



cactus

TEFL

The Little Book of TEFL Jobs



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Contents

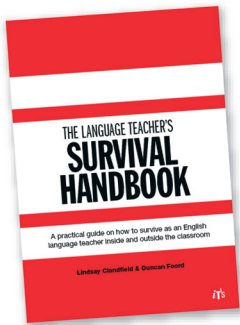
Overview	4
What to consider before you apply	
- Professional considerations	6
- Economic considerations	7
- Social and cultural considerations	8
- Political and geographical considerations	9
Ways to look for work	
- Recruitment sites	11
- Recruitment agencies	12
- Contacting schools directly	13
Creating your CV - dos	15
Creating your CV - don'ts	16
Tips for face-to-face interviews	17
Tips for telephone interviews	18
Contracts	19
TEFL in the UK	20
Summer work in the UK	21
TEFL in Europe	22
TEFL in Asia	23
TEFL in the Americas	24
TEFL in Australasia, Indonesia and Africa	25
Cactus TEFL and Jobs	26

Overview

Opportunities for working within the EFL industry worldwide are vast, and ever-increasing.

For some people TEFL is a short-term project, undertaken for a year or two or sometimes even less, whilst for others EFL teaching is a career. Whatever your intention, there will certainly be opportunities for you.

If you want to get the most out of your teaching projects, and don't wish to work on a private basis, the key is to find a good job with a good school. Although there are plenty of jobs around, not all of them will provide you with an experience to remember for the right reasons! Hopefully this book will give you the information you need to ensure that you get the most out your EFL experiences, making them as enjoyable and enlightening as they have the great potential to be.



The essential guide to surviving as an English language teacher

www.its-teachers.com



Factors to Consider Before You Apply for Work

Professional Considerations

You have got your TEFL qualification and therefore a foot on the ladder. How high you wish to climb is up to you. You may already have some teaching experience, but if not you need to establish how much academic/professional support you want when you start your job.

You also need to consider whether you will be happy to work in a school that may not have an extensive resource library. This can often be the case in smaller schools, or those situated in remote locations, but can be great for the more creative amongst us!

Many jobs will involve teaching specialist learners as well as General English courses. If so, you might wish to do an extra training course (online or face-to-face) to help equip you. Some schools will actually offer in-house training in specialist teaching, indeed, opportunities to enhance your career in general- these are often the larger language schools, but it's wise to ask about this in your interview.

Economic Considerations

It is rare, especially as a newly-qualified teacher (and irrespective of where you go) that your salary will be substantial in Western terms. Rates of pay do vary from country to country though, and if you are hoping to try to save any money during your stint you need to research carefully in which countries this may be feasible. Countries like Japan, Taiwan and South Korea tend to be traditionally the best paying places and you will often be offered extra perks such as financial reimbursement of flights upon completion of your contract.

It is worth bearing in mind that the most lucrative type of EFL teaching is often associated with the teaching of Business or Technical English, should this be something that you are interested in.

If you are going abroad, always ensure that you have enough money to get by on whilst you await your first pay cheque. This includes covering any housing deposits that may be required either by the school or private landlords.

Social and Cultural Considerations

Once you are TEFL qualified you will be filled with a much-deserved sense of achievement, confidence and excitement. The world will be your oyster! This said, be sure that if your new job is far away and you have not been this far afield before, you prepare yourself for the culture shock and expect a little homesickness initially.

Before you begin applying for jobs abroad it is important to think about whether you would be happy to be the only native English teacher in a school, or town, or whether you'd rather have others in the vicinity. This is especially important if you do not speak the local language. Careful research about your prospective school will tell you how many teachers are employed and if you will be the only native English speaker.

Different cultures have different values and beliefs, whether you consider them to be right or wrong. Obviously you must bear these in mind - if you hope to work in a country where you may encounter discrimination on the grounds of your gender, race, colour or age, be prepared.

Political and Geographical Considerations

If you wish to use your qualification to teach abroad, you may already have a specific country in mind. Whatever your situation, it is essential to find out as much as you can about any country where you are considering accepting work. Things to ascertain include:

- Whether it is politically stable. If not, is spending time there a risk that you are willing to take?
- If it has the type of climate that you can live in.
- If flights there are affordable enough that people can visit you/you can come home for special occasions (if this is something that is important to you).
- What the health service in that country is like, especially if you have any medical conditions that may be affected by this. It is also very important to get any vaccinations that may be required for travel to your country of choice.
- If you are eligible for the right type of visa to work in the country. If you are unsure of this, always check with the embassy.



CELTA/Trinity Cert TESOL



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- **Business English**



For a full list of these and other teacher development courses see www.cactustechners.com



Ways To Look for Work

Recruitment Sites

Sites such as www.cactustefl.com/jobs/ provide easy and effective ways to look for work. If you type 'TEFL Jobs' into any search engine, you will find hundreds of websites to trawl through, bear in mind that some will be limited or out of date though. There is little more frustrating than finding your perfect job, only to realise that it was posted 8 months ago and has been filled!

These sites do have other pitfalls, one of which is that it is hard to tell which ads are from legitimate schools and which ones, well...are not. Research any potential school as well as you can before you apply and keep an eye on any forums for reports of 'cowboy' schools. Obviously some of what you find will need to be taken with a pinch of salt!

Many of these sites enable you to register your details and CV to save time when you apply for jobs. This is great for time-saving, but resist the urge to 'blanket' apply for jobs; make sure you amend each application to make it relevant.

Recruitment Agencies

As in any industry, it is also possible to find work via recruitment agencies. As is to be expected, the kind of schools which can afford to pay an agency to find them teachers are likely to be profitable, and in need of many teachers.

It is usual for agencies to interview you prior to putting you forward for a position. This can be used as a good opportunity for you to ask them for advice and information on teaching in the country of your choice as they are likely to be very knowledgeable.

How much say you have in where exactly you end up teaching is likely to vary from agency to agency, as does the amount of contact that you have with them after you begin teaching, so it's worth checking these out at the outset. For many people though, the reassurance which agencies provide of having at least some link to a home-based representative in case of problem or emergency can be priceless.

Contacting Schools Directly

If you are already living in/visiting the country where you'd like to work, it can be better to approach schools there directly. Employers prefer to meet their teachers face-to-face, and this will make you stand out from the many online applications that they receive.

Here are some tips on how best to do this:

1. Prepare your CV so that it contains all necessary information. It may help to get it translated into the local language.
2. Collect the addresses of all the language schools in the area ('Yellow Pages' equivalents are always a good source of information).
3. Pick an area a day and visit all the schools there.
4. Ask to speak to someone specific – the Director of Studies is usually best.
5. Leave your CV.
6. Call back some time later, remind them they have your CV.
7. Once you get a job, tell other schools you applied to that you are no longer available.

GOING ABROAD TO TEACH?

Why not make it easier on yourself and brush up on your foreign language skills



For foreign language courses abroad visit www.cactuslanguage.com

For foreign language courses in the UK visit www.languagecoursesuk.co.uk

For foreign language courses in the US visit www.cactuslanguagecourses.com

Creating your CV - Dos

If you get your CV translated into the local language, remember to ensure that employers are aware if this has been done on your behalf and you can't actually speak the language.

Include specific details of your TEFL qualification (including the grade if there was one). This includes where you trained, how many hours the course involved, and which body accredits the qualification that you received.

Highlight any roles that you have held in an educational or professional capacity that have involved skills especially pertinent to EFL teaching. These may include training or tutoring type roles, roles that have relied heavily on communication skills, or anything of a commercial nature if you are hoping to do business English teaching.

Include details of any foreign languages that you speak.

Include a photograph if possible- schools like to see who they are employing!

Creating your CV - Don'ts

Don't include any spelling, punctuation or grammatical errors - it's a sure-fire way of ensuring that your application stays right at the bottom of the pile.

Don't include incomplete information (e.g missing employment dates).

Don't send the same CV to everyone as soon as you have it perfect. It needs to be relevant to each job! You should read adverts carefully and adapt your CV to reflect any particular features of the job or location that you feel are well suited to you. It shouldn't take too long but will make a big difference to prospective employers.

Don't make it any longer than two pages if at all possible, the information provided should be concise but informative.



Tips for Face-to-Face Interviews

Whilst smaller schools recruiting teachers from abroad will most probably set up a telephone interview, large schools, or schools that are part of international chains will usually prefer to interview you face-to-face either at one of their partner schools, or at a centre hired for a couple of days expressly for this reason.

As with any interview, it is important that you research the job and the school as much as possible beforehand, and make sure you have some questions ready to ask.

- Dress appropriately – smart/casual is usually fine unless otherwise stated. Remember that first impressions tend to count for a lot.
- Think about your body language. You should give a firm and confident handshake and look your interviewer in the eye when you speak. Smiling will go a long way too!
- Take along a copy of your CV with you.



Tips for Telephone Interviews

- Make sure the phone they call you on will be in a quiet place. Landlines are usually a better option to avoid any reception issues.
- Ensure that you have established whether the interview time is in their local time or yours, especially if it is somewhere far away.
- It is possible with phone interviews that your interviewer may not be a native English speaker - it could well be the Director or owner of a school rather than an English speaking DOS. Because of this, it is important to speak clearly, slowly and using appropriate vocabulary.
- You should also bear in mind that different interview norms may apply in different countries. Don't be unnerved by the unexpected!
- Have a copy of your CV to hand in case the interviewer refers to it.



Contracts

The subject of contracts is hard to broach as different rules may apply for each school in each country. The main thing to ensure you do though is to read your contract very carefully - obvious perhaps, but small print can catch people out.

One of the most important things to look for is the number of hours that you will be required to teach. This needs to be clearly stated, and should ideally be no more than 30 hours per week.

On the flip side, there may be schools that pay you by the hour, but do not consider it their responsibility to organise an allotted number of hours per week/month. Obviously this can lead to money issues if you end up short of work on a regular basis so be sure to check this out.

Accommodation is another aspect to look for in contracts. It can be included as a perk of the job and can be useful when you first arrive in an alien place, but schools can charge over the odds and take rent directly from your pay.

TEFL in the UK

TEFL in the UK can be roughly divided into two categories.

1. The teaching of English (often in private language schools) to people who want to use English for business, studies, leisure, or travel, and who believe that it is better to pay to study the language in the country where the language is spoken. This type of teaching tends to be the more competitive part of the industry to break into as a newly-qualified teacher because you're competing with qualified and experienced teachers who have often spent time away and then returned. This kind of teaching tends to be referred to as 'EFL'.

2. The teaching of English to new arrivals in the UK (usually immigrants or refugees), aimed at helping them to survive on a day to day basis in their new environment. This type of teaching is more associated with the state sector, or with volunteer teaching, and has become more and more pertinent as the UK's immigration policy has changed. 'ESOL' is the term most associated with this.

Summer Work in the UK

Every summer, the UK plays host to thousands of foreign students who come over to improve their English during their summer holiday. Most courses take place in private language schools, and often cater for young and teenage learners, although this is not always the case.

Summer schools are great for two types of teacher. Firstly, the experienced teacher who spends October to June teaching abroad and needs a way to earn money during the summer, and secondly, the newly-qualified teacher. Schools are usually willing to offer posts to recent TEFL graduates, and summer work can be a great way of getting some experience.

Most schools can offer teachers the option of a residential post, where supervision of students is required around the clock, but non-residential positions are also possible.

It can be possible to find summer work teaching full-time (30 hours) per week, but it is more usual to do 15 hours teaching and 15 hours activity and excursion supervision.



TEFL in Europe

TEFL in this part of the world is well-established and popular, particularly amongst those Europeans who want to gain some experience closer to home before spreading their wings and heading to more exotic locations.

Contracts in Europe tend to be 9 months in duration, and start from the end of September. Average monthly pay tends to be in the region of 800-1000 Euros per month.

Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece all have well-established industries with plenty of work for qualified teachers. France and Germany remain sought after locations, but 1-2 year language school contracts for foreigners are not always easy to come by.

The Eastern European countries of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary continue to attract a steady supply of teachers for roughly the same remuneration, and opportunities have more recently also opened up in places traditionally more 'off the beaten track', such as Latvia and Lithuania.

TEFL in Asia

Asia has the greatest number of TEFL jobs on offer worldwide by far. Any English speaker with a TEFL qualification (and sometimes not even that!) can find work, although schools who demand more recognised qualifications may offer the best pay and most supportive environment to work in.

Over the last few years China has emerged as the TEFL giant, mainly due to its increased business with the West.

Japan, Taiwan and South Korea continue to attract many an EFL teacher and can offer lucrative contracts for those who fancy the challenge.

In South-East Asia, Thailand too continues to offer a wealth of possibilities, largely due to the need to cater for the seemingly cap-less tourism industry.

Vietnam has also recently emerged as a place of increased opportunity. There is a constant demand for qualified teachers, who can find very competitive employment packages with good schools.

TEFL in the Americas

South America

This is another area of the world with a huge demand for English teachers - especially in the commercial and tourism hubs.

It is worth bearing in mind that there is often a preference for North American teachers, and that visa issues can sometimes make it hard to get full-time contracts on a formal basis. For this reason, the most popular way to teach initially in this continent seems to be on a short-term basis and perhaps as part of travelling plans.

North America

Opportunities exist to teach both fee-paying foreign students in private language schools, and to teach non-English speaking immigrants within the public/voluntary sector.

It is extremely difficult for any TEFL-trained foreigner to get a working visa though, so these jobs can generally only be considered by US/Canadian citizens.

TEFL in Australasia, Indonesia and Africa

Australasia

There are plenty of opportunities for teachers in Australia and New Zealand at present, particularly for any who are there on a working holiday visa.

Much of the work is in private language schools, teaching primarily Asian students, but there are also opportunities in less commercial spheres.

Indonesia

For anyone wanting a totally new experience, there are plenty of possibilities to teach in this part of the world. Many of the larger recruitment agencies and organisations source teachers for schools here in particular.

Africa

The majority of work in the continent tends to be on a voluntary basis, with the exception of North African countries and South Africa where employment in language schools is possible for those who can get visas.

Cactus TEFL

Cactus TEFL has been at the centre of the industry for several years now, and we hope that the knowledge we have built up via our clients and partner schools has provided you with a useful guide to finding your first job.

For recent job listings, more advice on looking for work and applying for jobs, and detailed information packs on working in specific countries of the world please go to www.cactustefl.com/jobs .

Whether you applied for your TEFL course through us or not, please feel free to contact us once you venture into the world of TEFL. We'd love to hear about your experiences, and for you to share your insider's view of the TEFL industry wherever you may be.

In the meantime, we wish you the very best of luck with your job search and your first real-life classroom experience.

The Cactus TEFL Team

For TEFL job listings & information
on working in specific countries:

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