

# Finding a Job Teaching English in Hong Kong

The demand for English teachers in Hong Kong is steady. It is most common to find a job in advance of actually being in the country, but at the same time, English teachers can find a job if they are already living in Hong Kong. If you are already living in Hong Kong or plan on visiting, and find a job while you are there, you will need to leave the country in order to obtain your legal work visa. Most teachers go to Macao to change their visa status.

One of the benefits of working in Hong Kong is that there is the opportunity to teach children or adults. Jobs in Hong Kong can be found through private language schools as well as in primary and secondary schools.

Jobs in Hong Kong can be found year round, except around Chinese New Year when the entire country is celebrating! Typical contracts will be for at least 12 months. Housing and airfare are sometimes provided by the employer.

The day-to-day schedule of an English teacher in Hong Kong will vary depending on the type of school and the needs of the school. In private language schools, English teachers will work around their students' work or school schedule. This means that you can teach classes in the mornings, afternoons, and/or evenings and sometimes on Saturdays. An English teachers' schedule at public schools or universities will vary from school to school, but are comparable to school and teaching schedules as those in the United States or other countries.

For more detailed information on finding a job and working in Hong Kong, please refer to International TEFL Academy's [Job Search Guidance Manual](#).

The steps below should be followed in order to successfully find work as an English teacher in Hong Kong.

**Before you go....**

## **1. ENSURE THAT TEACHING ENGLISH IN HONG KONG IS RIGHT FOR YOU.**

...ask yourself the following questions

- **Do you have at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited university or college?** *In order to obtain a work permit in Hong Kong, teachers need to show proof of completing a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.*
- **Do you have at least \$3,000.00 USD to support yourself in Hong Kong before you receive your first paycheck?** *This does not include money you will spend on airfare or other travel expenses.*
- **Do you want to save up to \$600 USD per month?**
- **Do you want to have your housing and airfare paid for by your school?** *Schools in Hong Kong only sometimes pay for their teachers living or travel expenses.*

**If you answered "no" to the above questions, it may be a good idea to rethink where you want to teach.**

## **2. PREPARE YOUR COVER LETTER AND RESUME**

- Review the [Job Search Guidance Manual](#) section on writing a resume and cover letter.
- Model your current resume after the sample resume in the Job Search Guidance Manual.
- Once your resume and cover letter have been updated, email them to Student Affairs to review and offer feedback.

## **3. RESEARCH AND FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE CITY AND LANGUAGE SCHOOLS**

**Resources can include:**

- International TEFL Academy's [Hong Kong School Finder](#)
- [Teaching English Abroad](#) by Susan Griffith

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- Online web searches and a Hong Kong guidebook such as Lonely Planet

## 4. DO YOU STILL WANT TO TEACH IN Hong Kong?

If the answer is YES, do the following:

### How to Get a Job In Advance of Being in Hong Kong:

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There are a few different ways to find a job in Hong Kong if you're not already there. International TEFL Academy recommends trying each different method that is outlined below to ensure you find the job that is right for you.

- 1. Recruiters:** Recruiters are companies that assist job seekers (English teachers in this case) in finding English teaching jobs abroad in public schools, private English language schools and universities. Essentially, they act as the middle man between the English teacher and the school but don't ultimately hire the English teacher. As a job seeker, you should not have to pay for a recruiter; recruiters should only be paid by the school that hires you. If you are ever unsure whether or not a recruiter is "legit" don't hesitate to contact International TEFL Academy to check if we've heard of them.

International TEFL Academy works with the following recruiters although there are many more out there. It is completely up to you if you want to work with a recruiter and which recruiter you end up working with. This is not a comprehensive list of recruiters for Hong Kong.

- **STL Hong Kong** - <http://stl-hk.com/get-started> - Assists qualified teachers to find work in Hong Kong and China.
- **Teach to Travel Hong Kong** - [http://www.teachtotravel.co.uk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=68&Itemid=75](http://www.teachtotravel.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=68&Itemid=75) - Hires teachers to work in kindergartens throughout Hong Kong.
- **Footprints Recruiting** - <http://www.footprintsrecruiting.com/teaching-jobs-abroad/asia/teaching-in-hong-kong> - Recruits for public school positions in Hong Kong.
- **Teachaway** - <http://www.teachaway.com/teaching-public-schools-hong-kong/> - Recruits for the NET Scheme in Hong Kong.

Each recruiter has different ways they would like you to contact them and different documents they will ask you for. Research each recruiter and their requirements before contacting them by going to their websites. Generally, you will *apply* to work with a recruiter by submitting certain documents (i.e. resume, cover letter, photo) through their website. Once your application has been reviewed a recruiter will contact you and set up an initial screening to find out more about you, where you are interested in working, where you are willing to work, when you are able to start, etc. As long as you meet the recruiter's requirements, the recruiter will begin to work with you on finding you a school.

- 2. Private Language Schools, Public Schools and Universities:** If you don't want to work with a recruiter, contacting language schools, public schools, and/or universities directly is another way to find a job teaching English in Hong Kong. To find schools throughout Hong Kong, use International TEFL Academy's [Hong Kong School Finder](#). We recommend using Google Chrome or another web server that translates websites from one language to another. Once you land on a specific school's website search for an *English Teacher* section or for instructions on how to apply for a position. If there aren't clear instructions on how to apply for a position, search for the school's contact information, such as an email address, and email the school directly to tell them who you are, what you want, and that you are applying for an English teaching position.

When you contact a school directly by email, include the following information:

- **Body of the Email:** Include a brief overview of your qualifications and what the intention of your email is. For example:

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*To whom it may concern,*

*My name Joe Smith and I am currently seeking a position teaching English at your school. I recently completed a 180-hour TEFL Certification Course in Chicago, Illinois, USA and have a bachelor's degree in psychology. I am available to start as early as February 1, 2013.*

*I have attached my resume, cover letter and a recent photo for your review. I welcome the opportunity for an interview at any time or day that is convenient for you.*

*Please let me know if you have any questions about my background or qualifications.*

*I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.*

*Sincerely,*

*Joe Smith*

- **Attachments:** Resume, Cover Letter, Photo and other information if it is requested on the school's website.

- 3. Job Boards:** Another way to search for a job in Hong Kong is by responding to job posts you find on different ESL Job Boards. There are hundreds of ESL job boards out there and it can be quite overwhelming. Below is a list of a few major job boards specific to jobs in Hong Kong to help you begin your search.

- **Teacher Gig** - [http://www.teachergig.com/jobs/hong\\_kong](http://www.teachergig.com/jobs/hong_kong)

Once you have a job your school will assist you in the steps of how to arrange your visa, when to book your flight, etc..

## How to Get a Job when in Hong Kong/On the Ground

### **1. Book Your Flight:**

Even though you are planning to live in Hong Kong indefinitely, and perhaps don't know when and if you'll return home, you should ask your airline if you need to show proof that you'll be leaving the country before your tourist visa expires. If this is the case, you may need to purchase a round trip ticket even if you're not planning on using the second half of the ticket. Most airlines also need to see your return ticket. If you don't have a return ticket there is a chance that you won't even be let on your flight. Tourist visas typically last for 30 - 90 days, but check with your home country's visa requirements. Your return ticket will need to be for a date that is before your tourist visa expires. You may have to "throw away" your return ticket and never use it, but check with your airline on their different options to change your travel dates.

**What is a visa?** A visa is simply a document (often in the form of a stamp in a passport) issued by a government that authorizes a foreign citizen to enter that government's country for residency, tourism, education and/or work. Read International TEFL Academy's article, "[What is a visa and do I need a visa to teach English abroad?](#)" for more information on visas.

- On what date should you fly to Hong Kong:
  - There is no specific date you need to be in Hong Kong since schools hire year round.
  - Below are a few different websites that offer discounted airfare:
    - [www.kayak.com](http://www.kayak.com)
    - [www.STAtravel.com](http://www.STAtravel.com)
    - [www.cheapair.com](http://www.cheapair.com)
    - Travel Agencies – You can also check with a local travel agent to help you find discounted airfare.

### **2. Book Your Accommodations -**

Most English teachers travelling to Hong Kong stay in a hostel or other budget friendly accommodations while they are looking for a job. We highly advise against renting an apartment or giving anyone money for accommodations before you arrive. You want to be sure to see the apartment before you rent it and can't always trust people you meet on the internet. Below are some websites to research for cheap

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accommodations.

- [www.hostelworld.com](http://www.hostelworld.com)
  - [www.hostels.com](http://www.hostels.com)
3. **Contact Schools** - Start contacting schools via email around 2 weeks before you will be in Hong Kong. You can find a list of language schools to contact in International TEFL Academy's [Hong Kong School Finder](#). Contacting schools ahead of time will let them know that you're interested! Even if you don't hear back from the school we also recommend contacting them again when you're in Hong Kong. When you contact schools before you arrive, include the following information:
- Resume (as a PDF attachment)
  - Cover Letter (as a PDF attachment)
  - In the body of the email include the following:
    - A brief overview of who you are and your qualifications and that you're looking for a position teaching English.
    - When you will be in Hong Kong and available for an interview.
    - Ask if there is a time and day that you can come in for an interview.
4. **Packing and Travel Checklist** – Check [International TEFL Academy's Packing and Travel Checklist](#) for additional items to do and pack before you move to Hong Kong.

Once you get to Hong Kong...

## 1. GOING THROUGH CUSTOMS

If you don't already have a job lined up and haven't already secured a work visa, you will need to enter Hong Kong as a tourist. It's not recommended to say that you are an English teacher and are there to teach English. Without the proper visa you could be turned away.

- **Don't** tell customs that you are there to teach English or work.  
**Why?** *Since you don't have a work visa and are travelling on a tourist visa, you are not legally allowed to work in the country. Since you are travelling on a tourist visa you need to be a tourist when you go through customs.*
- **Don't** bring a suitcase full of teaching materials.  
**Why?** *If you pack suitcase full of teaching materials and books titled "How to Find a Teaching Job in Hong Kong" and your bag is randomly searched, customs will most likely know that you are not there as a tourist. Pack a modest amount of materials that will get you started as a teacher in Hong Kong.*
- **Do** tell customs that you are there on vacation and that you are a tourist.
- **Do** have proof that you are leaving the country before your tourist visa will expire.

## 2. CELL PHONE

- Now that you live in Hong Kong you should buy a cell phone and get a local phone number. Talk to the locals (people at your hostel, other expats, etc.) about where the best cell phone deals are. Once you have a cell phone be sure to update your phone number on your resume and cover letter.

## 3. BE PREPARED

Once you've settled in it's time to start applying for jobs and preparing for interviews.

- **Dress and Look Professional** – Even if you don't have an interview set up you still want to look as though you are going in for an interview.
  - Men: Slacks/Collared Shirt  
Be clean shaven

**International TEFL Academy**  
[www.InternationalTEFLAcademy.com](http://www.InternationalTEFLAcademy.com)

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- Women: Skirt/Collared Shirt/Slacks
- Both: Take out any out of the ordinary face piercings and cover up any tattoos.
- **Get Organized**
  - Read the sample interview questions located in the [Job Search Guidance Manual](#)
  - Have printed copies of your resume and cover letter
  - Bring a sample lesson plan (you may also be asked to do a “demo teaching lesson”)
  - Bring copies of your TEFL Certificate
  - Some schools may also request:
    - Unofficial Transcripts
    - References and/or a letter of recommendation
    - Copy of your college diploma

## **4. APPLY FOR ENGLISH TEACHING JOBS**

1. To get a job in Hong Kong you need to visit schools in person (not by sitting in an internet café.)
  - Before you go, make sure you have checked the location and operating hours of the school.
  - When you get there, ask to speak with the person in charge of hiring English teachers – **Do not just drop off your resume and leave!**
    - If no one is there to speak with you, do the following:
      - Leave your resume and cover letter
      - Ask for contact information for the person in charge of hiring
      - Ask when he or she is typically in the office
      - Return to the school during his or her office hours
    - If the person in charge of hiring English teachers is there, do the following:
      - Politely ask him/her if they have time to speak with you about your qualifications and for you to find out more about their job openings for English teachers.
      - Tell him/her that you are there looking for an English teaching position and can start immediately.
      - If he/she does not have the time to talk with you then, schedule a time that he/she is available for a proper interview.

## **5. FOLLOW UP WITH THE SCHOOL**

- Within 24 – 48 hours after your interview, send a Thank You email to the person you interviewed with. If you don't have an email address, it is also appropriate to call.
  - Let them know how appreciative you are of them taking the time to interview you.
  - Let them know that you are interested in the position and that you want the job.
  - Let them know that you are a good fit for the job and give a few main reasons why!

## **6. REPEAT STEPS 4 – 5 UNTIL YOU ARE OFFERED A JOB!!**