



**TEFL JOBS IN
JAPAN**

**A Guide to Teaching
English in Japan**

SAPPORO

TEFL JOBS IN
JAPAN

FUKUOKA

TOKYO

OSAKA

Training
pan

Japan is one of the world's top TEFL destinations: there are plenty of jobs, the wages are very good, and Japanese students are renowned for being enthusiastic and polite.



And Japan is a great place to spend a year or two. It somehow manages to mix the best of sci-fi futurism and technological innovation with elements of traditional Japanese culture in a way that can seem strangely otherworldly to Western visitors. Once you land in Tokyo or Osaka, you'll soon realise why it's such a top TEFL destination.

TEFL Jobs in Japan: A Little Background

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The recession that hit Japan in the 90s had a huge impact on the TEFL market: demand for TEFL teachers dropped off the scale, a few of the major language school chains went bankrupt and 1000s of English teachers were left without work.

Since then, the Japanese economy has strengthened greatly and at the start of the new millennium, Japan went through a period of sustained financial recovery which led to greater need for English language teachers and the already high demand for English teachers went through the roof. According to reputable sources, and the testimony of teachers working in Japan, the market for TEFL teachers has not been too badly hit by the recession of 2008/9 and there are still ample opportunities for teaching English in Japan.



The TEFL jobs market in Japan is well established and well organised: and while there are lots of TEFL jobs available in Japan, newcomers are no longer guaranteed to find TEFL jobs. However, a well respected TEFL qualification will make finding work a little easier and will set you up for the challenges ahead



Opportunities for TEFL Teachers

TEFL jobs in Japan can be found in any number of different settings, from state schools and kindergartens to private tuition and private language schools. In recent years the demand for business English classes has increased massively. This is due to employers demanding higher levels of English from their employees in an attempt to take their place in the increasingly global marketplace.

The huge demand is also fuelled by the fact that people who have three years employment insurance can claim back part of the cost of courses from accredited organizations. So if you want to get involved in this lucrative market, make sure the school or company you work for is on the accreditation list.

The favored accent is definitely American, but clear precise diction, a tidy appearance and a professional manner are perhaps more important: so all you Brits, Irish, Aussies, Kiwis and Canadians shouldn't be put off.

Our Top Three TEFL Destinations

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There are opportunities to teach English across Japan. However, due to higher demand in the main commercial and financial areas, concentrating on the following cities should give you a higher chance of success.



Tokyo

Tokyo is Japan's capital city and perhaps the country's premier TEFL destination. There are lots of TEFL jobs available at language schools and institutes across the city. Many foreigners live and work in the Roppongi district, so it's a good place to start looking for a job and a place to rest your head. Another top place for hopeful TEFL teachers is the Kimi Information Centre in the Toshima-ku district (don't try to find it without a map!). Their website is in the useful links section at the end of this guide. It's also worth picking up the free Tokyo Classifieds paper that is handed out in Roppongi in Friday and the Monday edition of the Japan Times – they both have job and accommodation ads in.



Kobe

Kobe sits on a steep hillside overlooking Osaka Bay and is widely regarded as one of Japan's most attractive and cosmopolitan cities. It is not a huge tourist destination, and it has a charm and relatively laid back atmosphere (for Japan at least) that is a world away from its Kansai neighbour, Osaka. Kobe is also home to the Japanese headquarters of over 100 multinationals, including Nestlé and Procter & Gamble. The presence of these international businesses has driven an increased need for trained TEFL teachers with some knowledge of teaching business English.



Kyoto

Kyoto is also in the Kansai region of Japan. As with all Japanese cities, it is something of an urban jungle. But tucked away safely behind the brash façade of flashing neon and highrise concrete are the hidden gems that make Kyoto something of a repository for the soul of ancient Japan: 17 UNESCO World Heritage sites, over 1,600 Buddhist temples, around 400 Shinto shrines and enough 'real' Japanese culture to keep any TEFL teacher happy. All this culture pulls in tourists from around the world and with the tourist trade comes an increased demand for English teachers.

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Show Me the Money! Wages and Cost of Living in Japan

Wages

Obviously that depends on your level of training and experience, but with a degree and a TEFL qualification, you should be able to demand somewhere in the region of 250,000 Yen a month. That's about £1,850 or US\$2,800.





Cost of Living

Japan has a reputation for being unbelievably expensive, but in reality transportation, food and accommodation are actually cheaper than North America, much of Western Europe and parts of Australasia. There is a belief that once your food, accommodation and bills are totaled up it'll swallow up all your wages, but that's not really true any more. And simple adjustments like eating at local restaurants, not buying expensive imported goods and shopping at cheap markets and "100 Yen Shops" can leave you with a lot more cash in your pocket.

Accommodation

Expect an apartment to cost between 40,000 – 100,000 Yen per month. If your employer helps you find a place, or you live outside of Tokyo or Osaka, it will cost at the lower end of this range. Whereas the price is pushed up by using a rental agency or living in a big city. You will usually have to pay for utilities (about 10,000 Yen per month) on top of your rent and apartments are often unfurnished, although the better schools will provide you with basic furnishings

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Flight Reimbursement

One of the things that can make life a little more affordable is getting the cost of your flights paid back once you've completed your contract. This is completely discretionary, so you'll need to check your contract to see whether this applies to you.

Taxes

Although tax rates for the rich are among the highest in the world, you should only expect to pay 10% of your 2,500,000 Yen salary in tax.

Potential to Save Money

If you plan to really enjoy your time in Japan, you're unlikely to walk away with a bank account full-to-bursting with Japanese Yen! However, if you're lucky enough to land a decent long-term contract and you're able to practice a little self-discipline, you should be able to save some money.

How Much TEFL Training is Recommended?

Most schools in Japan will want to see that you've done at least 120 hours of TEFL study either online, in the classroom, or a mixture of both, especially if you don't have previous teaching experience. These courses will all qualify you to teach in Japan:

- ★ <http://www.onlinetefl.com/tefl-courses/combined-tefl-courses-120.html>
- ★ <http://www.onlinetefl.com/tefl-courses/combined-tefl-courses-140.html>
- ★ <http://www.onlinetefl.com/tefl-courses/online-tefl-course-120.html>



Common Teaching Conditions

You will typically teach for 6 hours a day, 5 days a week; with the occasional 6-day week. Most lessons happen in the afternoon or evening, although this can vary. Most students are eager and respectful. Children usually expect lessons to be fun, while the standard of English amongst adult students tends to be a little lower than in other Asian countries.

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Anything to Be Wary of

Arriving in Japan for the first time can be a real culture shock, so arm yourself with a basic understanding of the country and a healthy appetite for new experiences. Your employer will probably invite you to take part in extra-curricular activities. These will help you get your head around life in Japan... and declining the invitation could be seen as rude.



Working and Visas

Finding TEFL Jobs from Home

To help you find your feet in the job market, i-to-i can help you arrange a well-paid teaching job in Japan. Otherwise, it's relatively easy to find a teaching job before you leave home, either through the Japanese government's JET (Japan Exchange & Teaching) program, university careers departments or specialist recruitment agencies. Given the current fashion for learning other languages such as French and Spanish, the ability to speak a second European language could boost your employment prospects.



Finding TEFL Jobs in Japan

Japan is one of the easiest places to find a job in-country, as long as you're a native English speaker with a university degree; and if you're willing to venture outside of Tokyo, the lack of competition could make your search easier. Just be sure that your savings will cover your first few weeks without a job, or you'll be back home quicker than expected!

The Hiring Process

Once you've applied for a position, you're usually interviewed over the phone. The Japanese value enthusiasm and professionalism in their English teachers, so make sure you're enthusiastic and speak clearly and precisely. Equally, if you're invited for an interview, it helps to be smartly dressed and respectful.

Getting Your Visa

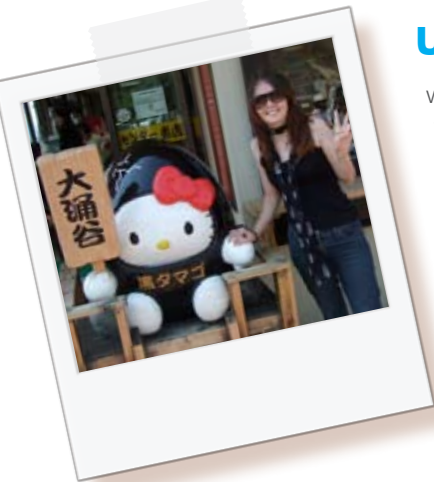
It is essential that you have a work visa to teach in Japan. If you have a job offer, your employer will send you an official Certificate of Eligibility, which you then take to your country's Japanese embassy who will issue a work permit. If you want to find work while you're in Japan, you can enter on a working holiday visa (except US citizens) and upgrade when you're out there. You'll need to do a border run, but a flight to South Korea (and a day or two sight-seeing in Seoul) isn't too much of a hassle.

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Requirements for a Working Visa:

- ★ A University degree
- ★ No criminal record
- ★ Citizen of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, or Denmark
- ★ Primarily in Japan for a holiday
- ★ Have a return ticket or enough money to purchase one
- ★ Have savings of at least £2,500 (US\$4,000) for living expenses (this varies depending on your nationality)





Useful Links

www.kimiwillbe.com
www.eslcafe.com
www.eslbase.com
www.gaijinpot.com
www.teaching-english-in-japan.net
www.kansaifreeads.com/
www.teach.nichibei-job.com/
www.www.aeonet.com/aeon_index.php
www.recruiting.ecc.co.jp/
www.careers.gaba.co.jp/overseas/index.html
www.kansaiscene.com/current/html/home.shtml
www.kfm.to/
www.whynotjapan.com/



Useful Books

Teaching English Abroad by Susan Griffith

This is something of a Bible for TEFLers and will give you all the info you'll need to get started.

Notes

