

Getting Started with Training

The most important advice for someone who wants to begin teaching English is, “Get some training.” So, what training does a teacher need? As Dormer (2011) states, a teacher needs competence in the following four areas:

1. Communicative Competence—skill in using English
2. Linguistic Competence—understanding the rules of English
3. Theoretical Knowledge—understanding English language learning
4. Methodological Competence—skill in English teaching

What are some ways of acquiring these competencies? Personal experience can provide some of them. If you can speak, understand, read and write English, then you have communicative competence. If you have studied English grammar, then you have some linguistic competence. If you have learned to speak a second language, then you have some theoretical knowledge about language learning. If you are a K-12 teacher, you have knowledge of teaching in your area of expertise, and some of that knowledge will transfer to teaching English. Reading books is another way to acquire these competencies.

However, I recommend earning a certificate before starting to teach English. A certificate provides you with a credential to present to the director of a program. It shows that you have acquired a specific body of content to prepare yourself to teach. In addition, a teacher who has theoretical knowledge can draw upon it when she faces challenges in the classroom. And when she faces those challenges, she often knows where to go for help.

To get started, take a short course, one that covers fewer than 100 hours of instruction. There are several formats available. A face-to-face course has the advantages of being able to get immediate responses to your questions and of benefiting from the interaction among fellow learners. The advantage of online training is flexibility. You can work on the course whenever you have an Internet connection. I recommend low-cost courses, costing less than \$100.

As a learner progresses through any of these courses, she may realize that some of the content was already familiar to her. These courses can be a refresher for an experienced teacher as well as a starting point for a prospective teacher.

1. Biola LEARN offers five courses related to TESOL that will be part of a forthcoming TESOL Professional Certificate. All courses from Biola LEARN can be started at any time and students can take as much time as they want to complete the course.
 - a. [Essentials of TESOL](#)
 - i. This is the first course. The others can be taken in any order.
 - ii. Online, not facilitated.
 - iii. Four hours of video instruction.
 - iv. \$24.99
 - b. [Pronunciation](#)
 - i. Covers the sound system of English, a sample lesson plan, and techniques for dealing with common pronunciation difficulties.
 - ii. \$9.99
 - c. [Classroom Management](#)
 - i. Covers how a teacher presents herself and organizes the classroom to provide a safe learning environment for students.
 - ii. \$24.99
 - d. [Teaching Speaking](#)

- i. Covers eight methods for building students' speaking skills and six methods for getting students to speak in English.
 - ii. \$24.99
 - e. Professionalism
 - i. Covers the ethics and professionalism of teaching English. Good teachers want to become better, and this course will provide direction.
 - ii. \$24.99
 - f. TESOL: Course Design
 - i. A teacher explores the process from the beginning, a needs assessment.
 - ii. The course guides the teacher through selecting course content, choosing materials and setting objectives.
 - iii. \$24.99
- 2. *Building Bridges with English*, ReachGlobal, <https://www.grow2serve.com/resources/bbe/>
This course is designed to prepare people who are called to teach English as ministry. This facilitated, five-week course requires 4-6 hours of work per week. You can go online when you choose, however you must submit assignments and participate in forum conversations by the weekly deadline. It costs \$85. You can sign up on the website to be notified when the course will be offered.
- 3. *Exploring the World of ELT*, Cambridge Assessment English, <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/explore-elt/3>.
This course is to raise awareness of what teaching English is, and how satisfying it can be. It is facilitated, so you have opportunity to ask questions and get responses from your instructors. You can work on it any time you want. If you can't work on it for a while, you can make up the work later. The instructors give you two additional weeks to complete any assignments you may have missed. This course is free. However, if you want a certificate, you can take two tests and pay \$59 to get it. For people who are interested in more training, Cambridge encourages going on to earn the CELTA certificate, which is an average certificate. You are expected to post on the online forum and respond to your classmates' posts. You can sign up on the website to be notified when the course will be offered.

One face-to-face ESL training program is *Teaching English Language Learners the Good News*. Both the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) and the North American Mission Board (NAMB) offer this 12-hour course which costs \$50-\$75, depending on the venue.

1. For trainings sponsored by the PCA, go to their [website](#) for more information.
2. For trainings sponsored by NAMB, check the website of Southern Baptist Convention churches in your region.
3. Look at the textbook, [Teaching English Language Learners the Good News](#).

Taking a course, whether online or in-person, is the start of equipping yourself to teach English. Following that you could explore the books and websites below to increase your knowledge and skills of English language teaching.

Books

Dormer, Jan Edwards. 2011. *Teaching English in Missions: Effectiveness and Integrity*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Publishing.

Pasquale, Michael D. 2011. *An ESL Ministry Handbook: Contexts and Principles*. Grand Rapids, MI: Credo House Publications.

This book equips you to be part of an ESL outreach.

Prolingua Associates. 2003. *The ESL Miscellany: A Treasury of Cultural and Linguistic Information*. Brattleboro, VT: Prolingua Associates.

There are a ton of lists in this book. The language that you need for various situations, various topics, and grammar helps. If you want to know which phrasal verbs can be separated and which cannot, this book will tell you.

Snow, Don & Campbell, Maxi-Ann. 2017. *More Than a Native Speaker, Third Edition*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL, Inc.

Many times, people who do not have certificates or degrees in teaching English volunteer to go abroad to teach English. This user-friendly introduction to teaching English outside your passport country will support you in your country of service. *Part 1: Preparing to Teach* covers course planning, lesson planning, evaluation and grading. *Part 2: Aspects of English Teaching* covers how to teach listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar and culture. *Part 3: Living Abroad* covers adjusting to life in your host culture and guidance should you decide to pursue further training.

Swan, Michael. 2005. *Practical English Usage, Third Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. This book has been described as “the one book I would take with me”. If you’re not sure how a word should be used, consult this source.

Websites

[BTR-TESOL](#), *Basic Training and Resources for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages* was developed by a professor who had people come to him and say, “I’m going to teach English for the first time. What’s the one book I should take with me?” After considering the 400+ books on his shelves, he developed this website to provide basic training and resource connections for new, untrained teachers. The tagline is “the least you should know and where to go for more.”

[ABWE English Language Ministries](#) has resources for [ESL/EFL Teaching Competencies Guidelines](#), [Recommended Resources for Teaching English](#), and [Teacher Training Programs](#).

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