



YOUR PARTNER IN BLENDED LEARNING - WORLDWIDE



**How To Get
A Job As
A Teaching
Assistant**

"Not to dare is to lose oneself." Soren Kierkegaard

How To Get A Job As A Teaching Assistant



One of the most coveted careers is that of a Teaching Assistant because it involves helping children develop into young adults with skills, confidence and a love of life.

It's a job where you can genuinely “Make a Difference”.

Not only that...

The hours of work and holiday breaks enable parents who are TAs to “be there” for their own children.

The popularity of this job brings challenges

Getting a post as a Teaching Assistant in a local school can be difficult but if you prepare well and present yourself in the proper manner, you too can join that happy band of TAs who “Make a Difference” on a daily basis.

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What does a Teaching Assistant do?

First of all you need to understand what the job involves and what skills you need in order to enjoy the role and become a successful Teaching Assistant (TA).

Primarily the role of a TA is one of **support**, mainly supporting teachers and the pupils in their care. Sometimes this involves working with an individual pupil or a small group, boosting their knowledge, understanding and skills. Often such pupils are below the normal standard for their age and sometimes have special needs.

You will also be asked to prepare the classroom for certain lessons and tidy up afterwards as well as helping display the children's work for general viewing and events like parents evening.

These days many schools are multi-cultural which also presents teaching assistants who have relevant language skills with a great opportunity.

So your work will be varied and at times challenging but there is one thing that is certain, every day will

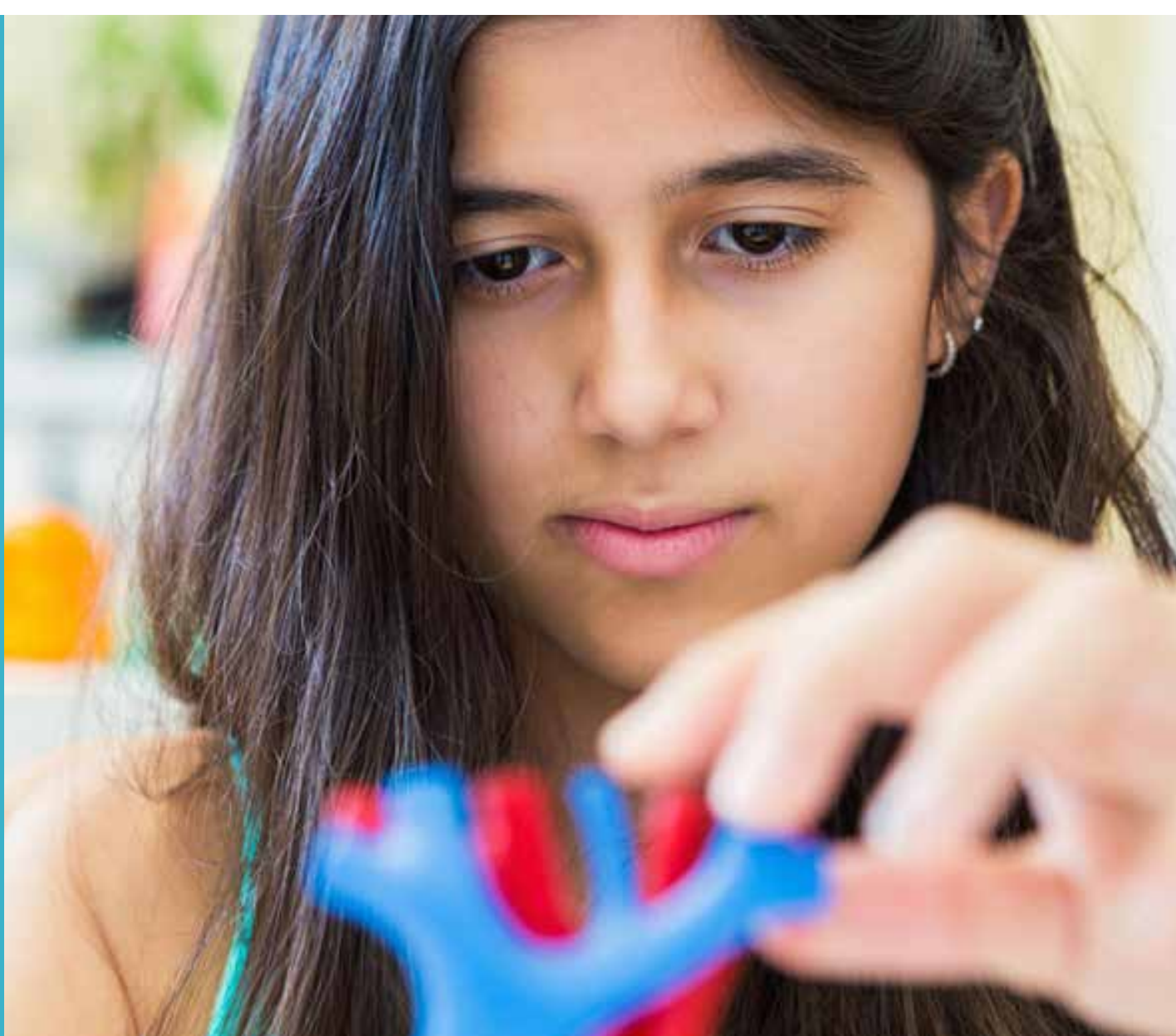
be different and you will have the opportunity to make a positive and lasting impact on the lives of those you support.

Seven skills you need to have

1. A genuine love of working with children
2. Good communication skills are a foundation stone in becoming an effective TA
3. The ability to build good relationships with the pupils, their parents and the teachers
4. Behaviour management will be required
5. Organisation skills, flexibility and creativity will make you a great asset in the classroom
6. A calm approach to any situation that may develop
7. Reading, writing and numeracy skills are often used to provide pupils with specific support



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There are two things you need to do that will definitely help you to get both an interview and the job

1. Getting some training and a recognised qualification

Whilst there is no official qualification for Teaching Assistants there are some very good TA courses that are accredited and listed on the Ofqual site. These offer training to build your knowledge and develop your understanding of the many functions of a Teaching Assistant.

Many of them are offered as online courses that can be studied in the comfort and privacy of your own home, allowing you to fit the course around your other commitments.

Stonebridge College is renowned for its excellent record in training teaching assistants who are either already working as a TA or looking to start a new career as one.

The three most popular courses that we run are:

Teaching Assistant: Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools Certificate (QCF) Level 3

This an NCFE accredited course with wide recognition across most schools. It requires a 50 hour work placement and has 11 modules and is assigned 32 credits.

Teaching Assistant: Specialist Support for Teaching and Learning in Schools (QCF) Level 3

As the course title implies this NCFE accredited course is for TAs who will be directly supporting teaching and learning in an area that requires specialist knowledge and skills. It requires a 50 hour work placement and has 15 modules being assigned 44 credits.

Teaching Assistant: CACHE Level 3 Award in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools (QCF)

This CACHE accredited course has 4 modules and does not require a work placement. 12 credits are assigned upon successful completion. CACHE qualifications are widely recognised across most schools.

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These 3 professional online courses not only cover the theoretical knowledge that underpins the work of a teaching assistant, but the course also requires a practical and competence-based element, giving you the opportunity to conduct some of your learning in the workplace.

24+ Advanced Learning Loans are available if you are 24yrs or over and have lived in England for the past 3 years.

2. Securing a school placement

The two courses listed above require a small work placement of just 50 hours in order to complete the practical aspects of the course. Most schools are more than willing to offer this facility if you are prepared to work on a voluntary basis for just a few hours per week.

Start to look for vacancies

You may already have a vacancy in mind but if not there are many advertisers on Google that offer current listings sorted into geographical locations.

To list just a few...

www.indeed.co.uk

www.totaljobs.com

www.eteach.com

www.reed.co.uk

www.hays.co.uk

jobs.theguardian.com

When you find one of interest, always download the **application form**, the **job description** and any other material being supplied.

Now it's time to do some research

Having the job description will enable you not only to make sure that it's a job you feel happy with but to match your skills and experience with the requirements of the actual job. Make a list of these "matches" noting why you would be an ideal candidate.

Look the school up on Google and read through all the content. Get a "feel for the school" it's history, future aims and past achievements and again, note these down.



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...and then apply

Your application is the key to open the door to the interview. It's vital that you follow the application process exactly as laid out by the school. Most applications require two sections to be completed plus an optional but important third.

A. The Application Form

Print a spare form out and fill that in first so any mistakes can be corrected before the final one is completed.

Answer all the questions accurately and concisely but where appropriate, add specific reasons why your experience and training would make you an ideal applicant.

B. Your CV

This needs to stand out with its brevity and bearing re the post on offer. Make sure that:

- ✓ Your contact details are up to date and accurate.
- ✓ The email address you quote is not an immature one, like dancingdiva@.
- ✓ You list your academic qualifications first, followed by others that are relevant to the job of a Teaching Assistant (such as - Teaching Assistant Qualification, First Aid, Child Minder, etc.).
- ✓ If you are enrolled on a Teaching Assistant course state which one and when you expect to qualify.
- ✓ When giving details of previous employment give pertinent details of the first few (up to five) followed by a just a list of any others making sure there are no unexplained gaps in your dates.
- ✓ Any interests listed demonstrate that they have helped you to develop relevant skills or gain suitable experience.

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C. Your intro letter or that space for more details

This is your chance to use that earlier research and cover off any skills, experience or training that is relevant to the TA job on offer. Where possible match them against points listed in the job description or noted in your research on the school.

Explain in a positive manner why you are interested in the job and that you would welcome the opportunity to expand on these reasons and your suitability by attending an interview.

This section needs to be unique to the specific job you are applying for, showing that you have a genuine feel for the school and the job in question.

Important:- Before you send the application double check everything to make sure that:

- ✓ You have completed and included all the requested information.
- ✓ The grammar and spelling has been carefully checked for errors by someone else who has a keen eye for detail.
- ✓ Your contact details are current and accurate.



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You have been invited to a Teaching Assistant interview?

Congratulations...but stay calm, it's not the job and there's more to do.

1. **Read the invitation letter carefully** to understand exactly how the selection process will be carried out and prepare as thoroughly as you can for each part of the interview (if more than one).
2. To ensure that there is **no discrimination** in the selection process you will be assessed against the same set of criteria as everyone else and it's vital that you score as highly as possible for each one.
3. Clues as to these criteria (if not listed) will be **in the job description** and any other material you have received from the school re your application. This is where the placement and training can play a major part in getting the job.
4. **Rehearse the interview** by asking a family member or friend to ask questions that are in line with the criteria you have drawn up and

answer them out loud as though you were before the selection committee. Do this until you are happy that you know how to express yourself and get your points across.

5. Make sure that you have the **correct address and time** for your appointment and that you arrive well in time to calm yourself before being called.

Once inside the interview room **try to relax and be yourself.**

And remember

- ✓ You have been professionally trained
- ✓ Gained a highly respected qualification
- ✓ Had experience of the job on your course placement
- ✓ Specifically prepared for this particular post at this particular school
- ✓ You really love working with children and want to make a difference in their lives.

If at first you don't succeed...

**...keep on trying and you will become a happy,
satisfied and encouraging Teaching Assistant.**

