

ESL Teachers

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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1. Working as an ESL Teacher [NOC 2021: 41210 / NOC 2016: 4021]

Job Description

ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers provide English language and life skills instruction to new immigrants, international students and others whose first language is not English.

If you work with recent immigrants you often plan lessons around the activities of daily life in Canada, such as answering the phone, looking for a job, grocery shopping, or going to the bank or doctor.

As an ESL teacher you perform the following duties:

- teach English grammar, reading, writing, and pronunciation
- teach students phrases for use in daily life or conversation
- prepare and mark tests and assignments to evaluate students' progress
- may take classes on field trips or other activities outside the classroom
- teach newcomers about canadian culture
- develop curriculum and prepare teaching materials
- teach students using lectures, discussion groups, and independent or group projects

Note:

- **College ESL teachers** are included in this guide. They are classified with the occupational group "*College and Other Vocational Instructors*".

- **Teachers in elementary and high schools are not included in this guide.**
These jobs are regulated in BC and you must be a member of the BC College of Teachers. If you would like to teach in an elementary or high school, refer to the guide:
 - **Teachers – Elementary & Secondary**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/employment-guides/teachers-elementary-secondary>

You can learn more about working as an ESL Teacher from:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for College & Other Vocational Instructors**
<https://www.workbc.ca/Jobs-Careers/Explore-Careers.aspx>
- **Career Cruising (profile for ESL Teacher)**
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>
Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page
- **Languages Canada – Research Reports**
<https://www.languagescanada.ca/en/research>

Industry Overview

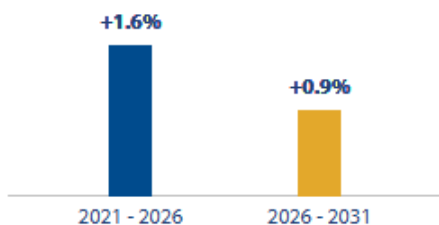
ESL teachers are employed by BC’s private career training institutions and public schools including colleges, high schools, and elementary schools. The number of private post-secondary institutions that provide language training has grown considerably. These schools often offer part-time work and contract positions, which usually pay less than equivalent positions in the public sector.

The Covid-19 pandemic caused major disruptions to the operation of Canadian language programs and the mobility of international students.

Job Outlook in BC, 2021-2031

College and Other Vocational Instructors (including ESL Teachers)

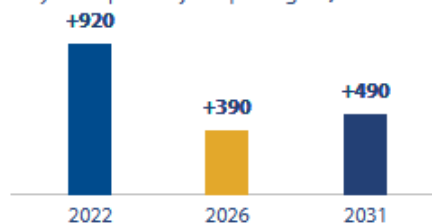
Forecasted average employment growth rate



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Job openings

10 year expected job openings: 5,270



Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Composition of job openings

Replacement of retiring workers:
66.2%
3,480 openings



New jobs due to economic growth:
33.8%
1,780 openings

Source: B.C. Labour Market Outlook

Chart from WorkBC

WorkBC provides job openings in BC's regions from 2021-2031:

Region	Employment in 2021	Estimated Annual Employment Growth 2021-2031	Estimated # of Job Openings 2021-2031
Vancouver Island / Coast	1,810	1.8%	860
Lower Mainland / Southwest	9,290	0.9%	3,200
Thompson-Okanagan	730	2.5%	460
Kootenay	550	2.9%	380
Cariboo	300	1.3%	130
North Coast & Nechako	220	1.8%	110
Northeast	200	2.5%	120

Sources: WorkBC, Career Cruising & Languages Canada 2020 Annual Report

Types of Employers

You can work for a variety of organizations including:

- community colleges
- private language schools
- community organizations

Salary

Your income may vary greatly because there are so many different places you can work as an ESL teacher.

ESL teachers who work for colleges, private schools, and community centres can earn anywhere from minimum wage to \$35 an hour. More experienced teachers may earn up to \$50 an hour. It is common to be hired on a part-time or contract basis.

Most teachers are paid only for classroom time. Your wages do not usually include the time spent preparing for program and marking papers outside of class time.

Benefits such as paid vacation and sick pay are rare because you normally work on a contract basis.

Source: Career Cruising (profile of ESL Teacher)

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In BC regions, ESL teachers **in Colleges** can expect to make:

Community/Area	Wages (\$/hour)		
	Low	Median	High
British Columbia	21.98	42.31	69.71
Cariboo Region	21.98	42.31	69.71
Kootenay Region	21.98	42.31	69.71
Lower Mainland–Southwest Region	20.00	41.21	71.47
North Coast Region	21.98	42.31	69.71
Thompson–Okanagan Region	21.98	42.31	69.71
Vancouver Island and Coast Region	26.37	42.08	57.69

Source: Job Bank, Wage Report <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/trend-analysis/search-wages>

Working Hours

You work a variety of hours depending on your work place. Some ESL teaching is done during evenings or weekends to accommodate the work and family commitments of older students

There is an increasing trend towards part-time employment and you may not find full-time employment immediately.

2. Skills, Education and Experience

Skills

- ability to effectively prepare, organize and deliver teaching materials
- knowledge of other cultures
- strong written and oral communication skills
- resourceful and patient
- organized and detail oriented
- creative
- ability to work independently

Education and Experience

Requirements to become an ESL teacher vary depending on where you want to work. In most cases, you need at least a bachelor's degree in a related subject such as English.

Employers may also require you to have a recognized ESL certificate or diploma such as TESL or TESOL. Certificate or diploma programs range from a few months to 1 year in length. They are offered at colleges, universities, and private language instruction schools across the country.

Qualifications

College/adult ESL teachers are not regulated in British Columbia.

There are no mandatory requirements for licensing or professional certification in order to work as an ESL teacher in BC.

ESL Certificate Programs *[required by some employers]*

- **TESL Canada Federation**
<https://www.tesl.ca/>

TESL Canada is the national federation of English as a second language teachers. It provides TESL Canada Professional Certification for instructors trained in Canada. To become TESL Canada certified, you must have a minimum of 100 hours' TESL/TEFL training, a 20-hour practicum teaching adults, and a Bachelor's degree in any discipline.

More information: <https://tesl.ca/certification/tesl-canada-professional-certification.html>

List of TESL recognized programs: <https://www.tesl.ca/training/tesl-canada-recognized-teacher-training-programs/recognized-teacher-training-directory.html>

If you received your ESL training outside Canada, you may be eligible to apply for Certification through the PLAR Prior Learning & Assessment Recognition program – for details, see: <https://tesl.ca/certification/tesl-canada-professional-certification/plar.html>

- **CELTA (Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages)**

<https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/teaching-english/teaching-qualifications/celta/>

CELTA is one of the most widely recognized qualifications of its kind around the world. There are over 2,700 centres in 130 countries that provide CELTA training.

More information: <https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/find-a-centre/find-a-teaching-centre/>

3. Finding Jobs

You'll find job advertisements in local newspapers, trade journals, and electronic sources, as well as through professional associations' publications.

Local Newspapers

You can look at the *Vancouver Sun* & *the Province* at Vancouver Public Library for free. Check the job postings daily, the careers section in the *Vancouver Sun* on Wednesdays and Saturdays and in *The Province* on Sundays.

Online Job Postings

- **Indeed.ca**
<https://www.indeed.ca/>
- **AMSSA Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC**
<https://www.amssa.org/job-search/>
job postings at AMSSA and its member agencies
- **Talent.com**
<https://ca.talent.com/>
- **BC JobConnect**
<https://bcjobconnect.ca> **must have permanent resident number**
newcomers can post their skills, education and work experience to BC employers looking for workers

Professional Associations' Career Resources

- **TEAL, Association of BC Teachers as an Additional Language**
https://www.bctéal.org/current_news_category/job-opportunities/
- **TESL Canada Opportunities**
<https://www.tesl.ca/jobs.html>
Click the link "Canadian postings"

Identifying the Right Position

When you browse job advertisements, you'll find different job titles.

For ESL Teachers, look for these related job titles:

- English as a Second Language Teacher or Instructor / English as an additional language
- English Language Instructor
- English as a Foreign Language Teacher
- CLB [Canadian Language Benchmarks] Instructor
- ELSA Teacher

Creating a List of Potential Employers

You can use directories to produce lists of ESL employers in British Columbia. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **English Language Schools Directory – Vancouver**

https://www.oxfordseminars.com/esl-schools-directory/north_america/canada/384_vancouver

- **Settlement Agencies/Services - Vancouver**

Settlement agencies offer language assessment and classes

<https://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/services/index.asp> (enter your postal code and click to select the boxes, 'language training' and 'language assessment')

- **Reference Canada**

<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/reference-canada>

Click on "Start Search" beside Canadian Businesses, then select the "Advanced Search" button. Select both "Keyword/SIC/NAICS" under Business Type and "City" under Geography. In the top search box enter "English as a second language" and click SEARCH. Select the appropriate headings. Lower down, select the Province, choose the cities, and click the "View Results" button.

Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

NOTE: *You can access this database from a Library computer. If you are using a computer from outside the Library, you will need a Vancouver Public Library card to login to this database. After clicking on the database name, you will be asked to enter your library card number and PIN (usually last four digits of your telephone number).*

4. Applying for a Job

In Canada, employers usually expect to receive a resume or curriculum vitae and a cover letter. These should identify the position you are applying for and summarize your relevant experience.

Use the library catalogue, <https://vpl.bibliocommons.com/> to find books on writing resumes and cover letters specific to your industry.

To learn about applying for jobs in Canada, use the following guides which are available in print at the Central Library or online:

- **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/writing-resumes-and-cover-letters>
- **Networking for Employment**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/networking-for-employment>
- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/getting-canadian-work-experience>
- **Learn More About Working in BC and Canada**
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/learn-more-about-working-in-bc-and-canada>

5. Getting Help from Industry Sources

Industry Associations

Associations for ESL teachers in BC can provide information and assistance. Registration and fees may be required for membership.

- **BC Teachers of English as an Additional Language**
<https://www.bcteal.org/>
- **Education and Training Employees Association**
<https://eteaunion.org/>
Vancouver's union for teachers of English as a Second Language
- **LINC: Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada**
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/new-life-canada/improve-english-french/classes.html> (language classes funded by the Government of Canada)
- **Languages Canada**
<https://www.languagescanada.ca>
- **TESL Canada**
<https://www.tesl.ca/>

Industry Journals

Search the Vancouver Public Library catalogue for journals related to your profession. Examples include:

- **TESL Canada Journal**
<https://teslcanadajournal.ca/>

Questions? Please ask the Information Staff in the Central Library, Vancouver Public Library or telephone 604-331-3603.

Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/>.

