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Teaching English to Adults

A Guide to Career Opportunities and Classroom Activities

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Introduction

Teaching English to adults is a fantastic TEFL niche, with global demand, diverse opportunities, and many ways to build a stable income and job security. Teaching adults is also a satisfying experience, as adults typically learn English to meet a specific goal, such as to seize a career opportunity or attend an overseas university. If you teach English to adults independently online, you'll find plenty of students looking for English tutors to help them meet career goals, prepare for proficiency tests, and more. There are also many online English language schools, institutes, and programs looking for qualified teachers to teach adult students. You'll also find many in-person options for teaching adults privately and in groups with companies, schools, and universities.

As English is the most widely spoken second language in the world, there's great demand for qualified English teachers. You can find opportunities to teach in person and online in almost every country, which provides teachers many ways to experience new cultures and find professional and personal fulfillment. Many teachers of adult students also pursue professional development opportunities, such as specialized TEFL certificates or advanced degrees in education or TESOL, to enhance their skills, target lucrative niches, and expand career options.



This eBook provides an overview of teaching English to adults, sharing insights into the benefits of teaching adults, specialized niches like Business English and test prep that are in demand, and the qualifications needed to teach adults. You'll also find strategies to teach different types of adult learners and some practical games and activities to increase student engagement and motivation. **Let's get started!**

Chapter 1

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN TEACHING ADULTS

Teaching adults can be quite different from teaching young learners. If you've found that teaching children isn't for you, there are plenty of opportunities to teach adults, online or in person. While many adults learn English for workplace or career purposes, it's possible to have students from all walks of life, including college students, homemakers, and retirees. Let's compare the advantages associated with teaching adults vs. teaching young learners.

Advantages of Teaching Adults

Classroom Management

- Less time spent on class management and more time on learning.
- Adult students are in English class by choice, so they tend to be motivated students.
- Professions, industries, and backgrounds of students provide interesting class discussions.
- Adult students provide more opportunities for cross-cultural or language exchange.

Opportunities to Specialize

- You can teach Business English online or in person for companies or provide private tutoring in either capacity to individuals or groups.
- Many adults seek English proficiency test preparation courses for academic, professional, or personal reasons, which may be taught in person or online.

Advantages of Teaching Young Learners

Learning Style

- Kids, especially elementary-aged, tend to have an unbridled enthusiasm for learning and are always ready to jump in and play any fun English games you present to them.
- Young learners tend to lack the hang-ups of adults, so they are not as shy about pronouncing new words or afraid of looking silly in front of the class.
- It's easy to see substantial progress in young learners' and teens' English levels since they are able to absorb so much so quickly.

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TEACHING ADULTS ONLINE

While there are many opportunities to teach adults in person, such as for universities, institutes, and companies, there are also many ways to teach adult students online.

Work With an Online Company

You can teach Business English in one-to-one classes or small-group classes through companies like Bridge Corporate Language Learning. Companies like this one provide the employees in multinational companies English courses as part of corporate language programs. While there are opportunities around the globe, the countries where Business English training is most common are Central and South America and the Middle East.



Roberta, from Brazil, teaches Business English online with Bridge Corporate Language Learning. She shared an example of a time that she felt like she made a difference in a student's life.

> *The people at his company realized he was putting in a lot of effort and he was promoted!*

Apply to teach Business English students online with Bridge Corporate Language Learning!

Tutor With a Marketplace

You can tutor adults on marketplaces by creating a profile that highlights your skills and qualifications and markets your services for adult students. Companies like italki and Preply are popular online marketplaces where you can set your own rates and hours, and companies like Cambly and EF English First pay a fixed rate per class.

Teach Independently

You can also teach adults as an online independent English teacher. As an online independent teacher, you can set your rates and choose your teaching niche. You'll need to market your services, collect payments, manage your students, create your curriculum, and teach your classes, but teaching independently puts you in the driver's seat of your own career. You can find training and support for this option in Bridge's Teacherpreneur Academy, which provides a specialized certification course in marketing and business, as well as an exclusive platform with access to expert-led workshops, networking sessions, and a library of resources.

Bridge alum Alejandro Olivares, from Venezuela, is an independent online teacher in his home country. He shared advice for teachers thinking about going independent.

> *"Be patient. Being an independent teacher is not easy, but if you want to manage your time and rates with freedom, it's the best way to do it."*



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Chapter 2

SPECIALIZING IN TEACHING BUSINESS ENGLISH



Teaching Business English is an ESL niche that focuses on business terminology and related topics as well as corporate culture. It's sometimes taught onsite to employees of large companies, but you can also teach private English classes or teach Business English online with private language companies.

One of the biggest benefits to teaching Business English is the pay. Like other English teaching positions, your salary will depend on your qualifications, experience, and other factors, but specializing in this niche usually includes higher pay as students and companies are usually willing to pay more for teachers who have highly developed skills in the specific type of English they need. Even for independent online Business English teachers, the demand for the niche means you can charge more for your services.

MEETING QUALIFICATIONS

Before applying to online and in-person Business English teaching jobs, make sure that you get TEFL certified, as pretty much all positions will require you to have a professional TEFL/TESOL certificate of at least 120 hours, like the Bridge Master TEFL Certificate.

Once you finish your initial TEFL course, it's even better if you can also earn Specialized Certification in Teaching Business English, as this can be a competitive field and you can earn more if you have specialized training. This 60-hour certification covers everything from conducting needs analyses and considering stakeholder expectations to teaching English as a global language.

Among other features, the Specialized Certification in Teaching Business English course includes:



» Interactive exercises and practice activities
» Teaching demos
» Downloadable resources like infographics
» Tutor and peer feedback via discussion boards

Upon completion of the course, you'll get:

» A professional TEFL/TESOL certificate
» A digital badge to share on LinkedIn, your resume, your teacher profile, your email signature, and elsewhere
» Up to six Continuing Education Units (CEUs)
» Job placement assistance



Learn More + About the Course

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JOB OPPORTUNITIES

There are many ways to teach Business English. Let's look at a few.

Teaching Business English Overseas

Business English is taught all around the world wherever adults have the desire to learn it. For example, Niels, a teacher from Peru, teaches technical English and specializes in the petroleum industry. While it is quite common to teach adult professionals in Latin America, demand for Business English teachers also exists in Asia and Europe. Regardless of the region, oftentimes, bigger companies with international clients can be found in larger cities. Therefore, you will see more positions advertised for Business English teachers in places like Beijing, China or São Paulo, Brazil than in smaller towns.

Teaching Business English Online

There are many companies where it's possible to teach English online to adults. For example, **Bridge Corporate Language Learning** provides tailored language learning programs to international companies of all sizes. From personalized private classes to small group training, corporations can choose the best fit for their employees' needs. Bridge teachers come from all over the globe and enjoy perks like flexible working hours and free access to ongoing certification and professional development.



Learn More +

About joining Bridge's multicultural team!

Teaching Business English Independently

If you don't want to work with a company, you can also teach Business English online as a teacherpreneur. There's a specific TEFL/TESOL niche for private online teachers specializing in Business English. If you market yourself correctly, you can find plenty of interested individuals, as well as companies who want someone to teach their employees English. If being your own boss and setting your own rates interests you, then you can start by checking out Bridge's Succeeding as an English Teacherpreneur Specialized Certification course, part of Teacherpreneur Academy.

Bridge alum Ruben, from Mexico, teaches Business English independently and specializes in pronunciation. He shared a particularly rewarding moment with a student who had struggled with successfully interviewing for jobs in English.



> *"A month after we finished working together, he sent me a message to thank me because he felt more confident in his interviews. Later, he texted again to tell me that he had been hired!"*

Stakeholders

As a Business English teacher, it's important to recognize the stakeholders. Companies will often pay for Business English classes to help an employee gain a promotion, begin a new position that deals with international travel or communication, or better assist international customers or clients. As key stakeholders in the success of their ESL students, company managers may expect you to report to them every so often to check in and update them on the students' progress. Business English classes are oftentimes more costly than regular English courses, too, which means that these stakeholders will be eager to see real, documented results. This is the case for both in-person and online Business English classes.

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Chapter 3

SPECIALIZING IN ENGLISH PROFICIENCY TEST PREPARATION



Teaching English test preparation courses is in high demand. Preparing students for the IELTS, TOEFL, PTE, and other English proficiency tests requires a special skill set and solid strategies. Because these courses are in-demand and often high-stakes, earning potential is high in this niche.

MEETING QUALIFICATIONS

Before beginning your job search, it's important to make sure that you get TEFL certified, as this niche also typically requires you to have a professional TEFL/TESOL certificate of at least 120 hours. Once you finish your initial TEFL course, it's even better if you can also train to prepare your students for the proficiency test they'll take. Among the most in-demand English proficiency tests are TOEFL, IELTS, and PTE. Bridge offers Micro-credentials in Teaching TOEFL Test Prep, Teaching IELTS Exam Prep, and Teaching PTE Test Prep.

Among other features, the Micro-credentials in Teaching TOEFL Test Prep, Teaching IELTS Exam Prep, and Teaching PTE Test Prep courses include:



» Interactive exercises and practice activities
» Teaching demos
» Downloadable resources like infographics
» Tutor and peer feedback via discussion boards

Upon completion of each course, you'll get:

» A professional TEFL/TESOL certificate
» A digital badge to share on LinkedIn, your resume, your teacher profile, your email signature, and elsewhere
» Up to six Continuing Education Units (CEUs)
» Job placement assistance



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JOB OPPORTUNITIES

There are multiple opportunities for teaching English proficiency test preparation. Let's look at a few.

Teaching English Proficiency Test Prep Online

Students all over the world look for tutoring assistance to prepare for English proficiency tests. You can teach online with a tutoring marketplace like Langu or Cambly, highlighting your test prep specialization in your profile to show students your credentials, experience, and the tests you specialize in. You can also choose to privately tutor or teach groups. Groups can be a lucrative option as you can charge group rates for single classes.

Teaching English Proficiency Test Prep With Companies

English proficiency exams are sometimes a part of corporate English language training programs. You can work with companies providing tutoring to prepare employees for testing and with private language companies that partner with businesses to provide English language training. These jobs may be onsite or online.



Teaching English Proficiency Test Prep Independently

Whether you want to work from home or travel the world as a digital nomad, the demand for English proficiency test prep tutors is high, so there are plenty of ways to create a private portfolio of adult test prep students. Many independent teachers market through social media, creating YouTube videos and tutorials, podcasts, and more to highlight their test prep specialization and experience. Test prep may be the only courses you teach, or you may combine test prep with other lucrative niches to create a stable source of income.

Bridge alum Belinda, from Malaysia, is an independent online English teacher who specializes in Business English and English proficiency test preparation, preparing adults for the IELTS exam and the TOEIC.

"To prepare, I did the exams myself and found the best methods to get good results. I believe teachers should be able to do the same work we give our students."



High-Stakes Testing

Why do adults take these tests? There are many reasons adults may need to take an English proficiency test, including to attend a college or university, for employment opportunities, to meet visa and immigration requirements, and for personal development. These reasons are typically high stakes, so students seek out tutoring to prepare as much as possible. Teachers who are very familiar with the test, understand question types and scoring criteria, and can assess student abilities and develop a custom study plan will be able to help students master the skills they need to be successful.

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Chapter 4

HOW TO GET A JOB TEACHING ADULTS



Whether you're new to TEFL or an experienced teacher, there **are a variety of ways you can teach English to adults**. You can teach in person or online, close to home or abroad. There are some basic requirements for most situations and additional requirements for some niches. Let's dive into the steps to find a job or launch an independent teaching career.

Step 01

Make sure you're qualified.

The first thing you should do once you decide to pursue a job teaching English is to get **TEFL certified**. Making sure you have the right training and certifications is essential if you want to get a job with an ESL company or if you want to find more online students as an independent teacher. Below are your qualification options.

- TEFL certification of at least 120 hours, like the Bridge Master TEFL Certificate. Your TEFL/TESOL course should cover the basics of teaching English, such as TEFL/TESOL theory, methodology, and lesson planning.

- If you want to teach adults in some of the highest-paying locations abroad like Saudi Arabia or the UAE, it's a good idea to consider a more advanced course, like the university-affiliated IDELT*Online*™, which allows you to pursue a Master's in TESOL later on.

- Finally, if you're not sure whether you want to teach English online or abroad (or both!), an option like the 240-hour Comprehensive Certification Bundle qualifies you to teach both online and worldwide.

Specialized Certifications. If you plan to teach in a specialized niche like Business English or test prep, taking courses like Teaching Business English or Teaching IELTS Exam Prep will qualify you with employers and help you stand out if you offer private tutoring.

Step 02

Get the right equipment if you're teaching online.

If you're teaching online, there are certain tools you'll need. The basic equipment includes:

» A desktop or laptop computer
» A high-speed internet connection (often wired, rather than wireless)
» A headset with a mic
» A webcam

You'll need to be comfortable using a computer and various software such as video conferencing tools like Skype or Zoom. The Bridge Practicum in Teaching English Online (included with the full, 180-hour Teaching English Online Course suite) will familiarize you with a typical online teaching platform and the software and tools you'll use in the virtual classroom. You can learn more about some of the most popular digital tools for remote instruction in the article, The Best Digital Tools for Teaching English Online.

Step 03

Prepare to apply for jobs.

When preparing to apply for jobs, there are a few steps to take.

First, **identify your TEFL niche**. Finding a TEFL niche popular with adult students is a great way to make yourself more marketable. Teachers who target specific fields within the English language teaching industry have a better chance of getting hired by high-paying companies or attracting students who are willing to pay more for classes. Apart from Business English and English proficiency test prep, which are among the more popular niches for teaching adults, you can also teach English for specific purposes or professions (ESP), such as technical English, medical English, or English for the hospitality industry.

Second, **prepare or refine your TEFL/TESOL resume**. Your resume should include your basic information, such as your name, address, phone number, email, and citizenship. Include a short professional summary of your teaching background, outstanding traits, career objectives, and relevant degrees or certification. If you've completed any Bridge TEFL courses, you can showcase your digital badges. Next, list your degrees, certifications, and other formal training with completion dates. Finally, include your teaching experience and any other relevant experience.

General tips for a TEFL/TESOL resume include:

» Make the highlights of your profile easily scannable.
» Avoid abbreviations.
» Avoid jargon and flowery language.
» Make good use of bullet points for breaking down job responsibilities, achievements, and skills.
» After you proofread your resume, ask a friend to look it over and/or use an online proofreading app like Grammarly.

If you plan to apply for a job teaching

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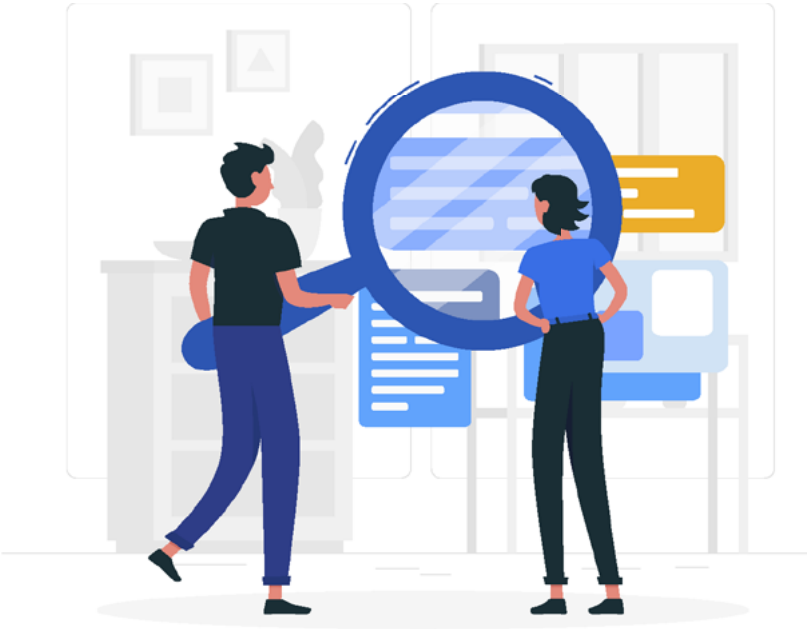
Business English or ESP, be sure to update your resume to highlight your skills and qualifications for teaching adults. Include all of your qualifications, recent TEFL/TESOL professional development, and any specializations you've completed.

Third, **prepare for your interview** by reflecting on how you'll answer interview questions, researching the ESL/EFL school or company, and thinking of questions you want to ask about the job. Also be sure to research what to expect in a video-based job interview, as many schools and companies (both online and abroad) conduct interviews virtually. If you're applying for a position teaching online, make sure that you have all of the requirements (a clean teaching background, a fast and stable internet connection, a headset, etc.) ready beforehand, as recruiters will be looking for these during the interview.

Step 04

Search and apply for jobs.

You can use popular sites like LinkedIn to find and apply for jobs, and you can search for opportunities on TEFL job boards. Bridge also has Preferred Employment Partners like Bridge Corporate Language Training. Bridge provides teachers with competitive hourly rates, training, support, and a multicultural ELT community.



Getting Started Teaching Adults Online Independently

If you plan to start your own teaching business, you'll still begin by earning TEFL certification, gaining additional training like a Specialized Certificate in Teaching English Online, identifying your niche, and training in your specialized area. Next, you'll need to:

» Define who your target students or clients will be.
» Develop your business plan.
» Make sure you have all the equipment and software you'll need.
» Identify the marketing strategies you'll implement to attract students.
» Put your plan into action.

You can find support and training to launch an independent online teaching career with Teacherpreneur Academy. The Academy is designed to empower educators as they launch independent teaching careers. Through expert-led workshops, monthly networking and instructor Q&A sessions, resources, and the tutor-led Specialized Certification course Succeeding as an Online Teacherpreneur, the Academy provides a blueprint for ESL teachers to launch their own private teaching businesses.

Tips For Making the Most Money as an Independent Teacher

- Teach groups instead of individual students. You can charge a group per person or offer a special package price.
- Create strong cancellation policies. Determine protocols for cut-off times for no-shows, and for suspending and rescheduling classes so you don't lose money at the last minute.
- Plan your teaching schedule. Organize your class schedule based on the region(s) where your students are located.
- Market your classes where demand for English is high. Target industries or companies where professionals are required or encouraged to learn English, such as in the hospitality industry or at international companies.
- Specialize in high-demand niches. Niches like technical English and exam prep will allow you to charge higher rates as you'll be a specialist in the topic.

In addition to teaching, many independent teachers also make additional money by:

» Creating YouTube videos
» Starting a blog
» Creating and selling lesson plans and materials
» Teaching courses for EFL teachers
» Writing curricula
» Self-publishing books on ESL teaching
» Becoming a paid speaker
» Becoming an ESL test assessor
» Writing articles for ESL websites
» Working as a translator



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Chapter 5

HOW TO TEACH CLASSES WITH MIXED ABILITY



Teaching a class with students of many different skill levels can be challenging. Whatever the reason may be for the mix of levels, it's important to be prepared. Your mindset or perception is one important consideration. In addition to this, there are strategies you can implement to ensure all students in your class are able to succeed. Let's look at some suggested strategies to teach classes with mixed ability.

Start by changing your expectations.

Expect and accept that there will be varied ability in every class of language learners. After all, we work with infinitely variable human beings. It was the well-known teacher trainer, Mario Rinvolucri, who said, *"...we do not teach a group but thirty separate people. Because of this, the problem of mixed abilities in the same room seems absolutely natural, and it is the idea of teaching a unitary lesson that seems odd."*

Once you have embraced the idea of mixed abilities, here are some ideas to consider:

» Plan different activities for different students.
» Design group tasks and assign people with mixed abilities to each group.
» Design open-ended group tasks and assist groups that need more support.

Let's admit that teaching a group of students with mixed abilities can be challenging. But, the good news is, there are tools that can help you hyper-personalize your instruction!

Personalized Learning Paths

Before the advent of AI tools and machine learning, personalizing English classes or developing courses in specific niches like Business English required more time and resources to come up with tailored assessments, curricula, materials, and strategies to make instruction more effective. Now, **using AI-generated and other tools, Business English teachers can customize courses, even for students taking English for specific purposes (ESP), from the moment the student's English level is assessed.** Let's look at some AI tools and features you can use to hyper-personalize your Business English lessons.

- **Adaptive learning systems in student placement.** Adaptive learning platforms can help teachers by identifying a student's strengths, learning gaps, and progress in real-time, then tailoring the content, difficulty, and pace of the instruction according to the student's skills and needs. One of the ways adaptive learning platforms are used is for carrying out placement tests or student assessment tools. In AI-driven English placement tests like Linguaskill, Cambridge English Placement Tests, and Pearson's Level Test, students are given a question, and then, based on their response, the adaptive program decides on the difficulty level of the next questions.

- **Personalizing competency-based learning using AI.** Bridge Corporate Language Learning teachers use adaptive learning systems to identify students' English levels, and then further personalize course objectives and course materials using Pearson's Global Scale of English (GSE) Teacher Toolkit, which allows a teacher to identify the learner's profile by selecting the English level and the age group or learner type. The GSE is mapped to CEFR levels, allowing teachers to interpret test results to provide targeted learning goals. For Business English learners, selecting their job role and the usual tasks they carry out at work provides hyper-personalized learning objectives specific to their job duties.

- **Customizing class content and assessments using AI tools.** AI-powered assessment and content creation tools are not only beneficial for creating personalized class content but also for making learning experiences more interactive. To start, teachers can take advantage of AI-powered image generators on graphic design apps like Canva or Visme to customize presentations, handouts, and videos. Meanwhile, sites like Quizizz or ClassPoint.ai offer more AI-run teaching assistant tools that can:

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» Generate personalized assessments from a text prompt, document, or webpage
» Gamify quizzes and add virtual rewards
» Enhance presentation slides or documents with graphics and interactive elements like live polls

Creating personalized AI-generated lesson plans. Business English teachers can also turn to AI assistants to develop or enhance lesson plans to address students' specific needs or make lessons more engaging. Some of the AI tools you can make use of are AI assistants like ChatGPT and Google Gemini, and lesson development platforms, such as Eduaide.Ai and Education CoPilot, that offer more advanced features like templates for gamified lessons and group projects.

Bridge Corporate Language Learning uses templated prompts to access creative activities to use in class. *"It's like having a magic tool that understands exactly what we want, and it helps us bring exciting and customized lessons into our classrooms."* **Karina Zew, Bridge Academic Director.**

Extending Learning with language apps. Language learning apps powered by AI are excellent digital tools for complementing Business English classes and fostering students' independent practice. Many apps feature virtual chatbots or tutors that run with natural language processing (NLP) technology, speech recognition, and text generation to engage users in simulated conversations. These applications can generate human-like conversations in specific contexts, provide real-time feedback, and even track learners' progress. You can find various language learning apps on the market, but here are some examples:

- FLOW
- Duolingo
- Memrise
- TalkPal

Resources and Special Offers from FLOW Speak for the Bridge Community

Try FLOW **for free**	Sign up
Schedule a demo to set up your class	Book a demo
Learn about building **English-speaking confidence**	Learn

You can provide information to your students about these apps, which students can download onto their mobile phones or computers. Students can use them as extended learning tools to increase their business vocabulary, improve their pronunciation, and practice conversations.

Chapter 6

TEACHING IN A MULTILINGUAL VS. MONOLINGUAL CLASSROOM



While many teachers consider the language level and age group they would prefer to work with when teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL), another sometimes overlooked consideration is whether they will be teaching in a monolingual or a multilingual classroom setting.

THE MONOLINGUAL CLASSROOM

A monolingual classroom means the students all share the same mother tongue. For example, imagine you are teaching English at a language school in Mexico. Your students are locals from the community, and the majority of them are from Mexico. Even if you have some students from neighboring countries, these students will also speak Spanish, so this class is monolingual. Similarly, if you're teaching an online Business English class for a company based in Saudi Arabia, all your students will likely speak Arabic, making it a monolingual class.

THE MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOM

A multilingual class, on the other hand, is one with students from various countries who may all speak different languages. For example, if you teach English at a language school in the U.S., you might teach local residents as well as students who have come from abroad to study English in an immersive setting. Your multilingual class, therefore, could have students from the Middle East, Europe, Asia, or any region. Or, if you teach a conversational English group class online, you may have students from different countries who speak multiple languages, making it a multilingual classroom.

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WHAT ISSUES WILL I HAVE TO CONSIDER IN A MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOM?

Let's take a look at some of the challenges you might face in a multilingual setting, and how each can be turned into an advantage.

There is no common first language among students in a multilingual classroom.

Students in a multilingual classroom can't chat in their first language or turn to their classmate to clarify a grammar point or define a vocab word in their mother tongue. All communication has to be in the common language - English. While more challenging, this is great practice for students!

Cultural experiences of students differ.

The fact that students come from vastly different countries and cultures makes for great conversation starters in class. As the teacher, you can use culture as a springboard to introduce class topics like worldwide holidays or food vocabulary, or otherwise stimulate the class with new perspectives.

Students in a multilingual class are making different mistakes in structure and pronunciation.

Students in a monolingual classroom often understand each other not because they speak correctly, but because they make the same mistakes. If students have different first languages, they might make different mistakes in English and will, therefore, have to strive to become better speakers and listeners in order to understand one another.

Students have different learning styles.

Learning styles differ between students and between cultures. In a multilingual classroom, you'll have students from cultures where the teacher's role is to lecture and give tests, mixed with learners from cultures where students are encouraged to actively participate in class. Pair work and small groups made up of students from different cultures can be the perfect opportunity for students to get out of their comfort zone and try a new approach to learning English.

As a TEFL-certified English teacher, your career can lead you in many directions, including monolingual or multilingual classrooms online or in person, at home or abroad. Making the most of the unique circumstances you and your students will face in a multilingual classroom will help to make you an engaging and effective teacher.

Chapter 7

DEALING WITH CHALLENGING STUDENTS

Even if your TEFL career involves teaching classrooms of corporate executives instead of kindergartners, you will still have classroom management issues to tackle, such as dealing with challenging students. Here are five common student types you'll run across and strategies for recognizing, understanding, and dealing with them to keep your classroom running smoothly.



1. The Dominator

This student is eager, enthusiastic, and anxious to demonstrate what they know (this student type can also be the familiar teacher's pet). It's great they are an involved and motivated student, but unfortunately, they articulate this eagerness by being the first to call out the answer every time you ask the class a question. This student's outbursts rob other students (who may be more introverted or just need a moment to formulate the answer) of the chance to participate because they can't compete with the Dominator.

How to manage:

As the teacher, your students look to you to facilitate a fair classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Therefore, even though your students are adults, it's okay to make class rules. Putting a rule in place that requires students to raise their hands when they know an answer, rather than blurting it out, gives you the opportunity to call on less vocal students. Also keep in mind that many Dominators don't mean to disrupt; they just want to do their best in class or they simply value the opportunity to practice talking in English. Therefore, another solution to dealing with this enthusiastic student type is to pair up two Dominators for partner work, giving both the outlet they are seeking.

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2. The Class Clown

You remember this student from when you were in high school or college (or maybe you were this student). This student always has a witty retort to the teacher's question and loves making the class laugh. Sure, the comments can be funny, but if this student's antics keep the class from learning English, it's a problem.

How to manage:

With adult students, it might seem like ignoring this student would be the solution, but the Class Clown is attention-seeking, so that will likely just make them joke around more. Instead, try physically moving toward the student while you're teaching. Walk over and stand by them while you're teaching, or give them a task like keeping score of a game or moderating a class debate. Even though this student is an adult, don't forget to praise them for good work so that they get the attention they need in other, less distracting ways.



3. The Silent Student

Adult students might be silent for many reasons: fear of making a mistake, general shyness, or just a preference for listening and observing over speaking up. Whatever the reason, silence can be a hinderance in the EFL classroom, where communicating in English is the goal.

How to manage:

Try talking privately to the student after class to find out why they are quiet in class. They may not even be aware they're not participating! Keep in mind, too, that some students need more time to think about their answer before responding to the teacher's question. Therefore, after you ask a question, try giving the class a couple of minutes to write down their answers individually before you call on anyone. Another good technique for taking the pressure off quiet students is utilizing partner or small group work. It's much easier for shy students to speak to one or two people than it is to a whole class!



4. The Translator

Imagine that you've painstakingly created vocabulary flashcards for your class of Saudi Arabian students so that they can associate the new vocabulary you are teaching with an image, rather than with an Arabic word. Yet there's one student who insists on calling out the Arabic translation right after each English word is presented - just what you're trying to avoid!

How to manage:

While translation is usually discouraged in the EFL classroom, the truth is, some students do learn this way and maybe this student is one of them. Have a private conversation with this student and instead of chastising them with "no translating in class," validate the fact that this learning method works for some students. Then ask the student, for the courtesy of others in the class who learn visually, to please write down, rather than say, the translation, if they feel this method benefits them.

5. The Arguer

The Arguer has a gift for analyzing concepts and pays great attention to detail, but as a result, they seem to challenge every grammar or speaking point you present. For example, you're teaching students how they might hear native speakers pronounce the phrase, "Don't you?" as "dōnchū?" The Arguer will tell you you're wrong because it's nowhere in the book!



How to manage:

First, always stay cool, calm, and patient, and avoid arguing with the Arguer. Instead, present evidence of your point rather than simply relying on your expertise as "the teacher." For example, make an activity out of bringing in a short song or clip from a TV show, in which students can hear this pronunciation for themselves. Or, ask the Arguer to bring in similar examples to demonstrate their own point.

Challenging students often represent different learning styles, so bear that in mind when faced with The Dominator, The Arguer, or other student personalities. Knowing what challenges you and your adult TEFL students can expect and having a plan for dealing with them can make your classroom much easier to manage.

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Chapter 8

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHING ADULTS



Just because you're teaching adults doesn't mean you can't integrate fun and engaging games and activities. Using in-person or online games is a great way to break the ice, engage your shy learners, and informally assess learning. Games can show your students that language learning can be fun and more than just memorizing vocab or cramming grammar points, and it can be a way for students to apply what they've already learned.

What are the benefits of games and activities for adult learners?

» They make language learning interesting.
» They provide a low-stakes way to assess student understanding.
» They build trust and rapport with students.
» They help students apply their learning.

How can you maximize the benefits of games and activities?

» Tailor game or activity materials to your students' interests and professional, personal, or academic goals.
» Be aware of the cultural norms of your students.
» Keep it low-stakes and enjoyable.
» Look for ways to reduce teacher talk time.
» Connect activities to real-life contexts that are relevant to your learners.
» Start with a practice round to give students an example to follow.
» Manage your time well by using a timer.
» Have a "plan B" in case you are over or under time.
» Assess your activity afterward to see what can be improved for next time.



PRACTICAL GAMES FOR ADULTS

Let's look at some games and activities! These games can be used in a classroom or online.

Crosswords/Virtual Crosswords

Crosswords are excellent for when you're teaching vocabulary around a certain topic, profession, or business situation. You can also use them when you're pre-teaching vocabulary for a later task or assignment.

You can design your own crossword puzzles using definitions from the dictionary, or you can use software that helps you create them. If you're teaching a group of high-level students, you can also let them design crossword puzzles for each other.

> **TEACHING TIP:** Creating crosswords for their peers would make an excellent asynchronous task when you're teaching online. During the synchronous lesson time, your students can then solve the crosswords. You can also set time limits or let your students compete against each other if you feel they're up for it.

The Right Word

In this challenging game, your students have to find which words correspond to the given definitions. This isn't as simple as it sounds because even if the definition reminds them of a familiar word, they may not know the word on your game sheet. This is excellent practice for extending your students' range of vocabulary and their fluency. You can also give your students clues, depending on their level.

For business professionals, expressing themselves fluently and accurately is an important ability they'll have to use every day, and this game helps them do just that.

Seize the Keywords

In this exercise, you'll create and give your students a 10-line story, and they have to memorize the order in which all of the verbs appear. Then, you collect the stories and give them a worksheet where all of the verbs are listed at random. Your students then have to place them in the correct order, as they found them in the text. If your students are attentive enough and understand the story, it's easy for them to remember the logical order of the verbs (as verbs imply action).

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This is an excellent game to use to teach verbs, verb groups, and tenses since you, as the author of the story, can use all of the words and tenses you wish to teach during that lesson. If you ask your students to retell the story at the end of the lesson, they can also gain valuable public speaking and memorization skills for presentations and speeches.

Roleplaying

When it comes to ESL speaking activities for adults, roleplaying games are very important to practice fluency, correct use of vocabulary and grammar, and listening skills all at the same time. Roleplaying is also a great opportunity to teach English for specific purposes since you and your students can create a situation that resembles their professional lives.

Roleplaying can also prepare students for upcoming job interviews. It allows your students ample speaking time, while you observe, take notes, and pay attention to important errors that need reviewing and correcting at the end of the activity.

> **TEACHING TIP:** If you're teaching online, you can simulate an online business conference with video conference software like Zoom, or you can even ask all of your students to turn off their cameras and only focus on what they hear to practice making phone calls. If you're teaching asynchronous lessons, you can exchange pretend work emails with your students or practice follow-up emails after a fictitious job interview.

Charades

If you're teaching adults who are learning English to apply for job promotions or to prepare for job transfers overseas, you'll likely spend a lot of time together, as these types of preparatory courses are often very comprehensive. In these situations, students will often open up to and trust you in a way that's not always possible during other ESL classes, where your students are often changing.

In group classes, a game of charades can be very relaxing and freeing for your students; they can let go of the pressure and have some fun together while still progressing in their English abilities. However, since charades can get quite silly and require a certain confidence in front of a group, this game is not very suitable for a small group of, let's say, CEOs and managers who need to show authority towards others.

> **TEACHING TIP:** Charades can be played in the online classroom if you and your students are equipped with enough space and a good place to set up webcams.

Twenty Questions

Playing 20 Questions with business-related topics can be a great way to practice speaking skills, especially when teaching interrogative forms. One student draws a card with a word on it. This can be a person, a thing, an event, or a situation. You can choose the rules with your students ahead of the lesson, and you can prepare accordingly. Then, the other students have 20 chances to ask questions and find out what word is written on the card. The first student can only answer "yes" or "no."

For example, the rule is that it can be a thing or a person related to professions. The student chooses the word "lawyer." The flow of questions could be:

> "Is it a person?" "Yes."
> "Does that person work outside?" "No."
> "Does that person work inside a special building?" "Yes."
> And so on.

You can prepare cards with words ahead of class or let students choose their own words, and if you're teaching online, you can send the students words via texting or online messaging.

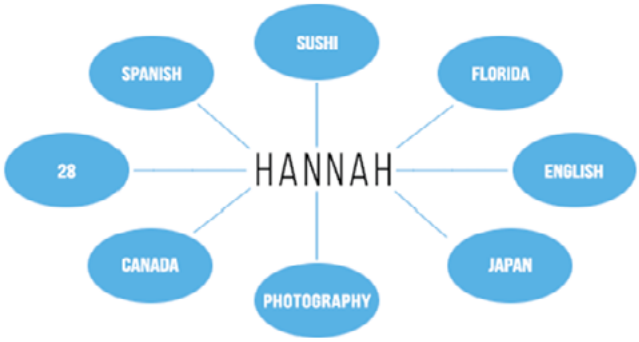
> **TEACHING TIP:** You can easily do this online by using a sight like Kahoot! by preparing the slides ahead of time just like you would do with physical cards.

ICEBREAKERS FOR ADULTS

Adults can be more reserved than children, so icebreakers can be a great way to get your students relaxed and engaged right from the start of class. You'll likely use an icebreaker on the first day of class, but they can be used anytime to get your class warmed up. Here are some icebreaker activities you can use to get your students loose and ready to learn!

What´s the Question?

This is a fun icebreaker to introduce yourself to your students, and then have them get to know each other. It can also be adapted for general practice in asking wh- questions (who, what, when, where, and why).



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Put your name in the center of the whiteboard, with a circle around it. Draw smaller circles around your name and in each one, write a word that describes you in some way. It could be where you are from, your favorite food, where you grew up, etc. Make some of them easy and others more challenging.

> **TEACHING TIP:** In an online class, you can use a virtual whiteboard to complete this activity.

Introduce yourself and tell students that the words on the board describe you. Give them a few minutes to think about what the questions might be for each of the words that surrounds your name. Students then have to ask questions to get to know you.

Some example questions they could ask are:

- Were you born in Canada?
- Did you grow up in Florida?
- Did you study English in college?
- Where does your family live?
- What language are you studying?
- Is your hobby photography?
- Where did you teach English before here?
- How old are you?
- What is your favorite food?

When they've guessed all the questions, it's now your students' turn. Give them a few minutes to draw similar word maps about themselves. Then, they can work in pairs asking and answering questions about each other. When the activity is over, call on students to introduce their partner and tell the class something interesting they learned about them.

Two Truths and a Lie

This game always seems to get adult classes going, especially when the teacher participates (since students are always curious to learn juicy facts about you)! The way this game works is students think of three unusual statements about themselves: Two must be true and one must be false. **As the teacher, you can start with an example, such as:**

» One of my hobbies is surfing.
» I speak Arabic.
» I once dyed my hair pink.

The goal for the rest of the students is to ask questions to determine which statement is false. **They might ask questions such as:**

» Where did you learn Arabic?
» Why did you dye your hair pink?
» Where is the last place you surfed?
» How do you say, "How are you?" in Arabic?

This fun, whole-class activity can be a great icebreaker or even a time-filler when your lesson goes shorter than expected.

Finish the Sentence

This is a simple activity that is surprisingly fun (and often funny)! Write several creative half-sentences on slips of paper that you think will engage the students or grab their interest. Some examples could be, "He never thought it would happen, but one day…" or, "Maria woke up in the morning, and suddenly realized…" Students, in pairs, select a half-sentence and work together to come up with three possible endings to create sentences. Encourage them to be funny and creative. Then, pairs read the finished sentences out loud.

For an added challenge that's sure to wake the class up, time them for 30 seconds and have them talk the whole time, expanding the story spontaneously. Another variation is to have one student start by finishing a half-sentence, then have a contest to see who can provide the next line the fastest.

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LAST MINUTE, NO-PREP TEFL ACTIVITIES FOR ADULTS

Imagine you finish a carefully planned lesson and see 20 minutes of class time left. Yikes! Or what if you're asked to substitute teach a class at the last minute without a plan? What will you do with your students? Don't worry! There are plenty of activities perfect for these situations. And they're more than time-fillers; these activities can target specific grammar points and vocabulary, provide pronunciation practice, and encourage speaking.

Pronunciation Practice – Minimal Pairs

Don't worry if you can't quite remember what minimal pairs are; this pronunciation game is easy for the teacher and fun for students. Best of all, it requires no real preparation and just a whiteboard and marker (physical or digital).

GOAL OF THE ACTIVITY: STUDENTS IDENTIFY CORRECTLY PRONOUNCED WORDS

How to play:

1. Make two columns on the whiteboard, and label them "right" and "left."

2. Think of pairs of short words your students already know that are exactly the same in pronunciation except for one different sound (these are called "minimal pairs"). Examples of minimal pairs are: she's/cheese, this/these, very/ berry, bad/bed, fan/van, etc. Choose five pairs and for each, write one word on the right and one word on the left side of the column.

3. Practice saying all the words with the class first, then tell students you will now call out a word from the board, and they should raise their left or right hand, depending on which column they see the word in. Reveal the right answer after each example.

4. After the warm-up, you're ready to play. Each student will number a piece of paper 1-5. Now, you call out one word from each pair on the board. As you do, students write an R or L, depending on which word they hear. Review answers with students.

5. Change the words and play again.

> **TEACHING TIP:** Change it up by having a student call out words.

Last Man Standing

GOAL OF THE ACTIVITY: VOCABULARY REVIEW

How to play: You'll need a ball or something soft to throw from student to student. In a pinch, you can use a balled-up piece of paper.

1. Think of a vocab theme, with the students' level in mind. Examples for lower-level students include jobs, family, or foods. For higher levels, you could use verbs, adjectives, or nouns under a certain theme, such as words related to a party or a business meeting. You can brainstorm words on the board first, then erase them all.

2. All students stand. Start the game by naming your category ("fruits," for example), then throwing the ball to a student. He or she catches it, names another fruit, and then throws the ball to another student, who names another one, then throws the ball again. If a student cannot think of a word, they have to sit.

3. The "last man standing" wins!

How to change it up:

» You can call on a student to choose the category.
» You can shout out a new category mid-way through the game.
» You can also play this game using word association, instead of categories, so there is no wrong answer.

TEFL Taboo

GOAL OF THE ACTIVITY: SPEAKING AND DESCRIBING

How to play:

1. Ask students to brainstorm some new vocab words they have learned so far in class. Have a student write them on the board as you choose about 10-15 good ones and write 5 each on separate pieces of paper for each group. Erase the board.

2. Depending on the size of the class, divide students into small groups of about 4 and give one student in each group a paper with the words.

- One will be the "reader," describing the word (or, if you have groups of more than four, then other students can help describe the word)
- One watches the time (two minutes)

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- One has a "buzzer" (they can just hit the table or say "out!") in case one of the words is said by mistake
- One sits in the "hot seat" and tries to figure out the target word

4. When the teacher says go, the 2-minute "timer" starts and the student in the hot seat tries to guess as many words as possible, as described by the reader. The reader cannot say the word or any form of it. If he or she does, then the buzzer is hit and the reader moves on to the next word.

5. For the next round, rotate the list of words from one group to another and have students switch roles.

> **TEACHING TIP:** Change it up by having students come up with the words in groups at the start of the game. For example, have them think of as many verbs as they can, or as many nouns related to a certain topic. Then, pass each group's list to another group and play.

Ready to learn more about games and activities for adult learners? Take the 10-hour Micro-credential course Games and Activities for the Online Classroom to:

» Learn theory behind using games with adults.
» Find activities and games for communication, vocabulary, and music.
» Learn about using task-based learning in online classes.
» Gain strategies to teach reading and writing online to adults.
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Conclusion

Teaching English to adult students can be personally fulfilling and a stable, lucrative TEFL career path. In addition to earning TEFL certification, it's important to engage in regular professional development to continue growing your teaching skills, stay relevant in the industry, and open doors to new opportunities. Your adult students will often be working professionals, sometimes with advanced degrees of their own and oftentimes taking English courses for high-stakes reasons like career advancement or immigration. They will expect high-quality instruction that will help them achieve their goals.

Teaching adults also provides vast opportunities to enjoy relationships with your students and broaden your cultural knowledge and competence. Engaging in lively class discussions and other activities that celebrate unique cultural traditions and explore student interests can not only broaden your horizons but spark interest in travel and new experiences.

As you embark on or continue a career teaching English to adult students, we hope the information, tips, techniques, and activities in this eBook inspire you. Explore more articles and resources about teaching English on the BridgeUniverse blog, or browse our Professional TEFL Certifications, Specialized Certifications, and Micro-credentials to start building the skills you need to successfully teach adult learners.

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