

Finding a Job Teaching English in China



China has one of the largest job markets for English teachers around the world. It is estimated that between 200 – 350 million Chinese know English, but the level of their English varies as well as how and if they actually use what they know of the language. China is a great option for those who are looking for a few perks to come with their contract such as a housing allowance, flight reimbursement and the opportunity to save some money while overseas.

For more detailed information on finding a job and working in China, 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 China.

Before you go....

1. ENSURE THAT TEACHING ENGLISH IN CHINA 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 China, teachers need to show proof of completing a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.*
- **Do you have approximately \$1,000 - \$2,000 USD to support yourself in China before receive your first paycheck?** *This does not include money you will spend on airfare or expenses you have before you get to China.*
- **Would you like to save up to \$600 USD or more each month?** *The amount of money an English teacher can save in China varies and ultimately depends on the "lifestyle" of the English teacher.*
- **Are you younger than 60 years old?** *Currently, China has a mandatory retirement age of 60 years old for men and 55 years old for women.*
- **Do you want your housing paid for and airfare reimbursed?** *Most schools in China offer housing stipends and airfare reimbursement.*

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. CHOOSE ONE MAJOR CITY WHERE YOU WANT TO LIVE AND WORK

Most teaching jobs will be found in larger cities such as Shanghai and Beijing. The demand for English teachers in smaller towns is much lower than it is in larger cities due to the amount of language schools there. However, in China there is still a demand for English teachers across the country. If you are willing to work in a rural town, you may potentially be able to save more money as you won't be spending as much and the cost of living will be lower than in a large city.

4. RESEARCH AND FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE CITY AND LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

Resources can include:

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

International TEFL Academy
www.InternationalTEFLAcademy.com

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- Online web searches and a China guidebook such as [Lonely Planet](#)

5. DO YOU STILL WANT TO TEACH IN CHINA?

Continue reading if your answer is “yes.”

How to Get a Job In Advance of Being in China:

There are a few different ways to find a job in China 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.

- **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.

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 teaching English.

Please review our [preferred recruiter document](#) for more information on recommended recruiters for China.

- **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 China. To find schools throughout China, use International TEFL Academy’s [China 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 who your qualifications and what the intention of your email is. For example:

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*

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- **Attachments:** Resume, Cover Letter, Photo and other information if it is requested on the school's website.
- **Job Boards:** Another way to search for a job in China 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 China to help you begin your search.
 - China Job - <http://www.chinajob.com/>
 - Network ESL - <http://www.networkesl.com/>
 - My China Job - <http://www.mychinajob.com/schools/index.asp>

How to Get a Job if You're Already in China:

STEP 1: BE PREPARED

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

Map Out the Schools - Plan out what schools you are going to apply to and where they're located before you go. Get a city map and map out where the schools are located. Each day you can visit schools that are located in the same vicinity so you're not travelling from one end of the city to the other in the same day. Use [ITA's China School Finder](#) to research language schools in China.

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
- 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

● **STEP 2: APPLY FOR ENGLISH TEACHING JOBS**

1. If you are already living in China, you can get a job while you are there by visiting 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!**

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- 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.

• STEP 3: 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, 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!

• STEP 4: REPEAT STEPS 1 - 3 UNTIL YOU ARE OFFERED A JOB!!

6. HAVE A JOB OFFER? NOW WHAT?

- **Review and Sign Your Contract:** Before you sign anything make sure that you completely understand your contract. Refer to the Job Search Guidance Manual for more information and tips on reviewing a contract. A few of the major things you should look for are:
 - **Salary (how much and how often you get paid)**
 - **Start and End Dates**
 - **Housing Allowance (if applicable)**
 - **Flight Reimbursement (if applicable)**
 - **End of contract bonus (if applicable)**
 - **Anything else they promised you in the interview**
- **Work Visa:** Now that you have signed your contract your school or recruiter should help you in the steps to obtain a work visa. Work visas for English teachers in China are technically called *Employment Visa* or *Z Visa*.

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.

You can read more about the Z Visa on the Embassy of China's website: <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/hzqz/zgqz/t84245.htm>.

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- **Other:** Now that you've reviewed and signed your contract and are applying for your work visa, you will need to work with your school on finalizing the details of your move to China.
 - **Flight:** If your school is going to reimburse you for your flight to China, you will need to purchase your airline ticket. Talk to your school or recruiter about your expected arrival date and tips on flying to China.
 - **Arrival:** Find out from your school or recruiter if there will be anyone to pick you up from the airport. If not, get very specific instructions on how to get to your housing once you arrive.
 - **Accommodations:** Most schools in China will give you a housing allowance or provide housing for their English teachers. Check with your school or recruiter for details on your housing. If your school does not offer housing, they should be able to assist you in how to find housing in China.
 - **Packing and Travel Checklist:** Check International TEFL Academy's Packing and Travel Checklist for additional items to do and pack before you move to China - <http://www.internationalteflacademy.com/Portals/67369/documents/student-affairs/ita-packing-and-travel-checklist.pdf>