

Teaching English Abroad

Advice on the Industry

By [Kenneth Beare](#), About.com Guide

Teaching English abroad is an exciting adventure, but sometimes the adventure can turn sour. Unfortunately, there are some schools and employers out there who are less than reputable and stories of poor treatment do exist. What's a future English teacher to do? Well, probably one of the best bets is to use the internet to do some research before you sign on the dotted line. Here are some effective techniques and tactics you can apply to making sure your future English teaching abroad opportunity fits your own expectations.

Teaching English Abroad - On your Own?

If you are on your own when looking for a teaching English job abroad you've got quite the challenge ahead. You'll need to research the countries you'd like to teach in to find out pay standards, typical contract lengths, visa requirements, etc. Don't take these things lightly, imagine you'd like to teach in Europe, go to Italy to teach English abroad. Wow, great food, sun, friendly people, the culture, on and on... Unfortunately, if you are an American or Australian that job you might want isn't available because you aren't a member of the European Union. Drats! If you are from England, then everything is fine, let's go looking for a job. But wait, ... Italian contracts generally last only 10 months at most. How are you going to pay the rent during the summer?

There's a lot that goes into choosing a destination for teaching English abroad when you're on your own. Here's a list of the questions / issues you should investigate before even looking for open positions:

- Choose which continent you would like to teach on
- Choose your target nation
- Ask yourself some financial questions:
 - Do I want to make enough to just get by?
 - Do I want to save some money?
 - Do I want to travel while I'm there?
 - Will I need a round-trip ticket to get back home?
 - Check into visa requirements
 - Look at teacher jobs available in your desired destination
 - Do some googling to discover others' experiences in your chosen country
 - Start looking for a job in that country if you are encouraged by the information you've found. If not, start from the top!

Here are some hints and comments about how to go about your teaching English abroad fact finding mission:

Choose which continent / nation you would like to teach on / in

This is important. There are teaching opportunities all over the world, but some teaching opportunities are better than others. To be completely honest, you'll find that some of the worst paid opportunities where the sun shines and the beaches beckon. In colder northern climates, the salaries increase.

Ask yourself some financial questions:

- Do I want to make enough to just get by?

If you're a purest and just interested in hanging out with the local population and finding out how the working class lives in your target destination, you'll find plenty of opportunity. If you want enough to travel and see the sights, competition will increase. Be honest with yourself as it makes a big difference in the effort you'll need to make finding a job.

- Do I want to save some money?

I'm tempted to say forget about teaching, but that's not completely true. If you are interested in making a profession out of teaching English abroad there are many avenues that open the door to a discrete living. If this is a requirement, understand that it will probably take some time to gather the experience to demand a salary that will allow you to put a bit by the side.

- Do I want to travel while I'm there?

We'd all probably like to travel while we're teaching English abroad. If it's your first year teaching you probably won't be able to afford much more than trips in the vicinity. If you're planning on teaching in Europe and you'd like to travel to France, Spain and more make sure you've got a little saved up before you leave.

- Will I need a round-trip to get back home?

This is unfortunately quite an important point for many of the lower paid jobs. If you don't have enough saved up to buy a flight home, you'll have to make sure that you find a job that offers round-trip airfare.

Check into visa requirements

This is a non-negotiable point in the preparation process. You have to find out if you are allowed to work and live in your chosen destination. Many countries have stringent visa requirements, so make sure to do your homework on this one! It's important to also mention that a number of countries (China comes to mind) now also have age restrictions. It's sad, but unfortunately true that English teachers over a certain age will not be accepted. Too bad there isn't an international organization to fight against age discrimination, but I digress...

Look at the jobs available in your desired destination

Now that you've done your homework, start looking for a job. A good place to start checking for jobs is TEFL.com. You can click through their database to see which

countries have the most offerings. It will give you a good idea of the opportunities / competition you'll find in your target destination country.

Do some googling to discover others' experiences in your chosen country

I can not stress this point enough. There are many stories of bad experiences in certain locations. Of course, there are plenty of great stories, too. Treat it like an Amazon search for a book you like. There are bound to be varied experiences, so you'll have to get a general idea by reading a number of experiences. The best place to look for these experiences is on forums.

Start looking for a job in that country if you are encouraged by the information you've found. If not, start from the top!

Don't get discouraged, there are literally thousands of opportunities to teach - I've seen 25,000 new openings per year used in relatively reliable sources concerning the industry. Once you've done this a few times, you'll have a good idea of reputable employers and agencies as well as understand what you are looking for in your quest to teach English abroad.