan are Taipei and Kaohsiung.

There are peaks in demand at the end of June and late August. The length of the contract varies depending on when you start, but it usually is 2-12 months.

## Schools

There are several types of places where you can teach in Taiwan, these are:

- In-company: General English, Business English
- University English departments: General English, English for Academic Purposes (EAP), English for Specific Purposes
- Private primary & secondary schools: General English, English for Younger Learners
- State primary & secondary schools: General English, English for Young Learners
- Private language schools (buhсібans): General English, EAP, Business English, TOEFL, GRE (university entry)

## 7. Thailand

### Why Choose Thailand?

- Beautiful country
- Friendly people
- Cheap cost of living
- Lots of teaching opportunities

Thailand's position as a getaway for the rich and famous and a gateway for budget travelers hasn't diminished its charms. Hedonism and spirituality are covered in large doses, from the excess of all-night beach parties through to the serenity of ancient temples. Thankfully, the infusion of tourist Baht has not overrun the traditional way of life: Buddhist monks remain a regular sight and most of the population still makes its money from the land.

The demand for English teachers in Thailand is very high.

### Regions and contracts

The main TEFL regions include Bangkok, Chiang Mai and, to a lesser extent, Hat Yai, Songkhla and other provinces. The length of a contract can vary between 3 and 12 months.

### Schools

There are several types of teaching you can do in Thailand, these include:

- Private & public universities: General English, EAP, ESP, TOEIC, TOEFL, IELTS, GMAT
- State primary & secondary schools: General English, English for Younger Learners
- Teachers' colleges: General English, EAP, ESP, IELTS, TOEFL
- International private secondary schools: General English, English for Younger Learners
- Summer camps: General English, English for Younger Learners
- Private language institutes: General English, Business English, IELTS, TOEFL, TOEIC, English for Younger Learners

## 8. The UK

### Why Choose The United Kingdom?

- Plenty to see and do
- Lots of jobs
- Teach students from every nation

The United Kingdom is a diverse combination of native communities and people from across the world - the entire Commonwealth condensed into one small group of islands. From Lands End in the south to John O'Groats in the north, you'll never want for something to do: exciting nightlife, historic buildings, quaint villages and rolling green fields will fill your days to bursting point.

The demand for English teachers in the UK is high but competitive.



## Regions and contracts

The main TEFL regions in the UK are London, Oxford, Cambridge, Bath, Bournemouth, Brighton, Hastings, Edinburgh and smaller towns and cities. TEFL jobs are available all year-round. You can usually get a contract for 3-12 months.

## Schools

There are several types of institutes where you can teach, these include:

- Private language schools: General English, Business English, Cambridge PET, FCE, CAE, CPE, IELTS
- Summer schools/study tours: General English
- Migrant English programs: General English, English for Younger Learners

## 9. The USA

### Why Choose The United States?

- Vast country with lots to see and do
- Easy to get around
- Huge variety of students
- Lots of jobs for those able to work here

There are innumerable slices of the American pie and the country's most visited destinations, like New York and Florida, only go some way towards characterising this world superpower. Covering 6 time zones, 50 states and all the major climate zones from tropical to polar, America feels like several countries rolled into one. The thrill of seeing such iconic imagery as New York yellow taxis and the Hollywood sign up close is matched by discovering parts of the country and its people that are among its best kept secrets.

The demand for EFL/ESL teachers in the United States is high and competitive.

## Regions and contracts

The main TEFL regions include all major cities, particularly New York, Washington, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego and Miami. You can work here for a period of time from 3-24 months.

## Schools

There are three main types of schools in the USA where you can teach English. These are:

- ESL private language institutes: General English, Business English, TOEFL, ECCE
- University language programs: General English, TOEFL, English for Specific Purposes
- Migrant English programs: General English, TOEFL, English for Specific Purposes

## 10. Australia

### Why Choose Australia?

- Massive country with lots to see and do
- Amazing, varied flora and fauna
- Lots of job opportunities
- Better salaries than many western countries

Similar in size to the USA, Australia has only a fraction of the population and all the wild-roaming space you could possibly need, complete with stunning scenery and all manner of wildlife. Its coastal cities are also part of its pulling power, as is the fascination with its ancient past. Long before European explorers trail blazed their way through the country, the Aboriginal people, one of the world's oldest civilizations, thrived and there has been a concentrated effort in recent years to preserve their culture. Meanwhile, a cultural mix has penetrated the cities which are enriched with people from across the globe, including Chinese and Greek communities.

The demand for English teachers in Australia is high, but very competitive.

### Regions and contracts

The main TEFL regions include Sydney, Perth, Brisbane, Cairns and Melbourne. The busiest TEFL periods are from September until June. Most teachers work on a 13-week contract.

### Schools

There are several types of teaching you can do in Australia, these are:

- ELICOS language schools: General English, Cambridge (PET, FCE, CAE, CPE), Business English, EAP, IELTS, TOEIC
- University ELICOS centers: General English, EAP, IELTS
- Private non-ELICOS language schools: General English, Cambridge (PET, FCE, CAE, CPE), Business English, EAP, IELTS, TOEIC
- TAFE colleges: General English, ESP
- AMES: General English, EAP, ESP

## 11. Europe

### Why Choose Europe?

- Magnificent scenery
- Lots of jobs
- Reasonable salaries
- Plenty to see and do
- Beautiful cities

The demand for TEFL teachers is probably the highest in Poland, Greece and the Czech Republic, although these countries are very popular with teachers so it might not be easy to get a job here. In Eastern Europe, the demand for TEFL teachers is moderate to high. In

Western Europe, the demand is relatively lower, with the exception of Scandinavia and the Southern countries like Greece and Spain. Most of the demand is in the business sector.

The main TEFL regions are usually the capital cities and other major cities. There are many different types of places where you could teach. These differ from country to country.

## 12. South East Asia

### Why Choose South East Asia?

- Beautiful countries
- Intriguing scenery
- Low cost of living
- Plenty to see and do
- Fascinating cultures

The demand for English teachers is high in most South East Asian countries. In Vietnam, the demand for English teachers is probably the highest, since there are not enough people to fill the positions. There are a lot of English teachers in Malaysia and Singapore, which makes it hard for TEFL teachers from abroad to find a job here.

## 13. The rest of Asia

This includes all Asian countries except the South Eastern countries.

### Why Choose Asia?

- Fascinating cultures
- Interesting countries
- No income tax!
- Intriguing scenery
- Plenty to see and do

The demand for English teachers is moderate to high in most of Asia. The market in Saudi Arabia is very competitive, although it is nearly impossible for women to teach here due to cultural differences.

## 14. Africa

### Why Choose Africa?

- A whole continent to explore!
- Lots to see and do
- Lots of volunteering opportunities
- Very rewarding work

From the world's highest free-standing mountain to a lake whose depths reach 150m below sea level, you could search high and low and never find a more varied and enchanting place



to visit. Here you will find more types of climate, culture and landscape than anywhere in the world, so it's no wonder that so many travellers fall in love with this continent.

The demand for TEFL teachers in Africa is high. Most opportunities are on a voluntary basis. Paid work is generally only available in the more developed countries such as South Africa. You can teach general English and English for Younger Learners at primary and secondary schools. You can teach general English and Business English at private language schools.

## **15. Latin America**

Why Choose Latin America?

- Beautiful countries
- No degree necessary
- Lots of job opportunities
- Plenty to see and do
- Many different cultures
- Rewarding jobs
- Low cost of living

The demand for TEFL teachers in all of Latin America is high. In Ecuador and Guatemala the demand is very high. However, there is a lot of competition from American TEFL teachers.