

FULBRIGHT TEACHING ASSISTANTS: PROFILE DESCRIPTIONS FROM ALUMNI

The following comments are representative of feedback from many of the 2017-18 ETAs in Germany. They summarize the personal requirements and duties typically connected with an ETA assignment in Germany.

Personal Profile

Adaptable: Within the school, you will be expected to learn on the job and adapt to a new environment. You will need to consult with your mentor teacher and observe your surroundings in order to learn about how your school organizes itself. You will likely have many different classes and often your schedule will change as a result of meetings or class trips, and it is important to be aware of these changes.

Organized: Related to the above point, you will need to stay on top of your schedule, manage online and paper documents, meet deadlines, and collect information from your school. For example, you should always have the relevant text necessary for any given class, just as the students are expected to come prepared.

Self-starting: The school is a very busy environment and it is important that you take the initiative in order to implement your ideas (e.g., projects), change your schedule, start clubs, or attend events and activities at the school. It is especially important to speak up if you have valuable information about a topic to share with a teacher.

Communicative: It is critical to stay in frequent contact with your mentor teachers and the other teachers you work with. Not only will this allow you to share ideas or troubleshoot potential issues, but also to receive important information about your workday (such as when a teacher knows s/he will be ill or would like you to do something special with his/her class).

Informed: You will quickly realize that the scope of your job extends beyond English instruction. Students and teachers alike will have questions for you about life in the United States, travel, and politics, among other topics. You will quickly develop positive relationships with your colleagues and students if you are willing and able to discuss themes like these in an informed way. It can be especially rewarding, for instance, to bring along materials from English-language items you read on your own.

Expected Duties of an ETA

Responsibilities:

- Enhance English lessons by supporting and supplementing English teachers in the classroom
On a daily basis, you are expected to:
- Participate actively in lessons (can be in front of the class, as a member of a smaller group, or one-on-one)
- Act as a live translator/ dictionary
- Assist with higher-level phrasing and vocabulary
- Get students talking!!

At times, you are expected to:

- Do a warm-up/ introductory exercise or play a game with a class
- Prepare and conduct a lesson on a cultural topic
- Deliver an informative presentation on an academic topic
- Lead and facilitate a class discussion
- Give your opinion/ perspective as an American
- Fill in for a teacher
- Give feedback on written or oral work
- Conduct preparation for oral exams or presentations
- Offer extra help/ discussion time
- Help with or attend school events

You should feel comfortable:

- Using German to assist students with translations/ vocabulary questions and to communicate with school administrators and staff
- Taking initiative to offer supplementary cultural information and materials where appropriate
- Being flexible
- Adjusting to individual teacher's expectations and planning methods

Other responsibilities:

- Inform yourself about the different course offerings at your school, including those outside of the English Department, as well as activities outside of the classroom. Use this information and consult with your mentor teacher in order to create a schedule with a variety of different courses.
- Attend your scheduled courses and actively contribute in accordance with what you and the classroom teacher have agreed upon. This may range from simply going around the classroom and offering help all the way to teaching a double-period on your own. In the latter case, it is essential that you prepare the necessary materials beforehand (the sessions and materials organized by the PAD can be especially helpful here).
- Provide feedback to the faculty about classroom sessions and ideas for improvement.
- Communicate frequently with your mentor teacher and other faculty, as appropriate, in order to receive updates from your school and make plans.
- Organize and carry out a special initiative (or multiple) on your own. Discuss your idea with your mentor teacher, set aside an appropriate amount of time, and determine what resources are needed (your school may be willing to reimburse you for expenses like postage). There are many potential ideas for projects that will connect students to the United States and your fellow ETAs can help you to develop an idea.
- Take on non-classroom obligations (such as one-on-one tutoring within the school) at the request of your colleagues.

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