HOW TO TEACH ENGLISH OVERSEAS
A Ten Week Plan to a New Life Abroad
How to Teach English Overseas
A Ten Week Plan to a New Life Abroad

Third Edition

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Dreams are the touchstones of our character.
Henry David Thoreau
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Introduction

Twenty Questions

BEFORE WE START and you head down the road to creating a new life overseas, here are 20 important questions you should ask yourself before deciding if teaching English overseas is right for you.

Do you have a family that you are responsible for?
How do they feel about moving overseas and living in a foreign land?

Do you have a spouse/partner? How do they feel about giving up their job and accompanying you?
Will they be able to find work overseas? Are they interested in teaching English also?

Do you have children? How will you educate them while overseas?
How might they feel about giving up their friends?

Do you have debts that must be paid while you are overseas? Do you have a degree?
Though a degree is not required in many countries, it will affect your options and income.

Are there special medical issues for you or your family that must be considered?

Do you have the financial reserves to return to your home country and re-establish yourself if things don’t work out? Are you willing to tough it out if you don’t like it?

Have you ever taught before? Do you have any reason to believe that you might enjoy teaching English?

Have you ever traveled or lived overseas? Did you enjoy it?

Would you find the daily problems of living and working overseas frustrating or a refreshing challenge?
Do you get depressed or angry easily?

Those 20 questions are only a beginning. Once you can answer them positively and be honest with yourself about them, then you are ready to proceed.
What personal qualities and attitudes will help you succeed?

Have reasonable expectations about your new occupation and what it can and cannot provide for you. This eBook will help you with that.

Understand that your new country will not be like your home country. Solutions to problems that work at home often don’t work overseas. Sometimes you really won’t know how to solve a problem.

Know that most personal problems you had in your home country will probably also exist or reoccur overseas.

Know that you will have good days and bad days, just like back home.

Know that you will probably experience good bosses, bad bosses, good jobs and bad jobs.

Be flexible and learn to bounce back from unhappy surprises and/or problematic situations.

Be willing to work under different cultural expectations about your behavior, appearance and dress.

Manage your moods, keep yourself upbeat and avoid downbeat people.

View your success overseas as a personal challenge and be determined about making it work.

What Language Schools and Employers are REALLY Looking for

Language schools, probably where you will find your first job as an English instructor, are businesses. The more students coming through the door and taking classes, the better their business does.

If students talk to their friends and they come and sign up for classes at your school, things go even better.

If they consistently sign up for the next class when the current one is finished, it is even better still.

Since attending a language school is an option and there are often competitors just down the street, schools must attend to enrollment. If they don’t, they go out of business and no one, including you, has a job. As a result of these demands on the success of the business, language schools look for teachers that can keep students coming back to their classrooms again and again.

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Think back to your favorite teachers when you were in school. Why were they your favorites? Where they friendly, helpful, intelligent, possibly even charming in their own way? Knowledgeable about their subject

You probably answered "Yes" to all of those characteristics and those are the very things that language schools are looking for. They would like their next teacher to be friendly, engaging, helpful, positive and encouraging.

When a school interviews you, they are looking for someone who will give their students a positive experience and they also want someone who will be pleasant to work with.

Of course, the school would like you to know a little something about English but as a native speaker, you already have a huge built-in store of knowledge about the language.

You have an excellent idea about what is right or wrong usage (though at first you may have difficulty explaining why). You know when pronunciation is understandable or not or when a sentence makes sense or not. These are the things non-native speakers regularly struggle with but for you will likely be no problem at all.

There is some excellent management research that shows that about 80% of people fired from their jobs are not fired because they lack the skills for their job. They are fired because of personal issues, attendance, punctuality, not following through and many other issues.

Take this to heart, though you may still have a lot to learn about teaching English, the biggest issue is just being able to get along and being a decent person to be around. Non-Western cultures tend to value these "getting along" characteristics highly.

They are just looking for someone pleasant and positive. Is that you? If not, teaching English abroad may not be your best career choice. It is a very people-oriented profession.

**Chapter One is Next: Getting Organized to Head Overseas**

What is coming in Chapter One? Scanning the Jobs Market — Find out what is possible . . . Passport — Get it now if you don’t already have it already. Degrees, Transcripts, Certificates and other Documents— Gathering together what you need for the job search.
Week One

There is no reason why that next job can't be yours. It is simply that easy

Scan the Jobs Market

Before we get too serious about things like passports, resumes and other details of life, let’s go ahead and fantasize a little bit. Scan this jobs feed with great jobs around the world including China, Thailand, Korea and much more: TEFL Country Guides at TEFLBootCamp.com

For jobs and internships in China: TEFL Jobs in China

For Thailand: TEFL jobs in Thailand For Korea: The Best TEFL Jobs in the World

For Vietnam: Country Guide — Train & Teach with Guaranteed Job! And Jobs in Vietnam

Jobs in Latin America Jobs in the Middle East—including UAE and Saudi Arabia

For almost everywhere else check this page: TEFL Country Guides

Realize that the people who will fill those jobs are just like you. Shortly they will be overseas living in and exploring the world and other cultures, traveling and often saving good money and/or paying off debts and student loans.

There is no reason why that next job can't be yours. It is simply that easy. Now we can go back a few paragraphs and draw a line through fantasize and change that to plan. This eBook is your plan.

Let’s go!
Before you can do much of anything and before you can expect any employer to take you seriously, you must have a current valid passport.

Employers are not interested in your plan to get one. They want to know that you have one. In fact, they will require you to have one to even get the process started.

If you already have a valid passport, you are ahead of the game and you can easily reduce this ten-week plan by a few weeks.

If your passport has expired or going to expire in the next year, get it renewed right now.

If you don't have a passport, order it right now because not much else on the job front can happen until you have it.

There are plenty of other things you can do to get ready, but you can't really land a job until that passport is in your hand.

Don't waste your time applying for jobs or contacting employers until that passport is in your hand.

Employers are quite familiar with day dreamers who contact them and never follow through. They won't want to waste their time.

One way to know if an applicant is serious is if they have their passport and it is current.

Almost every job application will require a photocopy or scan of your current valid passport.

Americans

A passport can take up to four weeks from the date of application and you may need to obtain supporting documents for the application. You can obtain an expedited passport for an additional fee and it can be issued and in your hands within two weeks.
For Americans . . .

Where to Apply for a Passport
(some of these links will take you to our website. That is so we can keep links current when they change.)

Expedited service: Where to Get a passport in two weeks or less

Click here for how long the process currently takes.

UK Citizens:

The Home Office's Identification and Passport Service is here

Click here for step-by-step assistance through the process for your first passport

The IPS recommends you plan for the process to take about six weeks.

Australians:

Start the process here.

A priority service is offered for an extra fee to complete the process in two working days.

An in-person interview is required.

New Zealanders:

Start here.

Their website says passports can be completed in ten working days and offers an urgent service that can complete the process in three working days.

Other Countries: Check your government’s websites.

As you can see here, if you already have a valid passport, you can easily take 2-4 weeks out of the process. In fact, if you really want, you can probably be teaching overseas in only 4-5 weeks. Accelerate the process as you please and are able.

Employers know an applicant is serious is if they already have their passport and it is current.
Degrees and Transcripts

Find the original of your degree if you have one. Not all countries require degrees so you can skip this step if you don’t have one. Generally speaking though, the higher the education requirement for teachers in a given country, the better the wages on offer in that country. But this is not always true.

Order current transcripts and be sure to not open them. Leave them in the sealed envelope. Have them ready but know that some countries will also want you to order them and have them sent directly to the school, Ministry of Labor or some other verification office.

Different countries will have different processes for verifying your degree/education. Some do it in your home country, others do it when you arrive there and still others will do both. When you apply for your job and are accepted, your future employer will typically walk you through the process.

You are not usually the first person they have helped through process and they will usually be familiar with current requirements. The requirements change regularly in some countries and your future employer will usually be the most up-to-date contact you can have.

The days of fake degrees are over. Don’t even think about it unless you would like to experience the inside of an immigration prison in a foreign land.

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The days of fake degrees are over. Don’t even think about it unless you would like to experience the inside of an immigration prison in a foreign land. Verification processes are improving by the week in almost every country.

One piece of advice: Order an extra "original" degree from your university. Universities are quite familiar with how to do it. Lost or misplaced degrees happen every day.

Order transcripts and a spare degree now. It can take only a few days or even up to few weeks depending on your university.

Training Certificates

If you have obtained a TEFL certification or taken any other kind of training related to teaching English, put it in the same place as your passport, degree and anything else you may find relevant.
Other Documents

Such an varied array of things can be asked of you that it is hard to completely prepare ahead of time. You may be asked for a local or FBI type police clearance or even a wide variety of medical clearances.

Be patient, provide what they ask and it will all work out. You won’t be the first person to be intimidated by the paperwork required. Everybody wonders if they can get through all of it but they always do.

Scan Everything

Prepare your scans now so you can attach the scans to your emails when you apply for jobs or send them when requested. Better to get them all done now rather than to rush as they are requested.

Week One Summary

There are many things to keep you busy if you are working or still in school. Once you have your passport and documents sorted and if you still have extra time, spend it looking for TEFL jobs, so you can open your eyes to all the opportunities out there.

Making yourself aware of all the possibilities is an important part of the decision process we will begin in Week Two.

Week One Checklist

- Check out the possibilities
- Passport: Order, Update, Check
- Degree: Original, Order a spare
- Transcripts: Order
- Other Documents: Training Certificates
- Scan everything you have
In Week One, when you were looking at the job listings, you probably found a few jobs that really caught your interest. Possibly it was the job or the location that seemed interesting.

**Where to Go**

We need to solve the location issue first though we will stay a bit flexible. The number one issue that will broaden or narrow the scope of choices is if you have a college/university degree or not. To a large extent, the subject/major of the degree may not matter as much as whether you have one or not.

The degree requirement is almost never a choice for the school as it is typically an immigration, Ministry of Labor or Ministry of Education requirement. The school will usually have no choice in the issue so don't waste your time or theirs trying to negotiate the requirement if you don't have a degree. Move on.

Generally speaking, much of Latin America, China, away from the mega-cities, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos and a few other places will offer teaching positions to non-degreed individuals. That's a big part of the world so don't be discouraged if you don't have a degree. If you have a degree, the world is your oyster.

China, Thailand and Korea are probably the most newcomer friendly TEFL countries in the world for people with degrees. If you don't have a degree, Latin America and the countries mentioned above are your best bets.

China, Thailand and Korea are very accepting of "newbie" teachers and don't tend to have super demanding expectations of your teaching skills. They will allow them to develop over time.

Japan is more demanding. For the Middle East teachers need to be skilled and prepared and a disciplinarian, but much of Asia and Latin America are quite low key and will allow you a some time to get your bearings as an EFL teacher.
Money

If money is an important factor and you have debts or wish to save as much money as you can, then take a close look at Korea, Taiwan and the Middle East. Non-degreed individuals will rarely be able to work in countries where significant savings can be accrued, though some savings are possible in China.

In Korea, Taiwan and Japan, US$800-1000 and up are quite possible in terms of savings. In the Middle East even more can be saved but advanced degrees, years of prerequisite experience and challenging students are standard fare.

When to Go

To a large extent, this is up to you. It is worth doing a little research about the country you are interested in, as each country will tend to have times when hiring is at its peak and times when hiring is in a lull. It often depends on the school year which can vary form country to country.

The school year in Korea and Japan, for example, begins in March. In Thailand it begins in May. Hiring comes to a standstill in Taiwan and China during Chinese New Year but may hit a peak soon after that.

You can do a Google search for school year or just look at a job offer and see when they want you there.

All that said, language schools tend to hire all year long so any time you are ready to go, there will be jobs ready for you.

... if a good number of people agree on a bit of information, then it is probably at least semi-accurate.
As you would with any forum, be aware of hype, sour grapes and other issues.

Week Two Summary
Cruise the web and make a decision about where you would like to teach.
Decide when you would like to start.

Week Two Checklist
- Decide on a specific country to focus your search
- Include financial wants and responsibilities in your decision
- Decide when to go
Week Three

Organize Your Job Search

This is the fun part. Schools and companies overseas actually need and want you! It’s a nice boost to the self-esteem and only the first of many dramatic changes that this life and lifestyle will bring to you.

A Short Personal Story

My wife and I sometimes look at each other and say, "Would you ever have imagined before we moved overseas that we could have done all the things we have done? That we would have worked and lived in so many countries? That we would have been able to travel to so many different countries? That we could have learned and experienced so much?"

Our answer is always, "No, could never have imagined it!" It still surprises us!

This life can be real for you too.

Teaching English overseas can exceed your imagination. If you visit the discussion boards on the Internet, look for some of the long-term and reputable posters. Ask them!

Please note though that there are many who will masquerade as experts on the discussion boards. Be quite careful from whom you take advice and on what advice you make your life decisions.

I have heard so many ridiculous claims about wages and jobs that I’m not even surprised anymore. Don’t fall victim to these stories. Things aren’t nearly as fantastic as they say nor are they as bad as they say.

Some “travelers” find it difficult to just say, "Yeah, I traveled to the Far East and taught English for a couple years and it just went great!” They seem to need to add a few embellishments about pirates, robbers and crooks along the way. It makes for a much more exciting story!

In fact, many thousands of us tread this path with very few problems. Come on board!
Corporate, Kids, Adults?

Depending on your previous life experience, you need to target the kind of job you want because there really are too many options. Corporate classes, kids, adults – what type of classes would you like to teach?

So many options are available to you that you can’t even imagine them all.

There are a wide range of opportunities from international hospitals to airports to large corporations and this is the time to narrow your job search. Pay special attention to your own previous experience and skills. Many people have special knowledge related to certain careers that many others don’t have. Take advantage of it and seek employment teaching English in that area.

If you work in IT right now, for example, consider teaching English at a college where they teach IT or a technical secondary school. You will already know the specialized language and have an interest in the area. If you already know the business and vocabulary that goes with it, you are ideal for them.

Not enough people marry their previous experience with their new jobs in TEFL. Most people will have special talents, knowledge and skills they should exploit if not immediately when first, then later when you have a little experience under your belt.

CVs and Resumes

Get used to the idea that the work scene overseas is very different from your home country.

Employers will want to see your photograph. They will ask you about your family, your age and if you are married. Get used to the idea of “different” not being a bad thing. It is not unusual for people to ask many questions that would be illegal in many countries. In their country they are legal and, in their eyes, they are legitimate questions.

Work visas for English teachers sometimes require that your passport be from a country they deem as being English speaking. Age is sometimes limited for certain kinds of visas. Men may not be allowed to teach at a women’s school (Saudi Arabia for example).

Decide now if these issues really bother you. If they do, you may have some difficulty landing a job or even surviving in some cultures.
What to put on your Resume/CV

Traditional resumes are fine but be sure to put the essential information near the top where your potential employer can see it quickly. Traditionally, a CV is a much more academically oriented form and more detailed but you'll find the terms resume and CV used somewhat interchangeably overseas. Keep them both to two pages or less if you can.

If you are an older person, put a cut off point to limit how long your resume will be. Do they really need to know that you worked for McDonalds 35 years ago? Conversely, if you are very interested in teaching in a particular specialty such as Business English, Science English, Hospitality English or Hospital/Medical English, then be sure to include your experience in that area to strengthen your position.

Photo

Most countries will want a photo attached to your resume, passport size, top left corner. It is usually okay if you print it on the resume if the printing is of high quality. Make sure you dress and appear professional in the photo. You are selling yourself. This should not be an informal photo.

Age, Marital Status, Sex, Nationality, Dependents

If you don't include this information and the employer has many applicants, guess where your resume will go. Get used to the idea that not everyone thinks the same way or has the same rules or standards. People and cultures and countries are different. That is what makes it all so interesting.

Contact Information

Make it easy to be contacted and make sure you have proper contacts.

Market Yourself

Two things are very important. One, make them want to hire you. Make yourself an attractive candidate in every way. Two, let them know you don't have the problems the last person they fired had!
Be an attractive candidate, literally and figuratively. Make sure your photo on your resume is professionally done and that you are dressed professionally. Men should be in a dress shirt and tie. Smile in your picture.

Highlight your TEFL training if you have it, any teaching/training experience you may have (TEFL or not, paid and/or volunteer), multi-cultural knowledge, travel experience, multi-lingual skills and anything else that makes you appear ready, skilled, and professional.

Your travel and knowledge/experience with other cultures and countries will reassure potential employers that you won’t run away after only a week or two on the job.

Be sure to highlight your special skills and abilities, and any work experience that might be relevant to the job or similar to the experience of their customers/students.

Write specifically that you are reliable and can hold down a job for long periods (if you can and have). Highlight family responsibilities, note if you are married and add anything that stresses dependability.

Expectations of employers are often reflected in contracts they will show or offer you. Try to counter any of the negative issues. Some inexperienced newbies react with outrage and anger at such clauses in their contract. Understand the employers and show a little finesse in dealing with them.

**Week Three Summary**

Decide the focus of your job search – Corporate, Adults, Kids – or whatever you can land.

**Week Three Checklist**

- Prepare resume/CV
- Get a professional photo for resumes and applications
- Provide proper contact information
- Prepare a cover letter
- Double check your scanned documents
Week Four

By now, your passport may have arrived or should be arriving soon. Scan the face page of your passport to send with your letters of interest and emails of enquiry. Though this is week four in a ten-week process, you could actually find yourself overseas within three or four weeks from now.

Starting the Job Search

One word of caution. Many people on discussion boards will suggest that only the worst jobs are advertised and you should just head on over and get a job in person. To some degree, they are right but it also depends on the country. Very popular countries like Thailand, for example, tend to hire locally. Countries like Korea, tend to hire from overseas. Japan does a bit of both. Latin America, largely hires locally, China tends to hire from overseas.

Probably the easier it is to get around a country without knowing the language, the more likely they will hire locally. But many countries are a bewildering maze if you are not familiar with them and even just finding a language school might be close to an impossible task.

Being hired locally often means a school won’t pay your travel expenses and also often means you will need to leave the country and go to a neighboring country to apply for a visa that will allow you to work. *Many countries will not allow people who arrived on a tourist visa to convert that visa to an employment visa. Therefore, an extra expense will be involved.*

If this is going to be your first job overseas and possibly your first time overseas at all, try to land a job from your home country. It just makes it easier. For some countries, like China for example, it is common for airfare to be paid. Your new employer will often meet you at the airport, help you get settled and will often arrange your housing in advance. You will have little to worry about other than just showing up for work on day one. Compare that to arriving not knowing where to go and where to stay and if you’ll be successful at arranging anything at all.
Should You Use a Recruiter?

Many people mistrust recruiters but some can be quite decent. The author’s very first TEFL job was found with a recruiter.

My Experience with a Recruiter

Was the first placement problem free? No! My first school got out of the TEFL business and left me essentially unemployed in a strange land. But, the recruiter handled it all and actually got me upgraded to a college job. All of a sudden I went from one week of vacation per year to four months paid vacation. Not bad at all!

I was patient and dealt with my recruiter in a reasonable way. I asked for their assistance.

I didn’t demand it, swear at them, call them crooks or demand an investigation. Many others in similar situations do react in such ways. Because I was reasonable and behaved in a culturally appropriate way, the recruiter tried hard to solve my problems and, in the end, did a great job.

Recruiter or Not?

Check them out. Ask on the forums. Check out the employer just as you would if you found the job yourself. Because a recruiter finds you a job, does not mean you have to take it! Check out every angle.

Some Cultural Issues

Being too assertive can be your greatest downfall. Other cultures deal with problems in different ways. Try to learn the most appropriate way to get things done. Know what you want and need, but use their cultural behavior to get it done. Overassertive behavior will often not work.

Following cultural rules, you can get what you want, even when others don’t get what they want. It doesn’t matter who is right or who is wrong. Just get done what you need to have done. Follow the cultural rules. They work. Leave your ego out of it and learn to operate as a skilled expatriate.

Life overseas is more like a fun cultural game. Learn how to play it so you win. It is fun and challenging to figure out. You will feel great when you get it solved. Have some cultural awareness about all your interactions starting with the interviews and all the way through your employment.

Follow the cultural rules. They work. Leave your ego out of it and learn to operate as a skilled expatriate.
How to Contact Employers

The same approach doesn't work everywhere. What really works best? Personal contact and networking works best but, if you are not in country, you'll have to try some other approaches.

Advertised Jobs

When jobs are advertised on popular boards, the advertiser may get as many as 100 responses or more. You need to think about how to get your application to the top. Follow up. It can help you land the job you want.

Tip: It is worth your effort to get a list of schools (online is often easy) and send your letter of interest (or email) to them before they advertise. Try to not compete with the hoards on the Internet. Look for schools that advertised a few months back. Some schools know they will need a teacher in a few months but might feel it is too early to advertise. They would love you to contact them to know they have the situation taken care of.

E-Mail & Telephone

Many of us use e-mail for everything. But, for some reason, not everyone responds well to it. Some employers will use it efficiently; others won't. Use it if that is what they ask for but don't expect it to do the job. A follow-up phone call might help you get to the top of the list even if you must make it at 2AM your time. That little bit of effort might make a huge difference if you land the job you want.

Some countries want a personal contact to meet you face to face. This is hard to do if you are in your home country. Phone calls are cheap nowadays, try them too. Be aware of time zones of course.

Regular Mail

Very few employers these days will want hard copies of your resume and a letter of interest. It is usually best to follow up with either an e-mail or a phone call.

The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.
Eleanor Roosevelt
Via Recruiters

Recruiters can facilitate your rapid placement but be sure to conduct your due diligence or do your research that we will discuss in Week Five. Don’t send your original degree or original of any documents to a recruiter. If they have your originals, you will not be able to independently look for other work.

How Many?

Plan on a 10 to 20 contacts to find the job you want. Some places (Korea for example) will require far fewer; others may require more. Be realistic and mentally prepared. There is enough demand that you can look over a few offers before you decide. Don’t hold out too much but don’t feel either that you must take the first job offer either. What is important is getting your foot in the door. Perfect jobs don’t really exist, work is work after all, but you can still have a great time in your new country.

Be Patient

Know that as a newbie, you may not find the perfect situation but don’t give up what you want too quickly.

TEFL Interviews

TEFL interviews are like interviews for just about any other type of job, but with a few exceptions. Particularly if you are a beginning teacher, don’t expect trick grammar questions or really difficult questions of any sort.

Usually, the employer is just trying to get a feel if you are a friendly and pleasant person. Both of these issues are important to the employer who is typically a business person running a school where it would be nice if the customers (students) like their teachers enough to keep signing up for more classes and earning him/her a profit. They also will want to know if you stutter or have a speech defect or strong accent. Speak clearly and carefully during your interview.
**Professional Interviews**

Professional level interviews are becoming more common these days, but even then you will still find them to be more friendly and chatty than interviews in your home country.

The notions, mentioned above, of friendliness and pleasantness, are generally what interviewers are looking for. If you are applying for a job that requires some experience or training, then you might expect a question about your teaching philosophy, teaching methods or how to deal with a discipline problem. Of course, think about these things before the interview.

**The Usual Interview**

A typical interview doesn’t exist. So really, you probably can’t do much to prepare, except to put yourself in a good mood, smile a lot, dress appropriately and go for it.

**Speak Clearly**

One thing almost all interviewers are looking for is your ability to speak clearly and understandably. Do that purposefully during the interview. Don’t try to impress them with your use of the language. You are probably already light years ahead of the English language skills of any non-native speaker that is interviewing you. That’s why they want and need a teacher. They want to know that you can communicate well with their students.

**Telephone Interviews**

These type of interviews are fairly common if you are trying to land a job from abroad. Try to speak clearly as some connections won’t be good. Be polite and ask for a question to be repeated if you can’t understand what is being asked. Telemarketers are told to smile when they are on the telephone because it helps to convey a sense of friendliness.

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*Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined.*

Henry David Thoreau
The Role of the Teacher in Society

Know that in many cultures the teacher is considered a surrogate parent and that even experienced teachers in some countries will tell you the most important thing about any teacher is that they love their students. It is a bit refreshing. There is a nice old-fashionedness about such thinking.

It's okay to tell an interviewer that you enjoy teaching, enjoy students and have a strong interest in their success.

Just be relaxed and sincere. That sincerity is one of the things they are looking for.

Where's the best place to start teaching overseas?

If you have a degree, the best places are probably Korea or China. There are many other great options out there too. Korea offers the best combination of minimal expectations for a newbie teacher combined with free housing, airplane tickets and a good salary that allows you to save US$1000 or more per month. China, with the same qualifications, can sometimes offer you a university position with fewer hours and more paid time off though with a smaller wage.

If you don't have a degree, China away from the mega-cities, Thailand (away from Bangkok) South America and Central America your best options.

Factors to Consider

Your best place may not be, and probably isn't, anyone else’s best place. Take a look at financial issues like how much it will take you to get set up. Know that most countries pay only monthly and you may not get paid until as late as the middle of the month after your first month of work. Six weeks of work may pass before the first money starts to come in.

Air Tickets

Do you need to pay for these or will they be reimbursed? Some jobs require that you work a specific amount of time before you are reimbursed. Halfway or at the end of the contract is most common.
Housing

Do you need to rent your own housing? What about deposits? How much out of pocket will you pay before your first pay day?

Your First Job

Until you have lived and worked overseas as an English teacher for at least six months, try to minimize your spending. If you decide the occupation is not for you, you might prefer that you didn’t spend too much to find out.

Keep a Reserve

When you head out, make sure you have a reserve to get you back home and back on your feet, just in case.

Week Four Summary

Start your job search. Read a bit about cultural issues and manage them carefully. Use a recruiter if you think it will be to your advantage but do check their reputation. Use appropriate contact methods for the specific job.

Week Four Checklist

- Begin applying for jobs
- Prepare for an interview and smile during that interview
- Contact a recruiter
- Don’t accept a job immediately

Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world. Harriet Tubman
Getting that first serious job offer is a very exciting thing. After you dance around a few moments, stop and catch your breath and start to think about things you must know before making a final decision.

This section is designed to help you know if you should take that job or not.

Ask Questions About the Job

Don't be shy. There are important things you need to know before moving yourself halfway across the world, but don't ask all these questions at one time. You'll overwhelm your potential employer. Spread them out a bit. Many of these can be asked during the interview or while reviewing the contact you'll have when the job is offered.

Some important questions to ask or things to know:

What is expected of me on a daily basis?

How many classes a day will I be expected to teach?

How long is each class? Is each class considered "one hour" even if it is only 45 or 50 minutes long?

Will I be expected to stay at the school even when I don't have classes?

Will I have responsibilities other than teaching? (like cleaning the classroom or the school, recruiting students, evaluating students for placement, handing out flyers for the school, parent meetings, etc.)

Will I be paid for that time?
Does the job provide housing? Is it furnished? What does "furnished" mean? How are the bills paid? How far is it from the school? Is it easy to get to work from there? Do I have to pay a deposit for it? How big is it? Will I have to share it? What are the average monthly costs?

Who is my boss? To whom do I report? Who evaluates me? What criteria is used to decide if I am successful?

How much sick and vacation time do I get? Who decides when I can use it? Can I use it all at one time? Does it accrue monthly or can I only use it at the end of my contract? Is there a bonus or gratuity payment at the end of my contract? How much is it? How is it determined?


Is there air conditioning and/or heating in the classrooms?

How many students are in a class? How are they placed or evaluated for placement? How do we decide if the students are progressing or successful?

Will I have a work space available at the school? A desk, an office?

Are there other foreign teachers at the school?

**Ask Questions About Your Employer**

Once you have a job offer and are seriously considering it, you need to do a little research about your employer. It’s important to check the reputation of your employer.

Ask a teacher currently at that school if it is possible. Remember that everyone has a different experience and while one person loves the job and employer, others may not. Things that greatly distress one teacher won’t even bother another. Ask more than one person if possible. Ask specifically what they like or don’t like about the employer.

A rare employer may not pay on time or pay less than was originally agreed. Some have worked for a school with these problems but stayed knowing that the employer always made good on amounts owing at the end of the contract. Ask! It is up to you to decide if you will let these issues bother you.

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*In some parts of the world, contracts are looked at as "flexible" instruments.*

*Ask current employees if the contract is followed.*
Housing can be a real concern in the TEFL world. Not so much of a problem if your school does not provide it as you can find and get the quality of housing you want and are willing to pay for. When the school provides it, sometimes you will be stuck with a less than satisfactory situation. Employer-provided housing is quite common in the Far East, China, Middle East and in other areas where housing tends to be expensive or requires huge security deposits.

**Cutting Costs**

Schools that provide housing want to spend the minimum amount needed for your housing. Ask the other teachers there if it is decent or not.

**Shared Housing**

Ask if housing is shared. It may be good to share housing with someone who can show you around and may give some help with your new job and employer. You may end up with someone that you don’t have anything in common with. If the job is attractive to you, it may be worth trying it.

"Western Style Housing"

Some employers will advertise that they provide “Western Style Housing”. Ask in detail what is provided in the housing. Ask about the safety of the area where your housing is.

**Request Decent Housing**

When having a problem with housing, you can always ask your employer, "Would you accept living here like this?" Don't demand a mansion. Have reasonable expectations but do require something decent.

Housing issues should not always be the kiss of death for a potential job. Some small issues are not so important in the big picture if you really like a job, its location and what you will be doing.
While you are in the process of getting interviewed, this is the time for you to start asking questions.

Get the details about the job, your employer and accommodation (if provided by your employer)

**Week Five Checklist**

- Start interviews
- Ask the important questions about your job
- Ask questions about the reputation of your employer
- Ask questions about your proposed housing

*Go confidently in the direction of your dreams.*

*Live the life you have imagined.*

Henry David Thoreau
Week Six

Getting Organized

Week six is about organizing your life for some major changes. Once you start a serious job search, it may actually take you less than two weeks to land a job that you would like.

If you are heading to Korea or China and have done your research, it will not be uncommon to find a good job within only a few days.

If you use a recruiter, they can also speed the process along. Even if you use a recruiter you should still do the research on your job, employer and housing that was suggested in Week Five. If your recruiter does not want you to ask questions about the job that should be a red flag to find a different recruiter.

By the end of this, you should have accepted a position, seen and signed a contract for the job and received either a fax or a scan of your contract signed by your new employer.

Contracts are a guideline and employers don’t always follow them to the letter. Expect your contract to be in the language of the country where you are going with possibly a translation of it into English and it might be a poor translation. The quality of the translation is not an indicator of the quality of the school, though it might be an indicator of just how much they need you.

Generally speaking, only the native language of the country where you are going is legally valid for contracts in that country. Don’t get overly stressed about contracts. There are often a few things you will just have to take on good faith or you will never adapt overseas. Don’t forget that your new employer is taking on good faith that you will be a decent and reliable employee and that you have represented yourself fairly and honestly.

This week, we will focus on organizing for the move overseas even if you don’t really know where you are going yet.
What to do with your home if you own it

If you already own your home, good for you. Should you sell it or rent it out? The answer depends a lot on your emotional attachment to your home. Do you view it as just an investment or as some place sacred for you to keep all your life?

An Investment

Financial security is an important issue for those of us who live overseas. It is important to view your home as an investment. Keep it for long term gain if you live in an area where you can expect prices to appreciate in the long term. If you plan on returning home in only a few years, keep it but rent it for the income.

Rent it

If you view your home as an investment, you should consider renting it so it produces some income or return on investment for you. This is money you can save for later in life or for your return to your home country. Use your property to help secure your future.

Professional Management

Get professional management. They know how to manage property the right way. It’s what they do. Don’t leave such a valuable asset in the hand of amateurs like friends or family. Rental property problems can strain relationships to the breaking point and you can find yourself heading home ahead of schedule to solve problems. Don’t try to manage the property from overseas. It is difficult enough to do when you are on the scene.

Health Insurance

Employers in most countries will provide you with a very basic form of health/medical insurance.

In some countries, you will become eligible for the national health care system. In others, you will belong to a private plan that your employer has purchased for you (or you may pay for a certain percentage of the coverage). In some countries you will not be provided with any insurance at all.

Employers in most countries will provide you with a very basic form of health insurance.
The real question is this: Is the provided coverage or private insurance you can buy adequate/enough?

If you are young and healthy, don't ride a motorcycle and don't travel to a lot of undeveloped countries, then it probably is. These types of coverage are fine for the occasional virus or semi-serious illness but they are not adequate for long-term or out-of-country coverage or for any kind of serious or catastrophic illness or injury.

If you are thinking about teaching long-term, are middle-aged or older or ride a motorcycle and travel to many undeveloped countries, then consider purchasing a good quality policy that you can take with you from country to country.

 Aren't these type policies expensive? What is really expensive is to have a serious medical problem with no or poor coverage. You will find that some policies offered by major insurance providers are quite expensive. But there are some reasonable alternatives. Two traditional companies that offer "instant quotes" on line are MultiNational Underwriters and Good Health. If you seek good insurance, it will be worth your time to conduct a serious Google search to find something that will fit your needs.

Two traditional companies that offer "instant quotes" on line are MultiNational Underwriters and Aetna International (AI). AI is here: [http://www.aetnainternational.com/](http://www.aetnainternational.com/)


UK Citizens have great option, the International Teacher’s Portfolio. Contact their consultant Fiona Lavery at fiona.lavery@ukglobalgroup.co.uk.

Use your own judgment about insurance. Consult your physician and financial advisor for further guidance as needed. Employers are more often these days offering better insurance options. Ask them.

**Before Moving Overseas**

Take care of all your obligations, debts, bills, taxes, etc. before you go. Consider a permanent forwarding address so that important mail can find you. Most of us use our parents or relatives for this at first.
If you are going to spend more than a couple years overseas, consider using a commercial mailbox service rather than leaving it to your family or friends. In a few years, if you would like another credit card, want to maintain a credit history or buy a house, for example, it is useful to have a permanent home country address.

Get a CPA or qualified accountant for your taxes

Taxes are not difficult to do but if you hate doing them, make arrangements before you leave for a qualified accountant to do them for you. Also, over a period of time, taxes can become more complicated as you lose contact with all the changes and as you increase your investments.

Every country has different requirements for their citizens while abroad. Learn the rules and follow them carefully by hiring a professional. A local accountant in your home country will be cheaper than contacting an international office in a foreign country when you run into a problem. Take care of your tax responsibilities. You will have to answer to them when you return and can even come back to bite you if you never return to your home country. Do it right from the start.

Use your own best judgment how to approach your personal health and financial issues. Consult a professional advisor as needed.

Week Six Summary

Start organizing your life for your move.

Week Six Checklist

- Accept a position and sign the contract
- Make a decision about your house if you own one
- Make a decision about health insurance
- Find an accountant
- Consider a permanent home country postal address

Use your own best judgment how to approach your personal health and financial issues. Consult a professional advisor as needed.
Visas Allowing Employment

By this week, you should have researched and accepted a position and signed a contract. Not every job will come with a contract but often a signed contract will be required for you to get the correct visa you need.

Check out the job situation if the employer says, “Come on over. We’ll take care of the paperwork when you get here”. Keep your eyes open. If you are hired from overseas, the paperwork and visas are usually (but not always!) done and the correct visa stamped in your passport before you leave your home country.

If you travel to a country to scout for jobs, expect to do a “visa run” to go get the proper visa from outside the country. Some jobs may require that you arrive on a tourist visa and change it to a legal working visa once there. Inquire about the details and ask another teacher at the same school if this worked out okay for them.

Visa application processes and paperwork can involve anything from a simple letter from your employer and copy of the contract to a substantial amount of paperwork that you will wonder if you can ever complete. If the visa process seems lengthy or difficult, experienced employers will often have a contact person who can help walk you through the process.

Get the visa process going now. It can take anywhere from a few days to a month or even more. It depends on the country, the employer and if all the paperwork is done properly the first time. Expect a few hitches in the process. They do happen. They are not a sign of problems with the school. They just happen.

Give Notice to Your Current Employer

This is always the moment of truth and one of the most exciting parts of the process though there will be many more exciting steps along the way. Now you find out if you were playing and fantasizing or if you are really ready to go.
Budgeting for Your Transition Overseas

Plan for enough to get set up, deal with any possible problems and return to your home country if needed. Figure out how much that will cost you and set that money aside. It is your safety net.

People sometimes head overseas with only a couple hundred bucks in their pocket and somehow do just fine. In fact, the great majority of people really do just fine. Only a small minority have any real trouble and even then people who are willing to tough it out usually survive.

Plan Optimistically and Realistically

You are not probably going to get paid until the first day of the month after the first complete month you work. Plan on buying basic foods and other basic necessities. A good guide would be to take with you at least what you will earn the first month on the job. If you can, take two months.

Plan your Return

Be sure to set aside as soon as possible the funds you would need to completely set yourself up at home in case you wish to return.

Sell or Store?

If you think you are only going overseas to teach English for short period of time, it may be good to keep and store most of your possessions. Consider carefully what you keep as you'll be surprised how little some things mean that seemed so important to you before you left. If you are thinking of spending a long time overseas, sell everything except those of sentimental value.

A Tip for While you are Overseas and Traveling

When you travel, if you want to acquire a memento of your visit to a special country or place, buy just one special thing. In this way, you can end up with a good collection of quality art, fabrics, carpets, and other very special things from many countries. They will hold your memories and later furnish your home.
Week Seven Summary

You are on the way. Time to take care of some essentials.

Week Seven Checklist

- Start your visa process if you have not done so already
- Give notice at your current job
- Make a budget for your transition overseas
- Decide what to sell and what to keep

I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past.

Patrick Henry
It’s time to sort out your travel arrangements if you have not done so already. Is your new employer sending you a ticket or going to reimburse you when you arrive? Are the arrangements up to you? Get all that taken care of now.

**What Kind of Plane Tickets Should You Buy?**

If you want to be extra safe, buy an open one-year return ticket. Just in case things don’t work out. You’ll have this ticket in your back pocket and you won’t have to worry about it. It may well help you get over some rough spots. Knowing you can leave often helps you to decide to stay.

**One Way**

Probably, most people head overseas on a one-way ticket. Many think they will want to go traveling and not head right home after their first year overseas. They think that they will want to continue working overseas after that. They are probably correct.

**Employer’s Tickets**

Some employers will provide your ticket or reimburse you for your tickets either on arrival or after a certain period of time or at the end of your contract. Wait to buy it until you know what they will do. Sometimes, this is all a very last minute situation.
What Kind of Expenses are Involved in Moving?

Be realistic about what you need to take with you and your actual moving expenses should not be much more than just your plane ticket. Don’t forget the costs of setting up your new home.

Know that overweight baggage fees are very expensive and can easily exceed hundreds of dollars even for just one bag! Double check your weight allowance and invest in a small scale and weigh your bags before heading to the airport. Be particularly careful of things like books as they are very heavy. This is all part of good planning several weeks before you leave.

Set up your Banking

Keep it simple. Don’t go chasing after "offshore" accounts and other fancy banking schemes that will cost you a small fortune in fees and that are only interested in you if you have several hundred thousand or even a million dollars, at a minimum.

Start Practical

Get a bank account with free "Bill Pay" service that is totally accessible via the Internet. Even your local credit union can do this nowadays. Find a bank or credit union that also offers other financial services such as life insurance, bill payments via "EFT", and/or investment accounts.

Set up your Accounts

Arrange these accounts before you leave your home country. Some are quite difficult to set up from overseas. Once they are set up, it is easy to attend to your financial affairs, even financial planning, from anywhere in the world via the Internet.

International ATM Card

Make sure you get an international ATM card to go with your account. It should belong to one of the international systems such as Cirrus or Maestro. Traveler’s Checks are old-fashioned these days, some places won’t even know what to do with them. Good international ATM cards work almost everywhere.
Integrated Banking

With your bank account online and a related ATM card, you will find your finances greatly simplified. If you wire money home to your account, you may withdraw it as needed via your ATM card, pay your bills with the Bill Pay service and even move money in and out of your brokerage account. All of this can be interconnected with your PayPal account if you don't like to use your credit cards on the Internet.

Security

Many people fear identity theft or other security issues when managing their finances online. Ideally, you should use your home computer. If you use an Internet cafe, be sure you carefully close all windows and sign out of each account. Open them again before you leave to make sure that you did. They should open to the log-in page not directly to your account.

Should You Set up a Brokerage Account?

If you think you might want to invest in stocks, mutual funds and/or bonds, check into a brokerage account and see if it suits your needs. Look on the Internet for a good company. Almost everything can be done online once you have the account set up. It is usually much easier to do it before you go.

Once overseas, it is usually difficult to open a brokerage account. Many financial regulations are based on where you live and where the brokerage company is based. While you might not consider Japan or Korea or Saudi Arabia to be your real home, brokerage houses may.

Online

Get it done before you go and sort out any and all the problems of using the account online. Most brokerages (and banks and credit card companies) have "paperless" transactions and statements. This is where your statements are sent to you via e-mail or you can download them from the Internet. It avoids the problem of having to decide what should be mailed to you and what isn't really needed.

Arrange your brokerage account to be interconnected with your bank. Most brokerage accounts and most banks will allow you to set up back and forth movement of your funds. Then you can do it all online.

If you use an Internet cafe, be sure you carefully close all windows and sign out of each account.
We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit.

Aristotle

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**Week Eight Summary**

Take care of your plane tickets if you have not done so already. Be careful of your weight. Arrange for your banking and investment accounts.

**Week Eight Checklist**

- Arrange your plane tickets
- Weigh your baggage
- Set up a bank account accessible via the Internet
- Set up an investment account accessible via the Internet and interconnected with your bank account
Week Nine

Passport and Visa

Every week gets easier now as you near your departure date.

About now you should have your passport returned from the embassy of the country where you are going with a new visa stamped in it that will allow you to go to that country and begin or pursue employment.

Every country is different and how this works can work in 50 different ways. Ask your new employer. Most likely, you will also have to do a fair amount of paperwork once you arrive at your destination to complete the process of working there legally.

Overseas

Once in the country in which you will be working, you'll typically need to go somewhere (immigration, Ministry of Labor or both) to get your work permit sorted out. Usually, your residence visa is only for a short time when you first enter the country. It will then be extended to the period of time for your work permit.

This can be confusing when your work permit can only be issued for the period of time of your visa but your visa will only be issued for the period of time of your work permit. But does the chicken come before the egg?

There is no need to worry. Somehow it all gets done. Lean on your employer. It won't usually be the first time they have gone through it.

Plans B and Plan C

Before you go, create a Plan A, Plan B and Plan C.
Westerners tend to think of things like contracts as being written in stone but in many countries, contracts can be quite flexible. This can mean that your employer may not do the things they said they would do. You may not like that. You may well find a time when it may be best move on.

**Plan B and Plan C**

When you do your research about countries and jobs, keep a second and third choice in your mind, just in case things don’t work out for Plan A. Keep these in the back of your mind, keep your resume up to date, and fish to see what is out there from time to time. With a decent Plan B and Plan C, you won’t have to worry about a surprise.

There is also the possibility that you just won’t like the job you took, the country you moved to or some other unforeseen problem may sour you on the whole deal.

**Your First Country - Your First Job**

Keep open the possibility of going back home. Don’t burn your bridges to anywhere. You just never know when you might need to head back where you were last year. Try to keep your options open. Leave every employer on good terms with them ready for and interested in your return. Maintain and network with people from previous employment. It all works both ways; you might need to help a friend come to where you are some day.

You may never need them (Plans B and C), but it is best to be cautious. The TEFL world is just a little less stable than other types of employment. Most people never needed their Plan B or C, but they are there, just in case you need them.
Week Nine Summary

You should have your passport back from the embassy or consulate that issues your visa. Having a Plan B and C is a good idea.

Week Nine Checklist

- Receive your passport with an appropriate visa in it
- Develop a Plan B
- Develop a Plan C

We are all inventors, each sailing out on a voyage of discovery, guided each by a private chart, of which there is no duplicate. The world is all gates, all opportunities.

Ralph Waldo Emerson
Here we go! This week is the easiest of all.

Time to do some fine tuning with your baggage before you head off to the airport. This is week ten but you probably should think about this several weeks before now as well.

**What Should You Take with You?**

Take only what you must. Moving lots of heavy bags around the world is no fun at all. Especially, as it seems you may arrive on very hot and steamy days or in the middle of a snow storm, neither of which is a lot of fun for carrying a lot of luggage.

**Medicine**

Generally speaking, many medicines are much cheaper overseas so don't bother to bring a lot if you can get it there. Unless the medicine you want is unusual or very new, it will most likely be available where you are going. Ask on the discussion boards but don't trust the answers 100% if the medicine is critical to your health.

Anything that is critical for maintaining your health be sure to take it with you on the plane.

**Other**

Bring only the basics in clothing You'll find you can get by with far less than you are used to. Bring a few special photos of family and friends so your new place can feel like a your home.

**Teaching Materials**

Bring one or two reference books. Books are heavy and bulky but they are often quite expensive overseas and sometimes hard to find. But with the Internet, you don't need them quite as much. You can look up almost everything online. Even the most remote small towns nowadays have Internet access.
To Bring a Computer or Not?

Absolutely yes. Even out of the way places have Internet these days.

Get a flash drive or portable hard drive and load all your essential files on it and bring that as a back up, just in case your tablet or notebook dies.

What Should You Mail to Your New Home?

If you really need it, put it in your suitcase. If it is critical, carry it onboard with you. Things may get lost if you mail them. In many countries, mail service is not reliable.

Say Goodbye

It is time to say goodbye to friends and family. Say goodbye to those that you may not see again for quite some time.

Spend time to go out and visit some of your favorite places before you leave. Have a great time. Tell family members that you love them and say the things you have wanted to say but haven’t said.

Week Ten Summary

Plan carefully what to take with you. Say good bye to family and friends and go out and have a good time.

Week Ten Checklist

- Decide what to take with you
- What to mail to yourself
- Say “I love you” to family and loved ones
- Get on that plane and go

Spend time to go out and visit some of your favorite places before you leave.
You might just be able to use a little guidance to help you get through the first couple of weeks overseas.

**On the Job Overseas**

What should you wear to your new job?

Always assume a shirt and tie and trousers for men and something equivalent for women. Ask your employer to be sure but even in very hot weather, more conservative cultures tend to dress up a bit. Dressing down is not usually appropriate. You will be severely judged by how you dress. Grooming and appearance are very important in many cultures. Make a good first impression. It will make a difference. There is a lot of local variation with this, so do ask your employer. Teaching kindergarten? Wear something informal and comfortable.

Should you buy a car or motorcycle?

A vehicle of some sort greatly enhances your ability to get out and see your new country. If you don’t already know how to drive a motorcycle, overseas may not be the best place to learn. Rules of the road in many countries can at best be termed flexible. However, many countries have great public transportation systems and you sometimes won’t need your own vehicle.

How will you know if it is safe where you live?

Ask your employer and coworkers. If it is not, ask to be moved. Living overseas is great fun and a real challenge, but getting mugged or killed shouldn’t be part of the package. It is important to ask; don’t assume you know. Cultural and visual/behavioral cues about crime can differ from your own understanding. It’s good to be sure! Many countries, especially in Asia, are probably safer than your home country.
How can you reduce your start-up expenses?

Don't try to buy everything at once and don't try to solve every problem by throwing money at it. Be patient. Your needs may be very different in your new situation from what they were in your home country. Take your time with spending until you really know what is going on.

**The Culture Game**

In some cultures, after work socialization is very important. Because of the great cultural divide, it can be quite useful to socialize with your coworkers, on their terms and in their ways, to help them get to know you. Make an effort if you are asked to go out for karaoke and actually sing if asked. By the way, nobody cares if you sing well, it's only that you make the effort. You never know; you may come to love it!

**Socializing with Coworkers**

Do it just to be polite but also be open to finding some new friends. Be careful, however, of drinking too much or becoming too familiar until you know your coworkers and the culture better. You don't want to start off on the wrong foot.

**Culture Shock**

You'll probably get it but sometimes shock is a bit of an overstatement.

You can expect to feel euphoric (I finally made it),

Angry (why can't I make things work like back home?),

Depressed and disappointed (everything isn't exactly like I expected it to be), and

Isolated (I don't really know anyone here).

All of this is normal. After all this is a very big time in your life and of course you will have some strong feelings about it. These emotional reactions are all natural responses to the situation you will find yourself in overseas. How to deal with it? Get busy! Personal projects, work, travel, making friends and even volunteering will help you adjust. Also take a little time and just recognize the feelings for what they are.

*Make an effort if you are asked to go out for karaoke and actually sing if asked. By the way, nobody cares if you sing well, it's only that you make the effort. You never know; you may come to love it!*
One of the best articles about dealing with Culture Shock is at About.com [Culture Shock: by About.com](http://www.about.com)

Don’t forget that you can have problems with your job, boss, landlord, and friends in your home country too. Don't blame it all on your host country!

Know that once you have lived in several countries, the effects of culture shock diminish as you learn to have more realistic expectations and as you just naturally learn how to deal with it.

**Surviving Uncertainty**

Part of the issue with culture shock is also the uncertainty of your new situation and of how things are going to develop. Follow the same course of treatment as for culture shock. Get involved.

**Dealing with Cultural Differences**

Your new country isn’t your old country. How people behave and respond can be quite different.

Many (maybe most) cultures are not as direct as our own. You'll need to pay attention and listen for underlying content all the time. You can make your coworkers and supervisor very uncomfortable if you make them confront you or if you become confrontational. It can really stress your relationships and sour your work situation. Be careful, listen, interpret.

Avoid misunderstandings when miscommunication seems to have occurred by asking your supervisor about it in the context of a culture question. You can say, "I am a bit confused here. Do you want me to ___? Please help me understand." This kind of a statement takes the heat off the situation and saves "face" for everyone involved. You can even have a good laugh about it instead of everyone being upset.

Develop a little finesse in dealing with cross-cultural communications and your life will go much smoother overseas. It's all part of learning to be a skilled expatriate.

**Week One Overseas Summary**

Dress well for your job. It is far more important than in Western cultures. Pay attention to cultural differences as they can make the difference between success or failure.
It might be time to start thinking a bit about spending a year or two or more overseas and how that might work for you.

**Networking**

Think networking in your home country and overseas and think about continuing or improving your credentials. Networking is even more important overseas. At times, you can line up good jobs via friends with a short interview. Contacts and networking work for you even better overseas than back home. Keep in touch with people you work with. They will move on to other, often better, jobs, and so will you. You never know when your paths may meet again or when you might be able to help each other.

**In Your Home Country**

Don't forget to keep in touch with your contacts and friends back home. You never know when you might want to head back. Invite them to visit you, be a great host and show them a great time. It could well pay dividends if you were to need a job back home on short notice. It will also give them a great experience. Let your friends see how wonderful a life abroad can be.

**Visit your Friends, Bosses and Coworkers**

When you visit your home country, make sure you visit your old coworkers, bosses and friends. Nothing is worse than coming back cold having lost all your old contacts. Do your best to keep it personal with a good list of personal contacts.
Improve Yourself

Improve your credentials.

While you are overseas, take another training course or get another degree. Some jobs overseas are only four days a week and you may get long vacations if you are lucky. Use that time to improve your credentials so you can continue to move up the ladder and improve your wages, benefits and free time.

Almost any program in the world can be taken online these days.

Just Have a GREAT Time!

Don’t need to explain that.

Nothing will ever be attempted if all possible objections must first be overcome.
Samuel Johnson
## Weekly Checklists

### Week One Checklist

- Check out the possibilities
- Passport: Order, Update, Check
- Degree: Original, Order a spare
- Transcripts: Order
- Other Documents: Training Certificates
- Scan everything you have

### Week Two Checklist

- Decide on a specific country to focus your search
- Include financial wants and responsibilities in your decision
- Decide when to go
**Week Three Checklist**

- Prepare resume/CV
- Get a professional photo for resumes and applications
- Provide proper contact information
- Prepare a cover letter
- Double check your scanned documents

**Week Four Checklist**

- Begin applying for jobs
- Prepare for an interview and smile during that interview
- Contact a recruiter
- Don’t accept a job immediately

**Week Five Checklist**

- Start interviews
- Ask the important questions about your job
- Ask questions about the reputation of your employer
- Ask questions about your proposed housing

*Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do.*

*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*
Week Six Checklist

- Accept a position
- Sign a contract
- Make a decision about your house if you own one
- Make a decision about health insurance
- Find an accountant
- Consider a permanent home country postal address

Week Seven Checklist

- Start your visa process if you have not done so already
- Give notice at your current job
- Make a budget for your transition overseas
- Decide what to sell and what to keep

Week Eight Checklist

- Arrange plane tickets
- Weigh your baggage
- Set up a bank account accessible via the Internet
- Set up an investment account accessible via the Internet and interconnected with your bank account

Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds.

Albert Einstein
We are still masters of our fate. We are still captains of our souls.

Winston Churchill

**Week Nine Checklist**

- Receive your passport with an appropriate visa in it
- Develop a Plan B
- Develop a Plan C

**Week Ten Checklist**

- Decide what to take with you
- Decide what to mail to yourself
- Say “I love you” to family and loved ones
- Get on the plane

*We are still masters of our fate. We are still captains of our souls.*

Winston Churchill
Basic TEFL Methods and Boardwork

It is good to know the basics and here they are.

TEFL Methodology taught in most TEFL training programs is generally either "PPP" or "ESA" 
"PPP" means Presentation, Practice and Production. Most EFL lessons are broken into those three parts.

Presentation is the part of the lesson when the target language (the language to be taught to the students) is presented to the students generally through eliciting and cueing of the students to see if they know it and then providing the language if no one does.

The target language is usually put on the board either in structure (grammar-type) charts or in dialogs. Presentation features more "teacher talk" than the other stages of the lesson, generally as much as 65-90% of the time. This portion of the total lesson can take as much as 20-40% of the lesson time.

Next comes the Practice section when the students practice the target language in one to three activities that progress from very structured (students are given activities that provide little possibility for error) to less-structured (as they master the material).

These activities should include as much "student talk" as possible and not focus on written activities, though written activities can provide a structure for the verbal practices. Practice should have the "student talk time" range from 60-80 percent of the time with teacher talk time being the balance of that time. This portion of the total lesson can take from 30-50% of the lesson time.

Production is the stage of the lesson when the students take the target language and use it in conversations that they structure and use it to talk about themselves or their daily lives or situations. Production should involve student talk at as much as 90% of the time and this component of the lesson can/should take as much as 20-30% of the lesson time.
As you can see the general structure of a PPP lesson is flexible, but an important feature is the movement from controlled and structured speech to less-controlled and more freely used and created speech. Another important feature of PPP (and other methods too) is the rapid reduction of teacher talk time and the increase in student talk time.

One of the most common errors untrained teachers make is that they talk too much. EFL students get very little chance to actually use the language they learn and the EFL classroom must be structured to create that opportunity.

"ESA" means Engage, Study, and Activate

Roughly equivalent to PPP, ESA is slightly different in that it is designed to allow movement back and forth between the stages. However, each stage is similar to the PPP stages in the same order. Proponents of this method stress its flexibility compared to PPP and the method as defined by Jeremy Harmer (its major advocate) uses more elicitation and stresses the engagement of students in the early stages of the lesson.

ESA is a superior method to PPP when both are looked at from a rigid point of view. But, EFL is not rigid and you should not adhere to any one viewpoint or method. PPP is often an easier method for new teacher-trainees to get a handle on.

Boardwork

Organizing the board for a more effective lesson is the mark of a skilled EFL teacher. KISS or "Keep it Simple for Students" is a good rule. Do a practice walk through of your lesson and as you do it, put everything on the board. Ideally, you don’t erase anything in one lesson and by the end of the lesson, it should look very well-organized and understandable. Check it from the back of the room to be sure students can see it.

Usually the best way to organize your board work is to literally present the lesson in a dry run and write everything on the board, including target language, grammar structure and vocabulary. As you think your way through the lesson, you will probably notice that you need to reorganize or restructure your thinking. This is an excellent practical exercise just to catch the flow of your lesson as well as for organizing your boardwork.
Note that in many classrooms, students will not be able to see the bottom one-third of the board from the back of the room. In some classrooms, the far left and right sides of the board may not be visible to students on the far opposite of the room due to the extreme angle or from bright light from windows. If there are curtains in the room, use them.

Write on the board in the classroom and walk around the room to see if your writing is big enough, clear enough and visible to everyone.

Never erase anything from the board without asking your students first. Why? Your very best students are taking notes! Just a simple, "Okay if I erase this?" and a fast look around the room will do the job. It's only polite, isn't it? Good teachers certainly don't mind waiting while their best students are taking notes.

A good lesson plan should have an example of what the board will look like on the last page. This will help you plan your boardwork in advance.

. . . walk around the room to see if your writing is big enough, clear enough and visible to everyone.
Lesson Planning

A lesson plan is simply a step-by-step guide to what an EFL teacher plans to do in the classroom on a given day. The more detailed the steps are, the better.

Ideally, if you could not go to work on a given day, another teacher could read your lesson plan and know exactly how to teach your class on that day. A good lesson plan might even include specific gestures and cues used for various parts of the lesson. That’s how detailed your plan should be.

There are literally hundreds of types of lesson plan but there is not one format accepted by all schools. Many schools have their own set format; others will let you use whatever format you like. There is, however, some general agreement about what should be included in a good lesson plan.

Generally agreed components of a lesson plan include the following:

Day/Date:

Lesson Name: What will you call the lesson?

Class/Level: Age, topic, skill level, class name

Materials: List everything you need to teach this lesson. List every possible thing you will need to take to the classroom and/or obtain from the school to complete the lesson. This list can help you make sure you don’t forget any handouts or special materials that you need to take to the class.

Textbook/Course book name: From what book are you working or drawing the lesson from?

Unit—title—page number: Specifically where in that book?
Goal/Aim: What are you working towards today? Describe the final result of the lesson in this format:

The students will be able to ___(do what?)______.

Example: The students will be able to ask and answer questions about their hobbies and interests

Grammar Structures Employed: Show the structures. Use a structure chart if needed.

Questions and Answers relevant to your lesson: Ask during the warm-up to elicit from students what they may or may not know about the topic to be covered.

NOTE: Lesson Begins Here

Warm-up: This includes a review (revision) of the previous lesson linked to this new lesson; questions and answers you have written above, used to elicit conversation using the new structures and function; to show examples of what your students will learn in this lesson. In some countries and with some age groups, this warm-up may come in the form of a specifically designed game.

Presentation (or use the ESA format depending on your school): Note the target language to be taught and how you will teach it. Include how you will stimulate the student’s interest in the language and how you might elicit from the students the language you are planning to teach. Include details as specific as when you might model structures and dialog and when you will require a repeated response (choral response) from the students. Include a structure chart for the grammar or the dialog you intend to teach.

Practice: Include the specific activities and attach any handouts to the lesson plan. Include up to three practice activities, sequencing them from most to least structured slowly giving the students more freedom.

Production: This is where students really learn and generalize a new language skill. Allow/encourage the students to talk about themselves, their lives or specific situations using their own information but focusing on the target language that was taught in the presentation and practiced in the previous activities. Include exactly what you will ask the students to do and that you intend to monitor students and encourage and correct them as needed in their use of the target language.

Conclusion: Discuss/recap what you have studied and learned during the lesson. In some countries and for some ages, this will be followed by a game that uses the target language.

NOTE: Lesson Ends Here

Believe with all of your heart that you will do what you were made to do.

Orison Swett Marden
Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter.
Mark Twain

Expanded Concepts

You can find literally thousands of EFL/ESL lesson plans on the Internet. Take a look at few and you will rarely see the same format used. But they will generally have, in one form or another, most of the Information indicated above.

Try these websites and see what they have and note the similarities and differences between the lesson formats. Don't get stuck in a rigid idea of what a lesson plan should look like. You'll notice many that are called lesson plans, really aren't!

TEFL Educator / TEFL Boot Camp: Free TEFL Training

The Internet TESL Journal: EFL and ESL Lessons and Lesson Plans

Do a good Google search and you find more ideas than you ever thought possible.
This ebook is meant only as a guideline to help you organize a move abroad as a teacher of English. The author has enjoyed over twenty years of living and working abroad and hopes you have the same success.

To help us do a better job of helping you, we would appreciate your opinion about this ebook.

Please take our fast, easy and confidential survey here: CLICK HERE
Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant. 

Robert Louis Stevenson