



Explore
ELT

Focus on the UK

This week we are profiling Mary who worked as a teacher and teacher trainer in the UK.

What do you like about teaching in the UK?

There's so much variety! Different people, different places, different career options. I've worked with lots of different types of students, some here on holiday, some who are refugees and others who are here to improve their English for their job or for their studies, and, of course, lots of trainee teachers. It's interesting, rewarding and as challenging as you want it to be.

How do I get a job in the UK?

Summer's the best time to get work, as lots of places have summer schools. The conditions and the work varies a lot, so check what exactly you're expected to do. You may well be more than happy to take on extracurricular activities in addition to teaching such as taking learners on day trips every other Saturday, but if you're not, it's best to find out before you sign away your Summer. Lots of schools arrange extra trips in July and August, so it's fairly standard to have this written into your (temporary) contract.

Who do you teach?

There are three main institutions and each has typical types of learners. Private language schools typically have small groups and a lot of European and Asian students. There is usually rolling enrolment, so the group may change every week. The pros are that there's a high level of energy and you see the dynamics of the class change as different characters join and leave.

Working in Further Education is another area, with students who are often permanent residents in the UK. These classes tend to be termly rather than rolling enrolment. Resources and pay tends to be better in FE than in private language schools, but then there's the paperwork and government cuts that you'll need to think about...

And some people get work in Higher Education. This tends to be very well paid in comparison to FE and private language schools, but is very competitive. You'll need a teaching qualification, and an MA or PHD can help here. Work in HE often involves working in a language unit attached to the university. You might have closed groups of students, who are in the UK for an intensive English course, or for pre university students who need to increase their academic English.

Do you have to be a native speaker to work in the UK?

No! And organisations are starting to get better at recognising this. You'll still find some places where they do only hire native speakers, but more organisations, like these ones,

<https://tefleguityadvocates.com/the-hall-of-fame/>

are committing to ensuring that there are equal opportunities for both native and non-native speakers. Organisations like TEFL advocates are doing a great job of raising awareness of discrimination and promoting equal opportunities.