

Finding a Job Teaching English in Mexico

Mexico is an enormous country with a plentitude of diversity. Spanning over 760,000 square miles with endless coastlines, large metropolitan cities, small “pueblas” jungles, ancient Mayan ruins, a thriving tourism economy and a well-known cuisine, Mexico literally has something to offer for everyone. With a multi-billion dollar tourism industry and close proximity and business relations to the United States, the English language is becoming more and more vital for Mexican citizens.

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

Before you go....

1. ENSURE THAT TEACHING ENGLISH IN MEXICO IS RIGHT FOR YOU.

...ask yourself the following questions

- **Are you looking to teach in a country where you can receive a work visa?** *In Mexico, teachers can apply for a Residencia Temporal (Temporary Residence Visa) which permits foreigners to work in Mexico. However, about 35% of teachers choose to work “under the table” as well.*
- **Do you have extra start-up money to apply for your Residencia Temporal?** *Once you receive a job from a school, you can apply for your Residencia Temporal. Some schools may cover the cost however, it is best to be prepared to pay approximately \$400 for the 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.

- **Are you looking to find a job in advance or on the ground in Mexico?** *Jobs in Mexico can be secured either way! Finding a job on the ground can sometimes be easier and less competitive.*
- **What type of students do you want to teach?** *In Mexico, it is possible to teach children, university students, or business professionals.*
- **Do you have approximately \$1,300.00 to \$1,800.00 USD to support yourself in Mexico for 6 weeks?** *This is the estimated and preferred start-up cost for an ESL teacher in Mexico (this also includes the approximate \$400 USD fee for the Residencia Temporal).*
- **Do you have a 4-year degree from an accredited college or university?** *Teachers without degrees can find work in Mexico however, those with Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees will be paid more.*
- **Will you be OK with breaking even financially every month?** *Schools in Mexico don’t typically offer their teachers benefits such as housing, flight reimbursement, etc. Some teachers are able to save a little bit of money.*

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 has been updated, email them to Student Affairs to review and offer feedback.

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

One great aspect about finding a job in Mexico is that there are many large cities that offer an extensive ESL market. However, like any country, the largest ESL markets will be found in the bigger cities such as Mexico City, Guadalajara, Morelos, Puebla, etc. 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. If you 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.

Please also keep in mind that job opportunities in beach towns such as Cancun, Cozumel, Acapulco, etc. can be difficult to come by due to the large amount of English speaking tourists already there.

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

Resources can include:

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

Preparation tip: If you are in a situation to find a job once you get to Mexico, 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 Mexico School Finder](#) to research language schools.

5. DO YOU STILL WANT TO TEACH IN MEXICO?

If the answer is YES, do the following:

1. **Contact Schools** - You can find a list of language schools to contact in [International TEFL Academy's Mexico School Finder](#). You can also apply to schools who have posted ads on general ESL and Mexico specific job boards. You can find these job boards in [International TEFL Academy's Job Search Guidance Manual](#). Even if you don't hear back from the school we also recommend contacting them again when you're in Mexico. 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 are available for an interview and when you are hoping to be in Mexico.
 - Ask if there is a time and day that you can come in for an interview if they wish to interview you once you are in Mexico.

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If you receive a job offer in advance, do the following:

- 1. Review and sign your contract** – It is important to read through your contract and make sure it includes the following important information:
 - Working days and working hours
 - Holidays
 - Probationary Period
 - Start and end dates of the contract
 - Salary and overtime (and when it is paid)
 - Anything else your employer promised you in the interview

Feel free to send your contract to the Student Affairs Department if you have any questions, concerns, or just want a third party to check it over.

- 2. Obtain your Residencia Temporal** – follow the steps below to receive your 12 month work visa:
 - Receive an offer letter on official letterhead from your employer
 - Fill out the application form on the Immigration website:
http://www.inm.gob.mx/index.php/page/Solicitud_de_Autorizacion_Visas
 - This link is in Spanish and will require that you have the following information at hand:
 - a. Passport
 - b. Name of Company
 - c. Company's RFC Number
 - d. If the company does not have registry number with immigration then the process will not be able to take place.
 - After you have clicked the save button, you will be taken to another window where you will be given a folio number and access code to follow the process online. The process will be followed through this link:
http://www.inm.gob.mx/index.php/page/Seguimiento_de_Tramite
 - Save the PDF format of the application and print it. This printed application must be signed by you and the name of the company's legal representative.
 - The application you have printed out, once signed by the company's legal representative, must be presented to your nearest INM office or Mexican consulate (if outside of Mexico) along with:
 - Copy of your passport (all pages)
 - Original FMM tourist Visa (issued upon entry to the country)
 - Job offer letter from the employer on the company's official letter
 - Copy of employer's immigration registry form
 - Copy of the company's legal representative's ID (IFE)
 - 1.000 pesos for payment of the application fee (INM will give you a payment stub to pay at a designated bank which must be returned to them to complete the process)
 - You will wait for your application to be cleared by INM. You can follow the process on the link above and this takes about 15 business days

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- You will receive an authorization form PDF, within the tracking page, which is the document you will require taking to your nearest INM office to be stamped. This is the document you will present to the Mexican consulate and it details your NUT authorization number. You have 15 working days after having it stamped to visit the consulate.
- You will go to the Mexican consulate of your choosing to collect your Temporary Residence Visa. You do not require scheduling an appointment with the consulate beforehand. You can simply show up at their address between the hours of 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM and approach the visa authorization desk. For this step you will require:
 - Authorization form PDF
 - Passport and copies of each page
 - \$48 USD for photograph
 - \$36 USD for the visa fee
 - Job offer letter from employer
- Once you receive the temporary visa, you have up to 30 days to return to Mexico.

VERY IMPORTANT: Make sure that your passport-new visa is stamped by immigration authorities upon entering the country at border checkpoint, port, or airport. Make sure you also receive an entry FMM visa for 30 days with the “Canje” option selected on the document. If your passport is not stamped or you did not get the FMM entry visa then the entire process will be void and you will have to start all over again.

- Once you are back in Mexico fill out the “Solicitud the Canje” form at your nearest INM office. When you visit the INM office you will require:
 - The “Residencia Temporal” visa in your passport
 - FMM Entry Visa marked for 30 days and “Canje”
 - Job offer Letter
 - Proof of residence in Mexico (power, water or phone bill)
 - Copy of every page of your passport
 - 3 full face photographs
 - 3 left profile photographs
 - 3,130 pesos for the Temporary Residence Card
- After completing step 7, INM will take 15 working days to assign you an appointment to show up and present your finger prints for the work permit. At this stage you will require visiting the INM office you visited for step 7. This is the last stage of the process.
- After completing the previous step, INM will take about 30 natural days to send you and appointment to pick up your official work permit.

A couple of things to keep in mind when applying for your Residence Temporal:

- Some schools will cover the cost of the visa but it depends on the school.
- The visa is good for 12 months but can be renewed easily in Mexico.
- Having a Residencia Temporal allows you to open a bank account and have universal health insurance coverage.

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3. Book Your Flight –

- When purchasing your flight to Mexico it is important to keep a few things in mind. Even though you are probably planning to live in Mexico 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 Mexico 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 180 days after entering Mexico). 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, boat, or plane ticket from Mexico to another country.

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

ITA recommends you schedule your arrival at least a couple of days before your job begins. This way, you can get to know your way around, practice with public transportation, and find a place to live if you have not already.

- ## 4. Book your accommodations –
- For those who don't already have family or friends living in Mexico, most English teachers stay in a hostel or other budget accommodations until they find a place to live near their school if they have not already found something ahead of time or if the school does not offer housing. 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.
- ## 5. Packing and Travel Checklist –
- Check [International TEFL Academy's Packing and Travel Checklist](#) for additional items to do and pack before you move to Brazil.

If you are looking for a job on the ground in Mexico, do the following:

1. Book Your Flight -

- When purchasing your flight to Mexico it is important to keep a few things in mind. Even though you are probably planning to live in Mexico 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 Mexico 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 180 days after entering Mexico). 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, boat, or plane ticket from Mexico to another country.
- On what date should you fly to Mexico:

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- There is no specific day that you need to be in Mexico as positions can typically be found year round. The major hiring months are May, June, and July as many schools begin the school year in August.

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 Mexico, 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 before you will be in Mexico. You can find a list of language schools to contact in [International TEFL Academy's Mexico 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 Mexico. 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 Chile 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 Chile.

Once you get to Mexico...

- 1. PRESENT FMM CARD (Forma Migratoria Multiple)** – This card is given to you and you must fill it out either at the airport or on the airplane before you arrive in Mexico. As a tourist, you must keep this card and present it when you leave the country.

Once you get to Mexico without a job...

2. 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 Mexico" 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 Mexico.*
- **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.

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3. CELL PHONE

- Now that you live in Mexico 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.

4. 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

5. APPLY FOR ENGLISH TEACHING JOBS

1. If you don't receive a job in Mexico beforehand, 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.

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6. 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!

7. DO NOT PANIC IF YOU DO NOT FIND A JOB RIGHT AWAY

- If you find a job the first day you are in Mexico, 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.

8. REPEAT STEPS 4 – 6 UNTIL YOU ARE OFFERED A JOB!!

After you receive a job offer on the ground in Mexico, do the following:

1. Apply for your Residencia Temporal ([follow the steps above](#))
2. **Working on a Tourist Visa** – If you choose to work on a tourist visa in Mexico, you will need to leave the country every 180 days to renew your visa. This also does not allow you to open a bank account and you are not eligible for universal health insurance in Mexico.