

English as a Second Language Teacher

Teach English to newcomers, in a school board or an adult program. Two very different routes, two very different paycheques.

TYPICAL PAY

\$95,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$60k to \$124k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

5 to 6 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Public schools, adult language programs, colleges, private langu...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Take a second language to Grade 12. Knowing what it feels like to learn one is the whole job.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 3 to 4 years
Linguistics, English, modern languages or education all fit. For high school you need two teachable subjects.
- 3 Bachelor of Education (B.Ed)** 1 to 2 years
Four semesters in Ontario, 1 to 2 years elsewhere, with classroom placements.
- 4 Provincial certification** A few weeks
Register with your regulator, for example the Ontario College of Teachers.
- 5 Language qualification courses** 1 to 3 years, part time
In Ontario this is a three-part Additional Qualification (AQ) in teaching English language learners. Part 1 needs only your certificate; later parts need teaching experience.

Pros and cons

- + You see people unlock a whole country's worth of opportunity
- + Two entry routes, one of them short and cheap
- + Adult teaching is flexible and often remote
- The adult route pays badly and is mostly part-time contract work
- The well-paid route needs 5 to 6 years of university first
- Funding for settlement programs rises and falls with immigration policy

Optional boosts

Higher certification standard. Federal settlement program training. Exam preparation teaching. Master's in applied linguistics or education.

Good to know

Canada funds language classes for newcomers

The federal government pays for free English and French classes for eligible permanent residents. Those programs are a major employer of adult language teachers, which is why immigration policy shows up in...

Some schools have dozens of first languages

Large urban boards in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal report students speaking well over 100 home languages between them. A single classroom can hold five or six.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: English as a Second Language Teacher, High School, wages (updated Nov 2025)

TESL Canada (Teaching English as a Second Language Canada)

TESL Canada: Certification

Ontario College of Teachers: Requirements to teach

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/english-as-a-second-language-teacher>



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