

Focus on Italy

In our Q and A about teaching in different contexts we had a lot of questions about what you need to teach in different countries. Each week we'll release an information sheet about teaching in a different country, written by teachers who are currently working there. This one is all about teaching in Italy and is by Chris, a CELTA trainer for Cambridge English in Milan.

What do you like about teaching and living in Italy?

Italy is one of those amazing countries that have something interesting to see or do around every corner. If you love sightseeing, you can quite easily catch a bus or train in any direction to visit something superb. Add to that fantastic regional food and a range of sports, and you instantly have an attractive lifestyle outside of teaching.

As well as the warmth of the Italian people, there is a variety of teaching work almost anywhere. There are conversation or exam preparation lessons in schools, private students, general English lessons with adults and business English lessons in companies. There is also a growing group of subject teachers who need to teach some of their subject in English (CLIL).

These days, we are also seeing a wave of students applying for university places in English-speaking countries instead of staying in Italy, and this illustrates how quickly new challenges for students and teachers can appear every year. 'Change' is the key word!

Do you need to speak the language to teach in Italy?

Unless you are based in one of the larger towns or one where there are more tourists, do learn some survival Italian before you go so that you can get by. It is a good idea to take Italian lessons while in Italy too, so that you are well prepared to deal with Italian bureaucracy.

What qualifications do you need to work in Italy?

Although it is not an official requirement, most private and state schools these days will open their doors to new English teachers much more readily if they have a recognised teaching qualification with teaching practice. And if you already have some relevant experience, that is also welcomed with open arms.

What are the challenges of teaching in Italy?

The general level of English is on the increase but teaching contracts with schools can vary from place to place. Most state schools take on English teachers to help with 'conversation', so you might find yourself in a

class alongside the official English teacher, rather than running the lessons yourself. Also, lessons can get quite lively so you'll need effective classroom management techniques.

There are lots of private language schools but their lessons are often off-site, which means doing quite a bit of travelling to get to companies or schools.

What advice would you give about teaching in Italy?

I recommend finding out about the place where you are going to teach first,

particularly about how well connected it is with nearby towns and cities. Then just have a go!

Students are often a delight to teach and will adore explaining their food, culture and history to you. They might also invite you to join in with social and local events.

Find a CELTA centre in Italy

www.cambridgeenglish.org/find-a-centre/find-a-teaching-centre/