



Premier TEFL

The Ultimate TEFL Job Comparison Chart



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Introduction

You don't just want to teach abroad in any old country, right? You have dozens (and we mean dozens) of options when it comes to launching your TEFL stint/career. And because of that, we at Premier TEFL are motivated as ever to make sure you select a destination that is the right fit for YOU.

For some, this has a lot to do with the culture and language immersion possibilities. For others, weather plays a big deal, or maybe it's access to amenities, how exotic you deem a place to be, how far away it is from home, or the availability of fun animals nearby (monkeys ARE adorable).

Whatever is helping you determine the right TEFL location for you, we want to break down top destinations to fit your needs.



Considerations TEFL recruiters make

Keep in mind that you're not only sizing up jobs teaching abroad, TEFL recruiters are sizing you up too. That's why it's important that you know what is being reviewed prior to submitting your job applications.

In general, TEFL staffing agencies look at the following information for every applicant:

Age - For better or worse, many TEFL companies and schools want to hire individuals that are “young” and healthy. It seems arbitrary, but where the rubber meets the road is in your visa application. For example, some countries outside of the US and the EU have different retirement ages, meaning that in their eyes, it might be that you should be resting and relaxing, not working! Other areas where age might have an influence is in companies that provide accommodations to teachers as part of their salary. It can be difficult to pair a one-off 40+ teacher with a younger 20-something (we all know teaching abroad will push your comfort zone, but maybe not in this way?!). Just be aware that your age may impact your TEFL job availabilities.

Education - Some countries require a certain level of qualification in order to be hired as a TEFL teacher. For instance, you may need to have a minimum bachelor's or undergraduate degree from an accrediting institution. Some countries (mostly in the Middle East and Hong Kong) will even require you to have a Masters degree or extensive prior experience as an English teacher (no surprise these destinations also pay the big bucks). Be sure to review a country's minimum education requirement before applying for TEFL jobs there.

Native Speaker or Non-Native Welcome - From some countries' perspectives, there is a huge leap from being a native English speaker to being a learned fluent English speaker. While many countries accept either as suitable for becoming a TEFL teacher, there are a handful of countries that require native fluency in order to teach. If you are not a native English speaker, be sure to review in advance if your IELTS/ TOEFL/PTE/CAE etc. exam scores clear their requirements.

Health/physically and mentally fit - If you haven't had a physical in a couple of years, now's the time to hit up your doctor and get the a-okay on your general health. Teachers who enter the country with health concerns present a liability to schools and thus, are less likely candidates to be hired. Many job applications will ask you to provide proof of good health and oftentimes, a simple physical can do the trick.

Demonstrable cultural sensitivity, respect, adaptability, patience, and flexibility - This is a little harder to “prove” or “justify,” but just do your best to exhibit these values in your interactions with recruiters, in how you discuss your goals and motivations for moving abroad to teach, and how you approach your responses to interview questions. Life abroad is anything but easy (an adventure, yes—but not easy), so the latter three traits will be paramount to succeeding in the ESL classroom. The former two are equally important to humbly build your skills as an interculturalist.



Popular countries for TEFL Jobs



So, how do you determine if a country is “the best” or lesser than when it comes to ESL job markets abroad? Great question. Our team racked their brains and came up with our star system: Each star represents...

- **Pay** – Can you make a decent living, live comfortably, and increase your savings/pay off past debts?
- **Quality of living** – Will your lifestyle be familiar enough? How is the climate, the pollution, the access to clean drinking water?
- **Access to culture** – Are the cities too cosmopolitan for their own good?
- **Job security** – What’s the job market like? How easy is it to obtain jobs?

And many earn a bonus (green star) if there’s something unique and special about it as a destination.



Argentina



The land of tango and steak is more than pretty mountain vistas and delicious Malbecs. **SO. MUCH. MORE.** Get a TEFL teaching job here to uncover its gauchos and glamour for yourself.

Summary of necessary qualifications

- Age: between 18 – 50
- Education: High School graduate
- Fluency: Native OR Learned
- Health: Good mental & physical health
- Soft skills: Flexible, hardworking and mature
- Other: Passport holder from USA, Canada, UK, Ireland, South Africa, Australia or New Zealand.

Summary of rating

- We knocked off .5 stars for pay, as most teachers make between \$650-\$900 USD monthly. Not bad for the local cost of living, but it doesn't give you much wiggle room to build up your savings.
- ★: There is a big market for foreign teachers in Argentina to work on a freelance basis, allowing teachers to build their own schedules quite easily.



Brazil



When you think Brazil, you might think nude beaches, touchdowns, and overpriced flip flops. But what you should also think of is incredible human diversity, some of the world's best football players, and abundant plant life like nowhere else on the planet. Your students will be made up of all this and more.

Summary of necessary qualifications

- Age: 18+
- Education: High School graduate
- Fluency: Native OR Learned
- Health: Be physically and mentally fit
- Soft skills: Adaptable, patient, caring, flexible, culturally sensitive
- Other: Clean criminal record.

Summary of rating

- We knocked off .5 stars for quality of living, as traffic can be so bad in major cities that running between students appointments can easily double the length of your work day.
- ★: Brazil is huge, so if you tire of one incredible city, there are dozens more waiting for you to explore and find teaching jobs in.



Cambodia



Delve into the layers of this kingdom's past, and soon you'll begin to understand how Buddhism, French colonialism, and the Khmer Rouge regime have impacted modern day Cambodia's culture, landscape, and cuisine.

Summary of necessary qualifications

- Age: 18+
- Education: High School graduate
- Fluency: Native OR Learned
- Health: Be physically and mentally fit
- Soft skills: Flexibility, strong work ethic, maturity
- Other: Clean police record

Summary of rating

- We knocked off .5 stars for amenities, as Cambodia is a developing country and you simply cannot expect similar services and conveniences that you're used to if you're coming from a Western nation. This is true in the classroom AND in your home-life.
- We knocked off .5 stars for rate of pay, as most teachers make \$10- \$12 hourly. This is a generally enough to cover your expenses, but leaves little room for savings.
- ★: Life in Cambodia is very affordable for ESL teachers. Plus, commuting to work is a piece of cake since most teachers live near their placements! Tuk tuk, bike, or on foot? Mix it up!



Chile



As one of South America's most developed nations, Chile has a relatively long-term infrastructure designed to recruit and support ESL teachers. Adventurous TEFLers will be happy here, as there is variety of landscapes and climates to explore and play in during your holidays and weekends off. Throw in some penguin spotting, Amazon exploring, and a laid-back street food culture chock full of surprises, and you may never want to return home.

Summary of necessary qualifications

- Age: 18+
- Education: High School graduate
- Fluency: Native
- Health: Be physically and mentally fit
- Soft skills: Cultural sensitivity, flexibility, communication, organizational
- Other: Clean criminal record

Summary of rating

- Schools in Chile prefer degree qualified ESL teachers, has a relatively high cost of living for the continent, and yet still pays its teachers only enough to break even. For that, one full star off.
- Government support certainly has its benefits, but one of the downsides is that the employment procedure can be quite lengthy and complicated. .5 stars gone!
- ★: More than 80% of this country has been classified as mountainous—pack your hiking boots because Chile is a trekker's paradise.



China



If work has been feeling like a chore lately, teaching here is just what you need to give your life's purpose and vocation a jolt! Instead of dozing through your post-lunch break slump, how about giggling at pandas in a research park or visiting some of the oldest archeological sites on the planet? China is a huge country, but its need for English teachers is even greater. With a population of over 1.3 billion and a renewed focus on English in schools, the demand for teachers is growing faster than your belly will from all those dumplings.

Summary of necessary qualifications

- Age: 18 to -50 (double check all job requirements)
- Education: Completed high school (internship) Bachelor's (job)
- Fluency: Native
- Health: Be physically and mentally fit
- Soft skills: Cultural sensitivity, patience, flexibility, caring
- Other: Passport holder from USA, Canada, UK, Ireland, South Africa, Australia or New Zealand

Summary of rating

- The quality of living might take some getting used to. LOTS of people, LITTLE personal space, and NO ice cubes? Also, the pollution... 1 off.
- ESL teachers can make REALLY good money here, so it re-gained half an star.
- ★: Chinese students adore their teachers and show them great respect. You will never tire of getting invitations to eat lunch with them!



Colombia



It's not too late to check out Colombia "before it was cool." This beautiful country is on the up and up and its growing appeal sees no signs of stopping. Choosing a location to teach English in Colombia is easy because every corner of the country is filled with lively people, historic landmarks, and unique local cultures. Add in a gentle mountainous climate and a tendency for mid-day siestas, and it's easy to see why Colombia is an increasingly attractive destination for ESL teachers to work and play. The best part? English teaching jobs in Colombia are pretty easy to come by!

Summary of necessary qualifications

- Age: between 21-55
- Education: Bachelor's required
- Fluency: Native OR Learned (C1/IELTS 7.0+)
- Health: Be physically and mentally fit
- Soft skills: Cultural sensitivity & community mindedness
- Other: Clean police record

Summary of rating

- Colombia is just about perfect, but we knocked off .5 stars because your pay won't knock your socks off.
- ★: The Colombian people are incredibly warm and welcoming, and they LOVE to party! Enjoy the most holidays of any ESL teacher in the world while teaching here.



Hong Kong



If you want a one-stop shop that offers you a taste of the entire world, Hong Kong is for you. Extremely cosmopolitan and often dubbed “Where East Meets West,” you’ll enjoy high quality of living, high pay, AND tons of culture as an ESL teacher in Hong Kong. Whether you’re a TEFL-certified teacher with years of experience or a novice who’s curious about Chinese culture, teaching is the perfect way to experience ALL of this island’s goodness.

Summary of necessary qualifications

- Age: 21+
- Education: Bachelor’s required
- Fluency: Native or Learned
- Health: Be physically and mentally fit
- Soft skills: cultural flexibility, organization, respect, creativity, enthusiasm and professionalism.

Summary of rating

- We knocked off .5 stars for the high teacher requirements and common age limitations, but added the .5 back because if you do fit the bill of what they’re looking for, the pay can be so, so good.
- ★ : DIM SUM.



India



You might be thinking to yourself, “Isn’t English one of the official languages in India?” And yes, you are right. But that doesn’t mean there isn’t still ample opportunity to help improve students’ university or English proficiency exam scores, to teach them your accent, for them to hear native fluency. What’s in it for you? Access to thousands of years of culture, of mysticism, of rajahs and world religions, color and magic. And chai. NOM!

Summary of necessary qualifications

- Age: 20+
- Education: High School graduate
- Fluency: Native OR Learned
- Health: Be physically and mentally fit
- Soft skills: Cultural sensitivity, adaptability

Summary of rating

- We knocked off 1 star because India truly has a limited job market, and teachers there don’t make a ton of money. Unless you want to specialize as a standardized test prep trainer, you will mostly find only volunteer teaching positions.
- We knocked off .5 stars because teachers whose aim is to make a little \$\$\$ while teaching abroad will be disappointed with their paychecks.
- We knocked off another .5 stars because many teaching jobs experience a lack of structure but a lot of bureaucracy. Even the classroom isn’t safe from the longstanding hierarchies embedded in the Indian culture!
- ★: Nowhere in the world is quite like India, and if you desire to get to know this country from an incredibly authentic level, this is the way to do it. It’s hot, it’s meaningful, it’s a new taste of life from all possible angles. If your goal is an enriching cultural experience or an avenue to a longer term stay in India, then trust us—you’ll be sari if you bypass this opportunity.



Romania



Waltz along the Danube, go black bear spotting, avoid vampires, and uncover a world of fascinating culture. Who could be so lucky as to enjoy all this and make a living? Teaching English in Romania is the opportunity of a lifetime, and not only for the endless supply of sugar-dusted papanasi (google it!). Teach English abroad in an oft-overlooked European destination with a hot job market for ESL teachers!

Summary of necessary qualifications

- Age: 18+
- Education: High School graduate
- Fluency: Native OR Learned
- Health: Be physically and mentally fit
- Soft skills: Cultural sensitivity, flexibility, adaptability
- Other: Preference for EU passport holders

Summary of rating

- We knocked off .5 stars because the job market is typically limited to European Union citizens—as this saves employers a bunch of paperwork.
- ★ : One little known fact that your ESL-teaching-counterparts in less developed countries will undoubtedly envy is that Romania's internet connectivity is gold - it's one of the best places in the world for 4G speed (perfect for incorporating tech into your lessons!).



Spain



It's beautiful. It's historic. It experiences insane amounts of sunshine any given year. AND it has over five thousands miles of coast. And did we mention that Spain has one of the largest job markets for teaching English in Europe? Get in on this ESL-teaching-party ASAP because the secret's out—these jobs can be competitive! Get your foot in the door with a TEFL certificate or job placement program there today.

Summary of necessary qualifications

- Age: 18+
- Education: High School graduate
- Fluency: Native
- Health: Be physically and mentally fit
- Soft skills: Enthusiastic & social
- Other: EU citizenship or passport is typically preferred. Clean criminal record.

Summary of rating

- We knocked off .5 stars for pay, as it's nothing to brag about!
- We knocked another .5 for the logistical hoo-hah, as working in the EU means strict visa regulations. You'll want to be working abroad legally here to avoid any trouble.
- ★ : You have your pick of the lot when it comes to badass cities to work abroad in. Choose one of the heavy hitters like Barcelona or Madrid, or go rogue and find ESL jobs in smaller Spanish cities, like Granada or Pontevedra!



Taiwan



Teach English abroad in a fly-over country that deserves more than a quick wave from 30,000 feet in the air. With a tourism industry bringing in over \$12 billion annually (often flying on a Hello Kitty PLANE), the Taiwanese are looking to speak English with a higher proficiency than ever before. Finding teaching jobs here is not a problem! From ziplining deep in the island forest to chilling along the coast, weekends free of classes will be adventures in their own right.

Summary of necessary qualifications

- Age: 21+
- Education: Bachelor's or Associate's degree required
- Fluency: Native
- Health: Be physically and mentally fit
- Soft skills: Cultural sensitivity, creativity, professionalism
- Other: Passport holder from USA, Canada, UK, Ireland, Australia or New Zealand
- Other: Clean police record

Summary of rating

- Taiwan is pretty close to perfect when it comes to TEFL. Monthly pay ranges from \$1500+ and the standard of living is quite high. There's easy transport, delicious (like, reeeeeeally delicious) food, ample nature for tramping about, and national WIFI connectivity. All packed into one tiny, but powerful island for you to get to know.
- ★: The Taiwanese EFL job market is unique as it has opportunities like "Big Chain Kindergartens" and "cram schools." Pay varies significantly between jobs but you can roughly expect to earn \$20+ hourly



Thailand



Thinking of zooming around on a moped and throwing back a sweet iced tea on your lunch break? Take your English teaching experience to a part of Asia that will show you more than just scenic postcards and tourist menus. As the fashion and business capital of Asia, Thailand is a whirlwind of activity. With incredible temples, a growing number of eco projects and green spaces, and a wave of international businesses, Thailand is developing rapidly and in need of citizenry with strong English skills. Become a part of it by finding a teaching job in the Land of Smiles now!

Summary of necessary qualifications

- Age: 21+
- Education: Bachelor's required
- Fluency: Native
- Health: Be physically and mentally fit
- Soft skills: Cultural sensitivity, enthusiasm, patience
- Other: Clean police record

Summary of rating

- We knocked off .5 stars because Thai authorities often require foreign teachers to report to immigration every three months, even if they have a proper work visa and permit. They want to make sure you're not wasting time catching sun rays on the beach or riding elephants (which you should never do, BTW) and are in fact teaching.
- Another .5 stars were taken away due to your projected earnings—most ESL teachers in Thailand can save a couple hundred dollars a month, but it'll take you a few months to save up enough to cover a flight home.
- ★: The Land of Smiles offers a variety of experiences to suit any TEFL teacher. Chill out in Chiang Mai, embrace busy Bangkok, or explore more far-flung and culturally immersive places like Northeast Thailand. Its proximity to other fabulous Southeast Asian destinations makes holiday travel a breeze!



Vietnam



If the idea of earning money while traveling, perfecting your chopsticks skills, developing into a well rounded individual, uncovering a complex recent history, and having fun partaking in enriching cultural experiences sounds like a pretty good chapter in life, you should set your sights on Vietnam—where the coffee is strong but the will to learn English is stronger. Teaching abroad is the perfect solution to get you there. After all, the era of rulers, time outs, and detention are long gone, and the days of making the world a better place through Simon Says and Duck Duck Goose await.

Summary of necessary qualifications

- Age: 20+
- Education: Bachelor's required
- Fluency: Native
- Health: Be physically and mentally fit
- Soft skills: Mature, good communication
- Other: Passport holder from USA, Canada, UK, Ireland, South Africa, Australia or New Zealand; Clean police record

Summary of rating

- We knocked off .5 stars because it is not uncommon for ESL teachers to work odd hours while teaching in Vietnam—primarily evenings and weekends, outside of normal school hours. On the bright side, you can make a decent living with only 15-20 hours of class time per week, leaving you plenty of time for beach going (or starting a side hustle).
- ★: The food. Oh the food. You will need lots and lots of fuel to stay on top of your ESL teaching game, right?! We deplore you to taste everything (twice) and to never feel ashamed for indulging in fourthmeals—especially with your fellow TEFL teachers or even your students!





info@premiertefl.com | www.premiertefl.com



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Find your next TEFL job

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We're here to make sure you have the most successful TEFL teaching experience and get you living the life you've always dreamed of!

Contact us with any questions - we'll help you get there.

We're available to chat Monday to Friday

UK	+44 (0) 1273 782 869
US	+1 (415) 800 3961
ROI	+353 83 8722 855