

# Private Tutoring

Tutoring is a great way to gain experience teaching English as a foreign language, as many teachers in Latin America and Europe will obtain private students to tutor on the side as a way to supplement their income and build their schedule. In addition, online English teachers will often work with students one-to-one.

Regardless of where (or how) they decide to teach, many ITA students choose to pursue private tutoring opportunities during their practicum experience to help them prepare for teaching privately abroad or online.

Students may work one-on-one with any students who are non-native English speakers. Lessons must be focused entirely on the subject of English. Private students may be acquired in a variety of ways, from posting an ad at a coffee shop offering free ESL lessons to working with a friend or family member. Private tutoring lessons can be completed in-person, or virtually via video chat.

One-on-one tutoring lessons are usually more laid-back and comfortable than formal classes. You should be prepared to maintain this casual atmosphere without your student taking advantage of the casual tone. Remember, the goal is to help your student learn new English language skills and improve the ones they currently have. Make sure to have goals, lesson plans and performance evaluations to help keep your lessons focused and successful. One of the main differences between tutoring and classroom teaching is content.

## Getting Started: How to Plan and Structure Your First Tutoring Session

Got the first-time teacher jitters? Check out our suggestions for how to structure your first tutoring session with a new student, so that you feel comfortable, and your student feels confident, too.

### 1) Before your first session (if possible), ask your student a few questions:

- a. What are your student's learning goals? Do they want to practice their conversational English? Learn the basics? Prepare for an exam?
- b. What is their English level? Advanced? Intermediate? Beginner?
- c. What are your student's expectations of your tutoring sessions? Do they want to work only on one language ability (speaking, writing, reading or listening/comprehension)?

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- d. You will perform a “needs analysis” during your first session with your student, explained below, but it’s always a good idea to have a basic understanding of your student’s learning goals before you start, if possible.
- 2) Dress in business casual clothing for your first session, but don’t overdo it (no suit necessary!) and arrive to your session on time or a bit early.**
- a. If you are tutoring virtually, be sure you have a private and quiet space set up where you can hold your virtual lessons and be sure to sit in front of a blank background or blur your background if you can.
- 3) Introduce yourself to your student. Then, ask them to introduce themselves to you.**
- a. You may want to prepare a short “elevator pitch” of who you are, your teaching experience or work history, education, etc.
  - b. Be sure to speak clearly, slowly, and use basic vocabulary if working with a beginner or intermediate level student.
  - c. Let them know that this isn’t a test of their English level, and you simply want to learn a bit more about them before starting your lesson.
- 4) Explain how your sessions will work, what the structure of each tutoring session will be, and set up an agenda with them that you both agree on.**
- a. See more information in the next section on how to set “ground rules” for your tutoring sessions.
- 5) Perform a “needs analysis” of your student’s English learning needs, as explained in the next section.**
- 6) Teach your student something new!**
- a. Based on your student’s English level, bring in some materials to use to have a short teaching lesson during your first tutoring session, so your student can get a feel for your teaching style, and you can learn a bit more about your student’s learning needs.

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## Performing a Needs Analysis

A “needs analysis” will be your key to success while tutoring and should always be done in your first tutoring session. For example, if a student does not need to learn how to write for their job, then writing should be a low factor in your lesson plans. In other cases, students may want to learn something that shouldn't be the focus given their goals (e.g. they want to learn new vocabulary rather than practicing speaking work with the vocabulary they have).

There are several ways you can complete an assessment of your student's needs, but one of the easiest ways to do so is to work from a need's analysis diagnostic assessment.

Learning what your student needs and what his/her language strengths/weaknesses are will come about in a needs analysis and some form of diagnostic test. Chapter 10 of your Online TEFL course covers some basic steps that come after this diagnostic test.

Here are some documents (all from our ITA courses) that can help set up tutoring:

- [Course Syllabus](#)
- [Needs Analysis & Diagnostic Test](#) (an example of this can be found in Chapter 10 of your Online TEFL certification course materials)

## Creating & Managing an Effective Learning Environment

- In your first session or even beforehand, establish a schedule with your student by determining how many times a week you and your student will meet. There are a number of virtual scheduling tools you can use, from a basic one like Google Calendar, to a more automated app, like [Calendly](#).
- Compromise on a cancellation policy and agree on how and when make-up classes will be scheduled. What are your no-show policies? Are you making it clear (in easy language) how and when to arrive to class (either virtually or physically)? What materials do they need to participate (i.e., tech requirements, homework ready)?
  - [Sample Cancellation Policies](#) from our Teaching English Online Course.
- For paying students (if you decide to charge for your lessons) – discuss payment options.

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Establish when you will be paid and how often. For example, will the student pay for a month's worth of classes upfront, or will you receive payment after the classes have been given?

- Decide where classes will be held. Will they be held at the student's home? Will the student come to your residence for classes? Will classes be given at a neutral location, such as a nearby café?
- Allow your student to clearly communicate their learning goals. Does your student require supplementary support on English classes they are currently enrolled in at a formal school or language school setting? Are you to provide lessons geared toward specific goals, such as learning English to pass a language proficiency exam, participate in international business meetings, prepare for a job interview, travel comfortably within English speaking countries, or to practice conversational English skills?
- Ensure your learning environment is reserved for learning English for your teaching time. This means that if you are teaching at your student's home, they should not be taking calls or taking care of household chores during your class time. Likewise, if you are giving classes at your home, you should act as a professional teacher and not take liberties because you are in your comfort zone – you should dress professionally, present prepared materials and should not be distracted with eating, drinking, or using your mobile phone.
- Have a clear understanding of the materials that will be used. If your student's learning goals are to prepare for a language proficiency exam or to receive extra support on English classes given at their school or university, then your student will likely have textbooks and material (i.e., homework, text materials) that they would like you to use.
- However, if there is a supplementary textbook that you would like your student to use, then you need to decide on who will purchase this or any outside material.
- If your student is looking to improve upon their conversational skills, please do not regard these classes as a casual chat hour. As a professional teacher, you should still plan various activities and bring outside material and resources to strengthen your student's speaking and listening skills, as well as basics such as grammar and pronunciation.

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## Tip 1:

Another difference between tutoring and classroom teaching has to do with grouping. In classes, teachers tend to use a lot of pair and group work, but in tutoring sessions, they don't have that option. It is difficult to anticipate how long a student will want to talk or write on a prompt. Thus, it is even more important to have back-up and extension activities ready.

## Tip 2:

Follow a textbook when you can. Finding a textbook (virtual or hardcopy) that even partially works for your student is an upfront cost but will save you time and stress. Here are just a few of our Director of Studies' favorite tools that are quick and easy to use.

- [Newsela](#)
- [ESL-Lab](#)
- [Padlet](#)

## Additional Resources:

You don't need millions of resources. In fact, we find it is better to have 3-5 good ones to supplement your lesson and books. In that way, you know them well and can edit/adapt in a timely manner. That is just our experience. To that end, here are some others that we recommend:

- [TED Education](#)
- [Socratic](#)
- [Quizlet](#)
- [Tay's Teaching Toolkit](#)
- [ISLcollective.com](#) – great site for worksheets
- [Ten Tips for ESL Tutorials](#) by University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- [The E.S.L. Tutor's Handbook](#) by Shawn Conway
- [Teaching ESL to Adults](#)
- [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#)
- [ESL Galaxy](#)
- [Creating Virtual Materials](#)

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- [Create Your Own Virtual Board Games](#) - can be played during a screen share or on a virtual whiteboard
- Speed Reading is an effective way to build reading skills for ESL students. Here is a long list of speed-reading exercises and comprehension questions you can use in your classes free of copyright problems:
  - <https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/lals/resources/speed-reading-and-listening-fluency>

## Resources Based on Learner Type (Target Learner):

Target Learner (Age)	Target Skill	Online Materials	Content Notes
Young Learners	Listening/ Speaking	Supersimple.com	free and paid content
	Reading	K12reader.com	free comprehension materials
	Writing	<a href="https://www.stickyball.net">https://www.stickyball.net</a>	
Adults	Listening/ Speaking	<a href="https://app.fluentize.com/login">https://app.fluentize.com/login</a> <a href="http://iteslj.org/questions/">http://iteslj.org/questions/</a>	High Quality Videos -both free and paid.
	Reading	<a href="https://newsela.com/">https://newsela.com/</a> <a href="http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/">http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/</a>	
	Grammar	<a href="https://www.teach-this.com/">https://www.teach-this.com/</a>	

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## After Completing Your 20 Practicum Hours

Once you have completed all 20 practicum hours, upload your complete write-up to the forum labeled Write-Up Submissions. Then, complete the Practicum Completion Form. Both steps need to be completed in order for your practicum submission to begin the review process.

Once Student Affairs has confirmed your hours, they will send you an email notifying you that your practicum requirement has been met. This email will contain information regarding the expected timeline and process for receiving your formal TEFL certificate.