

Teacher

Run a classroom of your own. A state license, a school calendar, and the most openings of almost any job on this site.

TYPICAL PAY

\$63,970

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$48k to \$104k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

4 to 5 years

after high school

DEMAND

Very high

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Public and private elementary schools, charter schools, classroo...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 9 to 12
Solid grades across subjects, because elementary teachers teach everything. Tutoring, camp work and coaching all count as experience.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
Education, or a subject plus an education minor. Some states require a major in an academic subject rather than in education itself.
- 3 Teacher preparation program** Built in, or 1 extra year
Methods courses plus supervised classroom placements. Some universities fold this into the degree, others run it as a fifth year.
- 4 Student teaching** One semester
A full semester running someone else's classroom under supervision. Usually unpaid, and the hardest part of the training.
- 5 Tests, background check and license** Weeks to months
Basic skills and subject tests, fingerprinting, then your state issues a preliminary license.

Pros and cons

- + Steady demand with openings in nearly every town in the country
- + A pension and Public Service Loan Forgiveness, which most private jobs cannot match
- + Real autonomy once the door closes and the class is yours
- Pay starts low for a job that needs a degree and a license
- The hours are longer than the school day and the extra ones are unpaid
- Behavior, class sizes and parent conflict are the reasons most leavers give

Optional boosts

Special education. Bilingual or English learner authorization. Mathematics and science. Reading specialist.

Good to know

Your pay is a public document

Public school districts publish their salary schedules, which set pay by years served and education level. You can look up exactly what a first year teacher earns in a district before you ever apply there. Almost n...

States are paying people to train

Teacher shortages have pushed states into paying for the training itself. California, for instance, runs a Student Teacher Stipend Program worth \$10,000 to help people through the unpaid placement semest...

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Elementary School Teachers (25–2021.00)

Praxis tests from ETS (Educational Testing Service)

California Commission on Teacher Credentialing

California Commission on Teacher Credentialing: teaching credential requirements

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/teacher>



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