



cactus

TEFL

The

Little

Book

of

TEFL

(Teaching English as
a Foreign Language)



www.cactustefl.com

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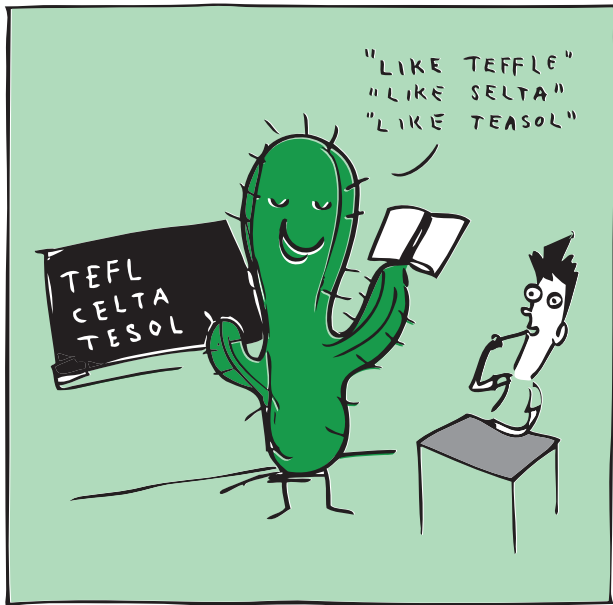
Fourth Edition

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In memory of our dear friend and colleague Suzanne Furstner.

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What is TEFL?

Welcome to the Wonderful World of TEFL!

TEFL is Teaching English as a Foreign Language. This little but well-used acronym describes the industry, the profession and all the courses you can take to qualify as a teacher.

TEFL can be temporary or permanent. Some people do it as a career break, others a gap year as it's a great way of earning money whilst travelling and discovering new cultures and civilisations. Other people consider TEFL at a later stage in life and then use it to cushion their finances, at home or overseas.

With TEFL being such an exciting and challenging industry, it is no surprise that some people end up doing it all their lives.

By the end of the Little Book of TEFL we hope you'll have a feel for the industry and be able to see if TEFL is for you!

Please check out our glossary on p.24 if you get stuck!

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Can You Do It?

We hear lots of "I'm considering TEFL" and not enough "Am I right for TEFL?".

Academic pre-requisites vary according to the TEFL course you choose, from no qualifications, to A-levels or an equivalent. If you don't have a strong academic background don't worry, your professional and personal experiences will also be taken into consideration.

So...are you right for TEFL?

We think you need to be open-minded, culturally curious and passionate about languages and learning. There is no such thing as a perfect EFL teacher, though all sorts of people make great teachers.

With TEFL, you get out what you put in. If you can juggle the lesson planning, the tempestuous relationships with photocopiers, the long days and the mental fatigue, you'll get respect from your students and a huge sense of achievement.

Gapping It

Whether you need time out between studies, before work or to escape a job for a while, gap-year travel and TEFL are a match made in heaven.

You have two options- setting off on your travels armed with a TEFL certificate, or doing your TEFL course en route. Either way, if opportunities arise you will have the means to earn some possibly well-needed cash!

Contracts can vary from 6-12 months but casual work can be found on a shorter, more informal basis once you have a few local contacts at your disposal.

The longer you stay in one country the more worthwhile the experience will be for both you and your students.

Teaching puts you at the centre of a community and opens up areas you would never experience as a tourist. It's a great way to make friends, and in doing so you learn about and help preserve the culture you are visiting, as well as giving something back.

TEFL As a Career Option

TEFL, like travelling, can become an irresistible passion. It's an international profession with endless opportunities.

At the outset, it's not the best paid industry to be in, and EFL teaching is widely seen as a stop-gap job. However, the truth is, it can evolve quickly and you can develop your skills and take on extra responsibility in order to grow professionally.

Once you have been in teaching for a while, you can move along an academic or commercial route. As Director of Studies (DOS) you can begin supporting other teachers, planning courses and materials, timetabling and generally providing academic leadership in a school.

The commercial path may involve selling the school's services to local companies, organising marketing activities, and representing your school overseas at conferences. As most schools are private companies, you'll find all the business functions you would in any other organisation.



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ELA - English Language Awareness Online Course

Want to do a TEFL course but don't know enough grammar?
Sign up to the brand-new pre-TEFL online grammar course!

- Preparation for CELTA, CertTESOL & other TEFL courses
- Tutor to answer your questions
- Video clips give you a taster of the classroom
- Audio clips to help with pronunciation features
- Entirely online in user-friendly environment
- Network with other trainee teachers!

For more information or to book online today visit:

www.cactustefl.com/ela

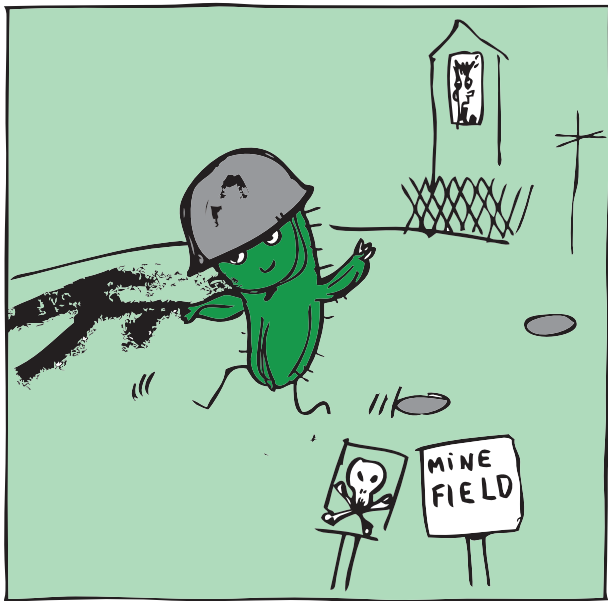
You're Never too Old for TEFL

TEFL is not just synonymous with university leavers and thirty-somethings. Research suggests that more and more people over 45 are taking up TEFL training in order to fulfil retirement projects, begin a new career or simply 'give something back' to society.

The recent trend for retiring to sunnier, Mediterranean, locations has certainly played a part in the increase in number of more mature EFL teachers.

Many employers value the professional or personal experience of the more mature EFL teacher, particularly in the teaching of Business English or other specialist areas.

Undeniably there may, in some countries and institutes, be a preference for younger teachers. However, private teaching is usually an option and will provide a relatively easy (and possibly more lucrative!) solution in 'problem' places.



How to Choose a Course

Type "TEFL course" into Google and stand well back. There are thousands of TEFL courses and course providers, but don't be overwhelmed. Remember that not all of the courses will be suitable for your needs and plans, and once you know what these are, the number of courses to choose from will be dramatically reduced.

The quality and duration of your TEFL course is directly proportional to the range of job opportunities you'll have when seeking work afterwards.

As with most things, research is the key. Finding out which TEFL qualifications are required in the countries you are interested in going to is a must. It's also worth checking visa requirements given that in order to work legitimately in some countries you may be required to have a degree. There is no point in investing time and money in a course when it may be hard for you to get work in your chosen country.

Four-week Courses

Within the TEFL industry, there are two qualifications that are arguably the most well-known. These are the Cambridge CELTA (Cambridge Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults) and the Trinity Cert TESOL (Trinity Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). Nowadays however, there are many other courses around which offer a similar structure and syllabus to these, but are known simply as 'TEFL courses'. They may not have the same prestige as a CELTA or a Trinity CertTESOL, but as long as they contain six hours of teaching practice and 120 hours of tuition, they should be fine to secure you work in the majority of language schools.

All of these four-week courses (or their part-time equivalents) are based primarily on observed teaching practice in front of genuine language students.

If there's no way you are able to follow one of these for whatever reason, you may want to consider doing a short or an online TEFL course.

Short TEFL Courses

These courses are often held over one weekend, and can involve anything up to 35 hours of tuition. They are lighter on your finances but generally cost more than the 120-hour courses pro-rata.

Shorter courses tend to skim off the juicy, fun part of the four-week course syllabus, and give you a great insight into TEFL. Some courses will even enable you to have an element of classroom teaching practice.

Short courses are generally impossible to fail and the course provider will usually issue you a certificate of completion for you to take on your travels.

Courses such as these may prove quite adequate for those planning to use TEFL to subsidise travel as opposed to a means of fully financing their life abroad. They will also be useful in countries where there are no formal requirements for a teaching qualification.

Online TEFL courses

Online courses are designed to give you an insight into the world of TEFL and are helpful if you are not able to take time out of work or get to a certain location to join in a face-to-face course. Online TEFL courses are also some of the cheapest courses available.

The disadvantage is that online courses will not include the real-world experience of observing and/or teaching authentic language classes. Depending on where you're looking to teach, this may or may not be a problem.

The great popularity of online learning is largely down to its universal accessibility and user-friendliness. You do have to like the idea of studying on your own, and be sufficiently self-motivated to get through it, though.

Many online courses have specialist modules available in Business English and Young Learners teaching too, which can be very useful extras if this is where your interest lies.

Brand New TEFL Jobs

Check out our extensive jobs section for current worldwide vacancies and expert advice on working around the globe.

China ● Greece ● Poland ● Russia
Spain ● UK ● Vietnam

For a full list of jobs in all countries worldwide visit:



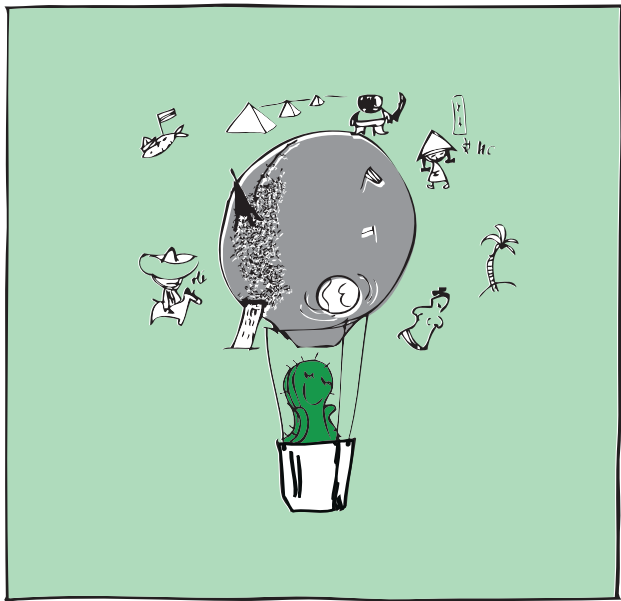
www.cactustefl.com/jobs



TEFL course Survival Tips!

Four-week courses in particular can be notoriously intensive. Jill Drower, experienced CELTA course tutor, has the following advice:

- Spend time in advance of the course going through the pre-course task given to you by your course provider (you may also consider ELA - see page 11 for details).
- Do not neglect your health or your sleep.
- Kiss goodbye to your social life for the duration!
- Try not to get hooked on how you are performing. Instead, focus on your students' performance.
- Try not to take negative criticism personally.
- Do not get disheartened if you see the words 'not to standard' or 'resubmit' written on your work.
- Do not spend hours the night before perfecting pictures and other less crucial lesson supplements.
- Communicate with others - both trainers and trainees.



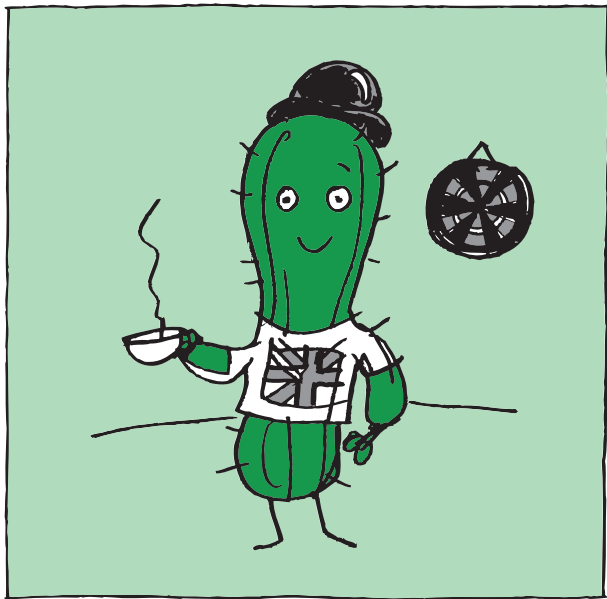
Where In the World?

The great thing about TEFL is that it can take you to your next town, or to the most far flung areas of the world.

As the global demand to speak English continues to increase, so does the need for English teachers. Countries like China, Vietnam and South Korea in particular have seen a massive rise in the number of people learning English, which in turn has created booming EFL industries.

South America also offers many possibilities to the intrepid EFL teacher, particularly as part of travelling plans. Visas can be a problem and failure to secure the right papers can lead to problems with the police. Your chances of getting work legally are greatly improved if you approach schools when you are already 'on the ground', and they consider you worth the bureaucratic and financial effort.

European hotspots for TEFL include Spain, Italy, Greece and the Czech Republic.

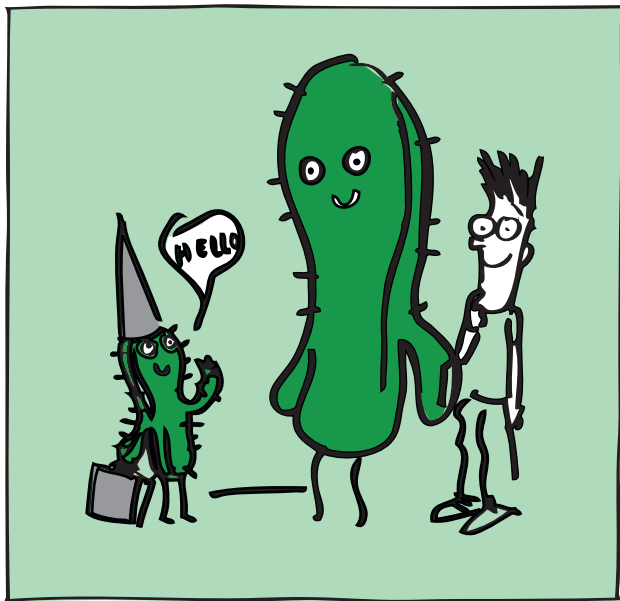


TEFL in the UK

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. The best time of year to find work is during the summer months in one of the thousands of summer schools that operate.

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, and has become more and more pertinent as the UK's immigration policy has changed.



Why Cactus TEFL?

Cactus TEFL is a private organisation, working independently to help raise the profile of the TEFL industry. We strive to promote high quality courses which are professionally delivered, providing the participant with a solid grounding prior to embarking on a teaching career. We also aim to unite teacher with employer through our new and extensive TEFL Jobs section.

As well as offering expert advice to anyone interested in TEFL, we are also an independent admissions service. You can apply for any of the courses featured on our site through us, at no extra cost. Our aim is to give you the means to make an informed decision on which course to take, and to make the application process a little easier for you. The great benefit of Cactus TEFL is that we are also on hand along the way to address any questions or concerns that you have, or simply to help plan your TEFL adventures.

Glossary

TEFL - Teaching English as a Foreign Language

CELTA - Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults

ELT - English Language Teaching

TESOL - Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

ESOL - English to Speakers of Other Languages

EFL - English as a Foreign Language

TESL - Teaching English as a Second Language

ESL - English as a second language

For full explanations of these terms (and even more industry acronyms!) please consult the Cactus TEFL website:
www.cactustefl.com.

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or to book a course:

Visit: www.cactustefl.com

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