



TEFL Jobs in Korea



Country overview

The following section provides useful, practical information about your destination country. It includes heaps of information about the local cuisine, cultural taboos and travel safety, so that you can make the most of your overseas teaching experience.

Basic Facts

South Korea is a country swathed in green, prodding its stony fingers skyward, and the Koreans are a people obsessed with nature, and with mountains in particular. Wherever you travel, you'll see Koreans out in the open air, clad in the latest adventure fashions, pushing ever onward and upward.

With China looming to its west and Japan nudging it from the east, it's no wonder the country has played unwilling host to centuries of war games. But no matter how many times its neighbours try to swallow it, South Korea manages to survive intact. Korea has four distinct seasons, with a wet monsoon/summer in the middle of the year, and a very cold winter from November to March. Jeju-do off the south coast is the warmest and wettest place in the country.

If you possibly can, time your visit to South Korea for autumn (September to November). It's sunny, the skies are blue, and Korea's spectacular autumn foliage is a real draw. Winter is cold but dry, and a good time to visit if you like skiing, snow-draped temples, a dearth of tourists and crisp (i.e. below freezing) weather. Spring (April to May) can be beautiful, but it's also the most popular time with Japanese tourists and you'll have trouble getting mid to top-end accommodation. Summer is hot, muggy, crowded, wet, typhoon-prone and expensive.

Society & Culture

Korea's population is one of the most ethnically and linguistically homogenous in the world. Except for a small Chinese community (about 20,000), virtually all Koreans share a common cultural and linguistic heritage. With 48.85 million people, South Korea has one of the world's highest population densities. Major population centres

are located in the northwest, southeast, and in the plains south of the Seoul-Incheon area.

Korea has experienced one of the largest rates of emigration, with ethnic Koreans residing primarily in China (1.9 million), the United States (1.52 million), Japan (681,000), and the countries of the former Soviet Union (450,000).

Language

The Korean language is related to Japanese and Mongolian. Although it differs grammatically from Chinese and does not use tones, a large number of Chinese cognates exist in Korean. Chinese ideograms are believed to have been brought into Korea some time before the second century BC. The learned class spoke Korean, but read and wrote Chinese. A phonetic writing system ("hangul") was invented in the 15th century by King Sejong to provide a writing system for commoners who could not read classical Chinese. Modern Korean uses hangul almost exclusively with Chinese characters in limited use for word clarification. Approximately 1,300 Chinese characters are used in modern Korean. English is taught as a second language in most primary and secondary schools. Chinese and Japanese are widely taught at secondary schools.

Religion

Half of the population actively practices religion. Among this group, Christianity (49%) and Buddhism (47%) comprise Korea's two dominant religions. Though only 3% identified themselves as Confucians, Korean society remains highly imbued with Confucian values and beliefs. The remaining 1% of the population practice Shamanism (traditional spirit worship) and Chondogyo ("Heavenly Way"), a traditional religion.

Food & Drink

Korea has its own cuisine, quite different from Chinese or Japanese. Rice is the staple food and a typical Korean meal consists of rice, soup, rice water and eight to twenty side dishes of vegetables, fish, poultry, eggs, bean-curd and sea plants. Most Korean soups and side dishes are heavily laced with red pepper.

Dishes include kimchi (Korean national dish, highly spiced pickle of Chinese cabbage or white radish with turnips, onions, salt, fish, chestnuts and red pepper), soups (based on beef, pork, oxtail, other meat, fish, chicken and cabbage, almost all spiced), pulgogi (marinated, charcoal-broiled beef barbecue), Genghis Khan (thin slices of beef and vegetables boiled at the table) or sinsollo (meat, fish, eggs and vegetables such as chestnuts and pinenuts cooked in

a brazier chafing dish at the table). Other examples of local cuisine are sanjok (strips of steak with onions and mushrooms), kalbichim (steamed beef ribs), fresh abalone and shrimps (from Chejudo Island, served with mustard, soy or chilli sauces) and Korean seaweed (prized throughout the Far East). There is waiter as well as counter service.

Most major hotels will offer a selection of restaurants, serving Korean, Japanese and Chinese cuisine or more Western-style food. For more information about Korean food, a brochure called The Wonderful World of Korean Food is available from Korea National Tourism Organisation's Tourist Information Centres.

Local drinks are mostly made from fermented rice or wheat and include jungjong (expensive variant of rice wine), soju (like vodka and made from potatoes or grain) or yakju/takju (cloudy and light tan-coloured) known together as makkoli. There are many brands of Korean beer, including Cass, Hite and OB. Ginseng wine is strong and sweet, similar to brandy, but varies in taste according to the basic ingredient used. The most common type of drinking establishment is the Suljip (wine bar), but there are also beer houses serving well-known European brands.

A couple of things to remember when eating in South Korea:

- Never pick up the bowls when you eat
- Never blow your nose at the table - this is possibly the worst thing you could possibly do!
- Say "Mashisoyo" (It's delicious!) or "Mashisosoyo" (It was delicious!)

Travel Safety

South Korea is a safe country to travel around but it is important, as with all travelling, to use your common sense and not to do things that you would not do at home. Remember to trust your instincts.

- Be careful of pickpockets, especially on public transport and in tourist areas.
- Carry your passport, credit cards, travellers' cheques and most of your money in your money belt, and only keep a small amount of cash in your wallet.
- If possible, leave your camera and other valuables securely locked in your room. If you are carrying your valuables with you, keep them in your day bag and lock it with a small padlock.

- Never leave your valuables unattended and never trust anyone you don't know to look after them for you.
- Don't flaunt your relative wealth by wearing expensive clothes or jewellery.
- Don't resist muggers - give them the money in your wallet.
- Where possible travel in groups and avoid deserted areas, especially at night.
- Women in particular should avoid travelling alone.
- Female teachers might consider carrying a personal alarm. Previous teachers have also recommended wearing a ring on your wedding finger to deter local men.
- Dress responsibly to avoid attracting attention to yourself.
- Try not to look lost or apprehensive. Acting confidently can be a deterrent to crime.
- Be careful of travel advice that strangers give to you, and don't go off with anyone you don't know. Consult your guidebook and ask several different people before trusting a piece of advice.
- Follow bathing advice at the beaches. Some areas are subject to riptides and strong currents.
- Don't get involved with drugs, and avoid any political demonstrations.
- Don't do anything you wouldn't do at home. In fact, you need to be even more vigilant as unfamiliar situations can sometimes catch you off-guard and make you more vulnerable.
- Take two photocopies of your passport in case it gets lost or stolen. Keep one with you to use if you need it and you may consider leaving one with friends or relatives too in case both your original passport and copy are lost in-country.

Special Events

Korea (Rep) celebrates many annual festivals throughout the year. The most significant festival is Buddha's Birthday, during which the 'Feast of Lanterns' is performed in the Republic of Korea's streets. Of great importance are the annual village rituals which are nationally recognised. At these festivals, mountain spirits, great generals and royalty of the past are remembered and celebrated. There are also festivals that mark the changing seasons and festivals of prayer for a good harvest. All are characterised by processions, by masked and costumed local people, music, dancing, battles and sports, to recreate the original historic event or to conjure up good spirits.

Jan 1 Seongsan Ilchul Festival (New Year's sunrise).
Jan 27-30 Daegwallyeong Snow Flower Festival, Gangwon-do/Inje
Pond Smelt Fishing (ice fishing competition and festivities),
Soyangho Lake.
Feb 17-19 First Full Moon Field Fire Festival (burning of dry grass),
Jeju-do.
Mar 15-23 Cheongdo Bullfighting Festival, Gyeongsangbuk-do.
Apr 2-5 Yeongam Wang-in Cultural Festival, Jeollanam-do.
Jul 14-23 Bucheon-si Puchon International Fantastic Film Festival,
Goyang-si.
Aug 8-10 Yeosu International Youth Festival.

Teaching opportunities in South Korea

- Summer Camps – See [website](#) for latest information
- Winter Camps – See [website](#) for latest information
- South Korean Private Language Schools
- South Korean Government Schools

What you can expect in Private Language Schools

- **Salary:** Up to 2 million won / £1000 / \$US1950 / €1475 / \$AU2475 / \$NZ2775 / \$CAD2250.
- **Accommodation:** Private bedroom in rent-free fully furnished shared accommodation.
- **Bonus:** Bonus equivalent to one month's salary on successful completion of contract.
- **Flights:** Reimbursed up to a value of 500 (approx AU\$1200 / NZ\$1400).
- **Arrival:** Meet and greet service at the airport plus orientation and transfer to school.
- **Locations:** Throughout South Korea.
- **Contract length:** 1 year.
- **Departure dates:** Monthly.
- **Student age range:** 5 - 15 years old.

What you can expect in Government Schools

- **Salary:** Up to 1,800,000 Won / \$1900 (USD) / £980 / €1450 / CAD\$2250 / AUD\$2450 / NZD\$2750 per month based on a 40 hour week (22 hours teaching, 18 office hours). Pay could be up to 50% higher than this dependent on your experience and the school you work at.
- **Accommodation:** During your week of training you will stay in dorm-style accommodation. During your time teaching you will stay in free, fully furnished Western style accommodation.

- **Arrival:** You will be met at Seoul (Incheon) or Busan Airport (depending on which is nearest to your placement) and taken to your accommodation. The next day, you will be taken to the central training centre to start a week of training and orientation.
- **Flight reimbursement:** £650 / €950 / US\$1250 / CAD\$1450 / AUD\$1580 / NZ\$1800
- **Locations:** Schools are located in Seoul, Busan, Daegu, Ulsan, Gyeongsangnamdo Province, Gangwondo Province and Gyeonggi Province
- **Contract length:** 1 year.
- **Departure dates:** February and August.

Requirements

- Native English speaker - Must be a holder of a native English passport eg. UK, Irish, Australian, New Zealand, USA, Canadian
- TEFL qualification (Essential TEFL Plus course included)
- University degree holder

Despite its friendly and open people, South Korea is an essentially conservative country. As with all of South East Asia, appearance is very importance. When submitting your passport photo as part of the application, please bear this in mind. Prominent tattoos, facial piercing and bright pink hair, probably wouldn't be a good idea!

Frequently Asked Questions

- Application
- Pre-departure
- **Government Schools** Employment | Teaching
- **Private Language Schools** Employment | Teaching

Application

1. What are the application requirements?

- Native English speaker, TEFL qualified.
- You need to be a university degree holder.

Following your initial application, you will need to submit the following documents:

- CV/Resume
- Covering letter
- Scanned copy of your University degree certificate
- Scanned copy of the information page of your passport
- Passport photograph
- Application Form (South Korea Government Schools only)

2. Can I apply with someone else?

It is usually possible for us to place applicant to government schools in the same accommodation and school. Unfortunately this is not the case for private schools.

3. Can I choose where I teach?

If you have a strong preference on location, please specify this in your covering letter; however, it is best to be as flexible as you can.

4. When are the start dates?

There are monthly start dates. It is suggested you apply as far in advance as possible.

5. What is the project length?

12 months

6. When should I apply?

It is best to apply as early as you can to secure your application. We recommend applying a minimum of three months in advance. However, depending on availability it is sometimes possible for us to fast-track applications in 4 weeks.

7. I haven't finished my degree yet, can I still apply?

As long as you have completed your degree and have got your certificate prior to departure, you are still eligible to apply. Please include a letter from your University supervisor / academic advisor with your application to confirm this.

Don't have a degree? Try Honduras, Hungary or Indonesia!

8. How do I apply?

Call your nearest i-to-i office or www.onlinetefl.com/jobs and apply now.

9. What happens if I apply but don't get accepted?

We have a 90% success rate for applicants who meet the basic application criteria. If however, you are not accepted, you will be refunded the full project fee.

Pre-departure

1. How do I get my visa?

On confirmation of employment, you need to apply for an E2 visa with the assistance of your employer. Please note that to do this you will be required to send the original copy of your degree certificate and the official breakdown/transcript of your degree to South Korea.

2. Which airport should I fly into?

South Korea Language schools: Seoul

South Korea Government schools: Seoul or Busan, depending on your job placement.

3. When and how should I book my flights?

Please wait to book your flights until you are advised by our in-country agent to do so.

4. Do I need to take out travel insurance?

We strongly recommend that you take out adequate travel insurance for the entire duration of your stay. For details of travel insurance for UK citizens, please visit www.endsleigh.co.uk. For citizens from outside of the UK, please visit: www.statravel.com.

5. Do I need vaccinations?

Inoculations

The following list of inoculations is based on information from the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and should be used in conjunction with your doctor or travel clinic.

i-to-i Placements, Exploration House,
32 Grattan Square,
Dungarvan, Waterford
Ireland

tefljobteam@i-to-i.com

UK: +44 (0) 113 205 0077
USA: (800) 985 4864
Ireland: +353(0) 58 40050
Australia: +61 (0)3 9326 3066

Yellow Fever (a certificate is required if you are travelling from an infected area).

Polio (recommended)

Tetanus (recommended)

Typhoid (recommended)

Hepatitis A (recommended)

Hepatitis B (sometimes recommended)

Rabies (sometimes recommended)

Diphtheria (sometimes recommended)

Japanese Encephalitis (sometimes recommended)

Malaria

Chloroquine-resistant malaria is present in rural areas between the Yellow and Yangtze rivers, Hunan, Yunnan and the regions bordering Cambodia and Laos. None of our placements are affected but you may choose to travel to the infected areas. Always consult your doctor for recommended medication and the most up to date health advice for travellers.

6. How much money should I bring with me?

We recommend that you bring approximately £500 / USD \$900 / €750 to cover all initial costs until your first payday. (You may be required to pay a bond on your apartment.) Always have access to emergency funds (Monies that can be transferred to you at short notice from home)

7. Do I need to be able to speak the local language?

No, but learning some simple phrases will be very useful.

Pronunciation

Vowels:

A : 'a' in 'are'

Ya : as in 'yard'

Ô : as in 'of'

YÔ ; as in 'young'

O : as in 'go'

Yo : as in 'yoke'

U : as in 'flute'

Yu : as in 'you'

Û : as in 'oo' in 'look'

I : as in 'ee' in 'beet'

Wo : in ion 'won'

Ae : as in the 'a' in 'hat'

Yae : as in the 'ya' in 'yam'

E : in the 'ten'

Ye : in in 'yes'

Wa : as in 'waffle'

Wae : as in 'wa' in 'wax'

Oe : as in 'wa' in 'way'

We : as in 'wet'

Wi : as in 'we'

Ûi : as in 'u' plus 'i'

Basics and Greetings

Hello : annyöng hashimnigga (formal)
Good bye: (to someone leaving) annyöngghi kaseyo
Good bye: (to someone staying) annyöngghi kyeseyo
Please : put'ak hamnida
Thank you : kamsa hamnida
You're welcome : gwaench'ansümnida
Yes: ye
No : aniyo
Excuse me: shillye hamnida
I'm sorry: mianhamnida
My name is' : che irümün ` imnida
I come from' : ch'önün ` e sö watsümnida
I want to go to ` : ` e kago shipsümnida
Bus: bössä
Taxi: t'aekshi
Public phone: gongjung chönhwa
Telephone card: chönhwa k'adü
Bank: ünhaeng
How much does it cost': ölmayeyo'
Can I have a discount': chim ssage juseyo

8. Is there a dress code?

Smart casual/work casual

9. How long will it take to complete the TEFL training?

The course can be completed in a minimum of 2-3 weeks. Most people finish the course in 4-6 weeks. You have a maximum of 6 months to complete the course. You will be sent your certificate, letter of reference and hard copy of the course within 21 days of completion of all components of the course. (TEFL course outline)

10. What happens when I arrive?

You will be met at the airport/train station of your teaching destination and transferred to your accommodation. You will have two orientations: one to prepare you for teaching and one to show you around the school and city.

South Korea - Private Language Schools: Employment

1. How much will I be paid?

You will be paid approximately £900 / €1300 / US\$1700 / CAN\$2000 / AUS\$2200 / NZ \$2400 per month in Won into your local bank account (you will be assisted in setting this up on arrival.) The tax rate is 3.2-5.5%.

The cost of living is approximately \$620 - \$900 USD / £350 - £500 / €525 - €750 per month (please note that this is a guide only).

2. Do I receive a bonus or flight re-imbusement?

Your flight will be reimbursed up to a value of £500. You will receive 25% on arrival, 25% on completion of three months and the final 50% on successful completion of the 12 month contract. You will also receive a bonus equivalent to one month's salary on successful completion of the 12 month contract.

3. How many days holiday will I receive per year?

You will receive 15-20 paid holidays per year.

4. What are my working hours?

You will work approximately 30 hours a week, Monday - Friday. You may be required to work some evenings and weekends.

5. Can I renew my contract?

Your contract may be extendable; you would need to discuss this with your school.

6. What happens if I need to break my contract?

As the work visa has been applied for by the school, to break the contract would directly cause your stay to be illegal. You would lose your bonus and any other related payments.

Teachers can leave contracts in case of emergency – they are not penalized. If they need to leave permanently that is certainly possible and if they need a short leave in case of family emergency this is usually accommodated.

7. What will my accommodation be like?

You will have a private room in rent-free fully furnished accommodation, usually shared with other English teachers.

Shared accommodation is always with other teachers to a maximum of 3 people per apartment. The age group would depend on the age of the teachers in the school but most teachers are between 25-40.

South Korea - Private Language Schools: Teaching

1. What age and level will I be teaching?

You will need to be prepared to teach all levels and all age groups. Most students are aged 5-15.

2. How many students are there in each class?

There are usually 8-12 students per class.

3. How long are the classes?

Most classes are 45 - 50 minutes long

4. Are there teaching resources available?

Yes, institutes are well-resourced. You may also like to take photos and pictures of your home country, family and friends.

5. Will I be teaching alone or in a team?

You will mostly be teaching alone, but you will have the guidance and support of other teachers and your supervisor.

6. What kind of school will I be teaching in?

You will teach in a private language institute.

South Korea - Government Schools: Employment

1. How much will I be paid?

Up to 1,800,000 Won / \$1900 (USD) / £980 / €1450 / CAD\$2250 / AUD\$2450 / NZD\$2750 per month based on a 40 hour week (22 hours teaching, 18 office hours). .

Utilities and phone bill are generally less than 200,000 Won/month dependent upon lifestyle and location. This estimate includes internet, cell phone, heat and electricity and phone bills.

The total cost of living is approximately \$620 - \$900 USD / £350 - £500 / €525 - €750 per month (please note that this is a guide only).

2. Do I receive a bonus or flight re-imbusement?

One-way airfare is arranged for you and reimbursed within a month of arrival and your one-way airfare home will be provided on completion of your contract.

3. How many holiday days will I receive per year?

Two to four weeks of paid holidays, depending on the school.

4. What are my working hours?

You will be working 40 hours a week, Monday to Friday. This will include 22 teaching hours and 18 office hours per week.

5. Can I renew my contract?

Your contract may be extendable; you would need to discuss this with your school.

6. What happens if I need to break my contract?

Penalties will be incurred for the cost of getting a replacement teacher and possible repayment of the airfare depending on the situation and length of employment.

South Korea - Government Schools: Teaching

1. What age and level of students will I be teaching?

You will be teaching elementary to high school students (aged 7 - 16 depending on the school) at a range of levels, from beginner to advanced.

2. How many students will there be in each class?

The class size can range from 5-50 students - the average size is 35.

3. How long are the classes?

Classes are usually 1 hour long.

4. Are there any teaching resources?

Yes, resources are available.

5. Will I be teaching alone or team teaching?

You will be co-teaching with a Korean teacher.

6. What kind of school will I be teaching in?

You will be teaching in government schools with an English program managed by a Western company, following the IELTS program.

TEFL certification

All our TEFL Jobs include the 40 hour Online TEFL course and the 20 hour Grammar and Language Awareness Module. These courses will give you the skills you need to teach English as a foreign language, so you can walk into your first TEFL classroom with the utmost confidence.

You'll be sent details of how to access your courses via email. You will have six months to complete the 40 hour course and extra time after that to complete the Grammar and Language Awareness Module. Both courses must be complete by the time you start your placement.

It's also an idea to take your TEFL certificate with you when you go. Some placements request it – and even if they don't it's always handy to have it with you.

It's not uncommon for applicants to desire extra qualifications to supplement their Online TEFL certification and further develop their skills. That's why we offer a range of specialist certificates that will help you tailor your skills towards a specific area of the TEFL business. As an i-to-i tutee you are entitled to 10% off any of these certificates.

Visit www.onlinetefl.com/online-tefl/certificates to find out more or call/email us at:

UK & the world: +44 (0)113 205 0077 tefljobteam@i-to-i.com

Ireland: 058 400 50 ireland@i-to-i.com

North America: 800 985 4864 usca@i-to-i.com

Australia: 1300 556 997 australia@i-to-i.com

Surviving culture shock

Almost everyone experiences some degree of culture shock when they first arrive at their destination - even if they're a seasoned traveller. It may be felt as stress, frustration, anxiety or homesickness and is a perfectly natural reaction to encountering a new culture that looks, sounds and feels different to what you're used to.

Try not to worry if you feel overwhelmed at the start of your placement - just go with the flow and before you know it you'll start to settle in. The following advice will help you to overcome culture shock as quickly as possible.

Doing as much research as possible into your destination will help to reduce culture shock, as you'll be prepared for many of the differences you will encounter. The Lonely Planet and Culture Shock! Guides are good resources to use for this.

Try to arrive at your destination as fresh as possible. Avoid alcohol and caffeine on your flight, eat a light meal and rest as much as possible. This will give you the energy to get through your first day in-country. If you're exhausted when you arrive, everything will seem a lot more challenging.

Take it easy on your first few days, to give yourself time to adjust to your new environment and get over your journey. You don't have to see and do everything in the first few days - that's just the adrenaline talking!

A good tip is to observe the locals and do as they do. They are used to the heat, humidity and altitude and know how best to cope. Watch what they do and adopt their ways.

Remember that if you're finding things difficult at your placement, it may be due to culture shock. Try to keep an open mind and avoid making comparisons with how things are done in your own country - if you wanted everything to stay the same you wouldn't have gone overseas in the first place!

If you're going away for several months, budget for a well-deserved break halfway through your placement. Treat yourself to a night in a comfy hotel and a good meal, then return to your placement feeling refreshed. It's okay to want a few home comforts while you're away - something as simple as watching a movie in English in an air-conditioned cinema can make you feel much better!

Checklist for Paid Teaching Placements

We send you:

- Confirmation email of PTP placement
- Confirmation/login details email of Online TEFL course
- DVD and GAM for TEFL course

What you need to do:

- Send relevant documents to complete application:
- CV/Resume
- Cover letter
- Scanned copy of your University degree certificate or a letter from your university confirming your expected graduation (English translation required). Please note a degree is not needed for paid teaching placements in Hungary
- Scanned copy of the information page of your passport
- Arrange suitable travel insurance.

Documents will be sent to the in-country representative who will contact you about the application. Remember to complete your TEFL course!

Once accepted we send you:

- Terms and conditions to be signed.

In-country representative sends:

- Confirmation of placement contract

What you need to do for South Korea:

You need to send to your in-country representative the following:

- Original copy of your degree certificate (if this is not written in English, please include a full translation notarized by a lawyer).
- Official copy of your university transcript for the duration of your degree. This needs to be placed in an envelope with the University stamp and logo on the outside. The envelope must be sealed with cello tape and be signed by the person who sealed the envelope.
- Photocopy of the picture page of your passport
- Updated CV
- Signed contract with school
- Six passport-sized photographs

You will then be emailed your visa permit reference number

You need to post the following documents to your local South Korean Embassy

- Visa application form - download from www.mofat.go.kr/me/index.jsp
- Passport
- Application fee
- Photographs

Next Steps:

- Once your visa has been accepted and returned, book flights

Enjoy your trip!