

Teaching English in Japan

One of the Japan Information & Culture Center's most commonly received inquiries concerns teaching English in Japan. Various types of schools employ foreign English teachers, including: Japanese public and private schools and universities, English language schools, international schools, and Department of Defense schools for dependents of US Government personnel. Japanese law requires public school teachers to hold a Japanese teaching certificate, so it is somewhat difficult for foreigners to become public school teachers. Some local governments hire non-Japanese directly as assistant English teachers, but most Americans working in public schools are hired through the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program sponsored by the Japanese Government. Private schools are not bound by the same regulations; however, positions are limited and are usually posted by the schools themselves. A 1982 legislative measure made it possible for non-Japanese citizens to be appointed faculty members of public universities; however, here too one must contact each university directly. Many individuals who seek employment as English teachers refer to websites that list available English teaching opportunities abroad.

The most common route is to work for one of the many private English language schools that hire teachers directly or through employment agencies in the US and Japan. Major companies also hire teachers for their in-house language programs. Qualification requirements vary, but recently, acquiring a position at most major language schools requires formal training in the field or at least a college degree. Increasingly, language schools are requiring that their employees have TESOL and/or ESL Certification.

To work in Japan, one must receive sponsorship and then obtain a working visa at a Japanese Embassy or Consulate outside Japan. If already in Japan, the employee receives a certificate of employment from a company and takes it to a local immigration office where a certificate of eligibility is issued. The employee must then leave Japan and obtain a visa from a Japanese consulate or Embassy. Before going to Japan, one should obtain as much information as possible about Japanese culture and working there.



The JET Program, one of the world's largest international exchange programs, is administered by local authorities in cooperation with several Japanese Government Ministries and the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR). Now in its 16th year, the JET Program offers candidates the opportunity to work as Assistant Language Teachers (ALT), who provide language instruction in junior and senior high schools. Participants are placed with local authorities throughout Japan in every imaginable locality. Some of the requirements for applying to the JET Program are that the candidate must: hold at least a bachelor's degree, not have lived in Japan for three or more years total since 1995, be qualified as a language teacher or be strongly motivated to take part in the teaching of English. In addition to positions as an ALT, the JET Program offers the option of working as a Coordinator for International Relations (CIR), whereby the CIR is placed in a local government or local international organization, or as a Sports Exchange Advisor (SEA), who assists with athletic program training and coaching.

JET Program applications are available through the Embassy of Japan or the Consulate of Japan in your residential jurisdiction (For consulates' contact information, see: www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/jicc/consulat.htm).

For more information on the JET Program, see: www.jetprogramme.org/index.html

JET Program Office
Embassy of Japan
2520 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20008
Tel: 202-238-6700

Department of Defense

The Department of Defense also hires Americans to teach at schools for dependents of military and civilian personnel. For more information, contact:

Department of Defense
Office of Dependent Schools
Hoffman Building 1
2461 Eisenhower Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22331



The Teaching English in Japan Program (TEIJ), coordinated by the Institute for Education on Japan at Earham College, offers participants an opportunity to serve in a Japanese community as an Assistant English Teacher, promoting international understanding and supporting English language instruction in Japanese schools. Well-qualified college graduates are nominated for two-year assignments to work in schools. The employers then make final decisions with respect to employment. In most cases, participants also do community work outside of the schools. Participants in the program endeavor to become part of the everyday flow of events and activities in their school and community setting, and to understand the larger issues of living in Japanese society. For more information, contact:

Institute for Education on Japan
Earham College
Drawer 202
Richmond, IN 47374
Tel: 1-888-685-2726
www.earham.edu/~aet/

Other Resources & Websites

For a directory of international schools in Japan, see the United States Embassy in Tokyo's website list: <http://usembassy.state.gov/tokyo/www7106.html>

In general, one of the best ways to learn more about teaching English in Japan is to go online. Many of the websites provide information on getting hired to teach in Japan, teaching tips, and job postings. The following websites may be useful for those seeking employment and general information on living in Japan:

- [American Citizen Services in Tokyo](http://usembassy.state.gov/tokyo/www7125.html)
(<http://usembassy.state.gov/tokyo/www7125.html>)
Consular Services for US Citizens in Japan
- The American School in Japan
(www.asij.ac.jp/)
- Guide to Japanese Visas
(www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/visa/index.html)
Information provided by Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- [Information for US Citizens Residing Abroad - US State Department](http://travel.state.gov/acs.html)
(<http://travel.state.gov/acs.html>)
- ["Townpage" Live in Japan Guide](http://english.itp.ne.jp/jtd/live/info/tel01.html)
(<http://english.itp.ne.jp/jtd/live/info/tel01.html>)
Also includes information for tourists in Japan.
- USPS Japan Page
(www.ups.com/asia/jp/using/services/import/engimportinfo.html)
Importing of Personal Items to Japan (Restrictions and Limitations).
- [Resources for Americans in Tokyo](http://usembassy.state.gov/tokyo/www7124.html)
(<http://usembassy.state.gov/tokyo/www7124.html>)
Provides links to: Sources of Help, Medical Resources in Tokyo and Surrounding Area, List of Attorneys, American Banks in Japan, U.S. Tax Return Preparers in Tokyo, Interpretation/Translation Services, English Newspapers in Tokyo, Places of Worship, Real Estate Agencies, English Speaking Schools, and Japanese Language Institutes for Foreign Students
- [United States Embassy Tokyo, Japan](http://usembassy.state.gov/tokyo/)
(<http://usembassy.state.gov/tokyo/>)
- [US Embassy in Tokyo Guide to Employment](http://usembassy.state.gov/tokyo/www7108.html)
(<http://usembassy.state.gov/tokyo/www7108.html>)
A comprehensive guide to employment in Japan for US citizens.
- Jobs in Japan.com
(www.jobsinjapan.com/)
A comprehensive guide to employment in Japan broken down by categories.
- JETRO's Guide to Business Living in Japan
(www.jetro.go.jp/it/e/pub/business_living_guide2001/index.html)
A comprehensive guide to living in Japan for the businessperson.
- **JGuide: Stanford University's Guide to Japanese Resources**
(<http://jguide.stanford.edu/>)
The "Employment & Study in Japan" section features a comprehensive list of websites containing information on teaching English in Japan.

The below resources are courtesy of the Embassy of the United States, Tokyo:

- ▶ The [American Chamber of Commerce in Japan](#), The Bridgestone Toranomon Bldg. 5F, 3-25-2 Toranomon, Minato Ku, Tokyo 105, has a publication entitled "Living in Japan" which gives valuable information and will be helpful to anyone interested in residing in Japan.
- ▶ [The Japan Times](#), 4-5-4 Shibaura, Minato Ku, Tokyo 108, has several publications on Japan which will also be of interest to any person contemplating residence in Japan such as: "Now you live in Japan" a handbook of essential knowledge for resident aliens, published by the Research Committee for Bi-Cultural Life in Japan; and Jean Pearce's "How to get things done in Japan" Volume 1 and 2.
- ▶ [The Japan Times](#) and other English-language newspapers have classified sections where jobs are

regularly advertised.

- ▶ Nihon Kajo Shuppan K.K., 3-16-6 Minami Nagasaki, Toshima Ku, Tokyo 170-91 publishes a booklet entitled "**A Guide to Entry, Residence and Registration Procedures in Japan for Foreign Nationals.**" This booklet, prepared by the Japan Immigration Association, lists the types of visas available and related rules and requirements for acquiring status and maintaining residence in Japan.
- ▶ Individuals interested in working for an American company in Japan may obtain a list of such firms from the Commercial Intelligence Division, Bureau of International Commerce, [United States Department of Commerce](#), Washington, D.C. 20230. www.doc.gov This list includes both the U.S. and Japanese addresses of the firms and is entitled "American Firms, Subsidiaries and Affiliates - Japan". Most American private companies recruit professional level employees in the United States.