

English Teacher

Introduction

English teachers help students to develop communication skills and express themselves imaginatively. They enable students to analyse and respond to spoken and written language, understanding its impact and purpose. English teachers develop students' ability to examine a wide range of texts, including novels, poetry, drama, adverts, websites and newspaper articles.



Work Activities

Secondary school English teachers help students develop the skills to communicate confidently and effectively. They aim to equip students with the ability to express themselves, using appropriate language (so, standard English in an interview, rather than slang). English teachers develop students' ability to analyse and respond to a wide range of texts, understanding their purpose and how an author's language achieves its impact on the reader.

They teach both English language and literature. English language involves reading and analysing texts including fiction such as novels, poetry and drama. Students also study non-fiction texts, especially things that they'd encounter in everyday life, such as adverts, newspaper articles, film reviews and travel websites. Teachers encourage students to respond to texts using creative writing, group work, debates and drama activities. English language also involves speaking and listening activities, and studying and responding to spoken language such as a politician's speech.

English literature is the study of prose texts, poetry and drama. This includes texts from our literary heritage, as well as modern works and, as with English language, a variety of different cultural voices.

English teachers use a mixture of activities and resources to stimulate interest, learning and imagination. These also help to develop skills and meet the needs of students with differing learning styles. For example, English teachers use audio-visual materials, interactive whiteboards and online learning games.

Teachers might also arrange and lead theatre trips, and other visits to places of interest.

Depending on the text they're using, English teachers might work closely with teachers of other subjects. For example, they might work with a history teacher to gain a better understanding of the Russian Revolution when they're teaching Orwell's 'Animal Farm'.

Other activities include:

- Preparing and planning lessons.
- Marking work and giving feedback.
- Preparing pupils for exams.
- Going to staff meetings and parents' evenings.
- Setting and enforcing standards of behaviour.

Some English teachers are also form tutors, involving duties such as taking a register, providing general information and giving guidance.

English teachers might supervise the work of one or more teaching assistants.

Personal Qualities and Skills

As an English teacher, you'll need:

- The ability to encourage, motivate and inspire your students.
- Communication skills.
- Tact and patience.

- The ability to maintain discipline and deal with challenging behaviour.
- Organisational and planning skills.

Pay and Opportunities

Pay

Teachers in the state education sector are paid on a scale according to their qualifications, experience and responsibilities. The highest salaries are available in inner London schools.

The pay rates (per year) below are approximate.

- Unqualified teachers [who have not yet received Qualified Teacher Status] earn in the range of £16,000 - £25,000.
- Qualified teachers earn in the range of £21,500 - £31,500.
- 'Advanced skills teachers' earn in the range of £37,500 - £57,000.
- 'Excellent teachers' earn in the range of £39,500 - £52,000.

In the private sector, salaries are generally higher, though they are sometimes linked to state sector pay scales.

Hours of work

Teachers normally work from 8:30 am or 9 am to 3:30 pm or 4 pm, Monday to Friday. However, most teachers work extra hours - marking work, preparing lessons and going to meetings. They often have to work in the evenings and at weekends to prepare lessons and mark work.

Where could I work?

Employers are state and private schools.

There are also opportunities to teach in other countries.

Some teachers supplement their income by teaching privately, marking national exams or writing textbooks.

Where are vacancies advertised?

Vacancies are advertised by local authorities and in the local and national press, including The Guardian and The Times Educational Supplement (TES). There are also job boards, such as eTeach.

Entry Routes and Training

Entry routes

To become a secondary school English teacher, you usually need to gain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) through initial teacher training (ITT). There are several routes.

There are a small number of degree courses in secondary English education, leading to QTS.

Most people follow their degree with a PGCE. Some courses include specialist areas such as drama, media studies or special educational needs. Courses are one-year full-time. You need to apply through UCAS Teacher Training.

There is also the employment-based School Direct scheme: you'll train while working in a school. The expectation is that you'd go on to work in the school or group of schools where you trained, although there's no guarantee of employment at the end of your training.

You can also train in a school after your degree through school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT). These programmes are delivered by groups of neighbouring schools and colleges and often aim to meet local teaching needs.

Teach First is a charity that recruits and supports graduates to teach in schools in low-income communities in a number of UK regions. The programme takes two years to complete and leads to QTS.

To achieve QTS, student teachers need to pass tests in English and maths.

Training

Once employed, newly qualified teachers (NQTs) must complete a three-term induction period, usually within a single school year.

Progression

There are opportunities for teachers to move into teacher training, advisory work, educational research or schools inspection.

Teachers can become heads of department, heads of year, or co-ordinators of special educational needs or careers guidance.

Rehabilitation of Offenders

This career is an exception to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that you must supply information to an employer about any spent or unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings, if they ask you to.

This is different from other careers, where you only have to reveal information on unspent convictions if you are asked to.

Qualifications

All candidates for teacher training need GCSEs (or recognised equivalent qualifications) at grade C or above in English Language and Mathematics.

If you want to teach at Key Stage 3 (ages 11-14), you must also have a GCSE (or recognised equivalent qualification) at grade C or above in a science subject.

If you don't have the GCSEs that are usually needed, you might be able to sit a pre-entry equivalency test; you should contact individual course providers to discuss your situation before making your application.

For entry to a PGCE, you'll usually need a degree in English or a subject that included at least 50% English content. Some universities accept students with degrees in closely-related subjects such as drama, performance arts, media and film.

For entry to a degree in English, the usual requirements are:

- 2/3 A levels, including English Language or English Literature
- 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C.

Alternatives to A levels include:

- Edexcel (BTEC) level 3 Nationals
- The International Baccalaureate Diploma.

However, course requirements vary, so please check prospectuses carefully.

Some universities accept the Welsh Baccalaureate as equivalent to 1 A-level.

Adult Opportunities

Courses

If you don't have the qualifications you need to enter a degree course, you might be able to start one after completing a college or university Access course, such as Access to English. You don't usually need any qualifications to start an Access course, although you should check this with the course provider.

Distance learning

Some PGCE courses are available on a flexible learning basis. For example, you might be able to train by distance learning in combination with classroom-based teaching practice and campus study.

Employment-based training

Instead of going to university to do a PGCE, graduates can follow an employment-based route. This is where you train in a school. Employment-based routes include School Direct, school-centred initial teacher training (SCITT) and the scheme offered by Teach First. For more information, please see 'Entry Routes and Training'.

Funding

For funding information, take a look at the GOV.UK website

Further Information

Contacts

- **UCAS Teacher Training**
Website: www.ucas.com/how-it-all-works/teacher-training
- **Department of Education Northern Ireland**
Northern Ireland Enquiries
Email: DE.DEWebMail@education-ni.gov.uk
Website: www.deni.gov.uk
- **General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTC Scotland)**
Scottish enquiries
Email: gtcs@gtcs.org.uk
Website: www.gtcs.org.uk
- **GOV.UK**
UK government services and information
Website: www.gov.uk
- **Teach in Scotland**
Scottish enquiries
Email: teaching@infoscotland.com
Website: www.teachinginscotland.com

Related Careers

- Nursery Nurse
- NVQ Assessor
- School Lunchtime Supervisor
- History Teacher
- Geography Teacher
- Modern Foreign Languages Teacher
- Teaching Assistant
- Music Teacher
- Maths Teacher
- Science Teacher
- Education Welfare Officer
- Playworker
- Special Educational Needs Teacher
- Art and Design Teacher
- Design and Technology Teacher

- Early Years Teacher
- Physical Education Teacher
- Primary Teacher
- Secondary Teacher
- Training Manager
- Higher Education (HE) Lecturer
- School Business Manager
- Teacher of English as a Foreign Language
- Lecturer
- Teacher
- Welsh Teacher
- Nursery Assistant
- Headteacher