

# Finding a Job Teaching English in Italy

Italy represents one of the largest job markets in Europe and while red tape is daunting and work permits are virtually impossible to come by for non-EU (European Union) citizens, there are numerous opportunities for Americans and other non-EU citizens to gain employment, particularly in larger cities. Citizens of the United Kingdom and Ireland will find it far easier going to Italy as many language schools are actually British owned and operated with a pronounced bias towards hiring Britons. An **EU Citizen** is a citizen that holds nationality of a country that is part of the European Union. For a list of countries that are part of the EU, please click [here](#).

Jobs will be concentrated in large cities, particularly those with extensive commerce, tourism and/or universities. We recommend that you concentrate your job search in these cities. That said, jobs can be also found in smaller towns and cities as well as in southern Italy and Sicily (particularly Palermo). Just be prepared to take more time for your job search, be patient and be prepared to be less selective. Also, pay will likely be lower.

For more detailed information on finding a job in Italy, 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 Italy.

**Before you go....**

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

...ask yourself the following questions

- **If you are a US citizen, or a citizen of a country outside of the EU, are you ok with working “under the table” and overstaying your tourist 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.

**Student Visas** – It is possible to obtain a student visa which will allow you to work legally in Italy while you are studying or taking classes. People who live in Italy as students are legally able to work for up to a certain amount of hours per week. The school you register to take classes at must be recognized by the Italian Government in order to obtain your student visa. International TEFL Academy does not assist students with obtaining a student visa.

- Rules and laws constantly change. Below are only possible outcomes that may happen if you've overstayed your tourist visa:

1. You may be fined when leaving the country.
2. You may not be able to return to Italy for a certain amount of time.
3. You may be “kicked out” of the country.

*\*Australians, Canadians and those from New Zealand have the opportunity to acquire a [Working Holiday Visa](#).*

- **Are you OK with not having a job before you arrive in Italy?** *Jobs in Italy are found in person.*
- **Do you want to teach adults?**
- **Do you have approximately \$2,100.00 USD to support yourself in Italy for 2 months?**
- **Do you want to be abroad in January or September/October?**

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- Do you have a 4-year degree from an accredited college or university?
- Will you be OK with breaking even financially every month? Schools in Italy don't offer their teachers benefits such as healthcare, housing, flight reimbursement, etc.

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.
- Some schools may request that your cover letter and resume are translated to Italian, but this isn't very common in Italy. If you speak Italian fluently or know someone who does, have your cover letter and resume translated. Do not use websites such as *Google Translate* to translate any documents as the translation is not always the best!
- Once your resume and cover letters 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 Rome, Florence, Milan, Naples, Turin, and Bologna. 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. If you are interested in teaching English in a small town we recommend giving yourself a certain amount of time to find a job. For example, if you want to teach in Trieste, Italy and are unable to find a job after 2 – 3 weeks, we recommend moving to a larger city where the demand for English teachers is much higher and your prospects of finding a job are greater.

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

Resources can include:

- International TEFL Academy's [Italy School Finder](#)
- [Teaching English Abroad](#) by Susan Griffith
- Online web searches and an Italy guidebook such as [Lonely Planet](#)

**Preparation tip:** Since jobs as an English teacher are found once you get to Italy, it's a great idea to plan out what schools you are going to apply to before you go and where they're located. 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 Italy School Finder](#) to research language schools.

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## 5. DO YOU STILL WANT TO TEACH IN ITALY?

If the answer is YES, do the following:

1. **Book Your Flight** - When purchasing your flight to Italy it is important to keep a few things in mind. Even though you are probably planning to live in Italy indefinitely, and perhaps don't know when and if you'll return home, many airlines may ask to see proof of a return ticket or onward travel in order to allow you to board your flight. Each airline has different rules so please make sure to check with your airline before making any purchases. When you arrive in Italy the customs agent may also ask to see proof that you have plans to leave the country before your tourist visa expires. In both cases, it is recommended to have either a return ticket or a ticket for onward travel. The date of the return or onward travel must be prior to the expiration of your tourist visa (typically 90 days after entering Italy). If you purchase a round-trip ticket, look into ones that have a flexible return date so that you may adjust the date after you've gone through customs. If you prefer to purchase onward travel, this can be in the form of a bus, train, or flight ticket from Italy to a country outside the Schengen Zone.

On what date should you fly to Italy:

- There is no specific day that you need to be in Italy. Below are ITA's recommendations based on the 2 major hiring seasons:
  - a. September/October hiring season - We recommend being in Italy around the middle of September.
  - b. January hiring season – We recommend being in Italy during the first 2 weeks of January.

Review International TEFL Academy's [travel resources](#) for recommended resources to book your flight.

2. **Book your accommodations** – For those who don't already have family or friends living in Italy, most English teachers stay in a hostel or other budget 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. Please see the [accommodations section](#) of the travel resources page for recommended resources.
3. **Contact Schools** - Start contacting schools via email around 2 weeks before you will be in Italy. You can find a list of language schools to contact in [International TEFL Academy's Italy 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 Italy. 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 Italy 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 Italy.

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Once you get to Italy...

## 1. GOING THROUGH CUSTOMS

- **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 Italy" 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 Italy.*
- **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 Italy 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
  - 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 Italy 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.

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- 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, 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. DO NOT PANIC IF YOU DO NOT FIND A JOB RIGHT AWAY**

- If you find a job the first day you are in Italy, you are LUCKY! It is completely normal if it takes you a week or two and visits to multiple language schools before you find a job. Be persistent, follow-up with schools, and give it at least 2-3 weeks before you move on to a different location.
- Potential reasons why a school may not hire you in Italy:
  - **You do not have a CELTA** – A handful language schools in Italy only recognize CELTA Certificates mostly because they are very popular in the UK. This will not be the case for the majority of schools in Italy. If a language school only accepts a CELTA Certificate, you can try to let them know that your TEFL certification meets the same standards, holds the same level of accreditation in the UK and internationally, and provides more training and practicum hours than a CELTA. Feel free to show them [ITA's Accreditation](#) page online.
  - **You do not have a specific English accent** – There will be certain language schools that are specifically looking for British accents, for example.
  - **You are not able to work legally** – You will run into schools in Italy that are only interested in hiring those who can already work legally (teachers with Student Visas, Working Holiday Visas, EU citizens, etc.) There are schools that follow this procedure but there are also many schools that do not and will pay teachers “under the table”.
  - **The school simply is not hiring.**

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