

# Frequently Asked Questions for Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in Uruguay

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## TEACHING/ WORK

### 1. Will I be responsible for a final product (regarding schools and individual research)?

You will not be held responsible for a final product in your teaching or individual research. In terms of the schools and CERP, some of us chose to work on a well-developed, long-term project (such as a theatrical production or artistic presentation) while others did not. The schools and CERPs were very pleased that some of us were eager to carry out long-term projects, and the students were eager to participate. But, while such a project would be encouraged, it is by no means the only way to benefit the schools and CERPs and to make effective use of your time. Some of us chose to work on shorter, smaller projects, or to fulfill different roles in different settings. Whether or not you choose to complete a project will depend on the school's needs as well as your own talents and motivation. As for your individual research, you will find the Fulbright Commission extremely beneficial in helping you to find materials and connect with people who can help you with your research.

### 2. What is my role in the classroom? (depends on your personal comfort level, needs of the school, mentor's responsibility; can act as assistant in classroom, co-teacher, have the opportunity to teach isolated classes or seminars, observer, resource)

Your role in the classroom will depend on many factors. One of the first is your own motivation...Your mentors know that you are not necessarily a trained teacher, and they will not expect you to take on more responsibility than you are comfortable with. If you have a specific idea of something that you would like to do, the best idea is to share it with your mentor and see if it fits with the established curriculum or plan. On the other hand, if your mentors know you have a specific talent or skill, they may ask you to lead a certain project. Depending on the institution, you may act as an assistant in the classroom, a co-teacher, an observer, or an English-language resource; you may

also have the opportunity to teach isolated classes or seminars about a topic of interest to you and the students.

### **3. What are some possible activities I can prepare?**

The range of possible activities is practically endless. In the schools, options include (but are not limited to) organizing a long-term project such as a play or visual arts presentation, but also short term lessons such as creative writing activities, presentations on various aspects of US culture (food, geography, myths and legends, holidays, children's games, songs, US and Uruguayan heroes) games like Hangman, Bingo, and Charades, and individual or small-group tutoring. In some classes, teachers may give you lots of freedom to develop your own ideas; in others, they may ask you to help them to teach the set curriculum but with your own activities (e.g., Name That Biome)!

In the CERP, activities can vary depending on the subject matter and teacher with whom you are working. Some teachers will prefer you to organize activities very closely linked to the set curriculum (such as teaching Chaucer and Shakespeare) whereas others will give you freedom to organize seminars on various issues of US culture...Some such seminars included a brief history of the American South, the Civil Rights Movement and other US social movements, gender and language, regional accents in the US, differences between American and British English, Ebonics, and any other topics you can think of.

### **4. Who will I be teaching?**

You will be teaching university-level students who are studying to be English teachers in the public high schools and you will be teaching elementary school children in full-time public schools targeted toward underprivileged communities.

### **5. What if I am sick and can't go to work?**

You will be provided with contact information for your mentor teachers and school administrators. As with any professional work setting, you should notify your mentor/school if you are ill and cannot make it to work. You should have the option to reschedule the day that you missed with your mentor teacher. Contact Fulbright if you need to make a doctor's appointment. Contact the British Hospital if you wish to make a doctor's appointment or contact Fulbright if you need the name of a specialized English speaking doctor.

### **6. What is the difference between the interior and city experiences?**

There are logistical and socio-cultural factors to consider when comparing the interior and city experiences. The interior experience is short term. It is important to establish open lines of communication with mentors and teachers as soon as possible to adjust to schools and institutions. Plan activities or projects according to time. Time flies, so take advantage of the free time and relatively limited cultural activities available in cities. For instance, plan weekend maté time with students in the plaza's and parks, small get together's with teachers or students, and weekend trips to nearby provinces. Plan to spend a day at a rural school, visit farms, and attend rodeos, fairs, markets, and establishing routines with locals. Just like in the states, the pace of life and routines are slower and more tranquil in small towns. Take advantage of the free time to sit and talk with locals. In Montevideo transportation to and from school, CERP, and downtown takes longer but there are plenty of opportunities for cultural enrichment and entertainment. Everything in Montevideo is more expensive, so try to save money

earlier in the interior. Montevideo invites you to sample the rich diversity of music, art, theatre, and cultural events: take advantage of the city life opportunities but small town feel.

## 7. What resources should I bring?

- Storybooks-classic children's picture books, Shell Silverstein's poems, holiday books, books about sports, cowboys,
- Songs-Wee-Sing, Barney, Educational Songs, recited poetry, recordings of famous speeches, recordings that represent different dialects.
- Variety of music- blues, jazz, hip-hop, pop, classic folk tunes, revolution songs, etc...
- Educational posters, favorite American artists, travel brochures, city plans with neighborhood grids, small and large map of United States, pictures of parks, rivers, downtown centers,
- Magazines- Teen, People, New Yorker, Saturday Evening Post, VARIETY
- DVD's of musicals (Mary Poppins, Sound of Music, Disney movies, movies with different accents, dialects, discussions of race, class, gender, family structures, daily routines, etc...
- Madlibs- Where you fill in story with adjectives, nouns, etc...
- Toys for classroom (balls, American flags, candy from the US, peanut butter, brownies, maple syrup, Bisquick, caramel (to compare with dulce de leche), marshmallows and graham crackers for smores, salsa and tortilla chips, pumpkin pie filling, chocolate chips.
- Photos... Four seasons and related sports, extracurricular activities for each season. Pictures of children playing soccer, flag football, cheerleading, swimming, hockey, track and field, volleyball, baseball, etc...High school gym class, Friday night football games, high school/college basketball, etc...Professional sports team games, super bowl parties, state finals, etc...Videotapes of school graduations, plays, concerts, etc..., Irish dancers, band or choir concerts, lunchroom, high school and college cafeteria, private and public school uniforms for school and sports teams. Bus, subway, train stops, neighborhood markets, grocery stores, Costco or Wal-Mart, shopping centers, Radio shack, dry cleaners, butcher, bakery, highways, community soccer fields, slides, monkey bars. Pictures of daily routines: students making their bag lunches, waiting for bus, waiting in the hallway during passing periods, gym class, art, music, pottery, science class, etc.... Holiday pictures of 4th of July barbeques, campfires, s'mores, camping, hanging out at the beach, birthday parties, high school house parties, college Frat parties, dorm rooms and college life. Boarding school pictures, summer camp experiences, vacations, 1st day of school.
- Favorite recipes to share, books, poems, costumes for class plays or theatre productions.
- Possibilities are endless, but basically have as many visual representations of authentic life experiences from home. If you come from a diverse city, take advantage of the menus and signs in foreign languages. Perhaps take pictures of the various ethnic neighborhoods. Try to provide an honest representation of what you think the US looks like taking certain factors into account: race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class. Include pictures of subdivisions, trailer park homes, town-homes, high rises, housing developments, urban sprawl, cottages, beach homes, summer homes, log cabins....

## 8. What things can I plan ahead of time?

- Visit alma mater college, high school, elementary school and take pictures.
- Write out a project proposal for teachers to volunteer either in March or the next fall during Montevideo placement. ETA should state what he or she will be doing, Fulbright objectives, and contact information.

- Volunteer to coordinate a pair and share over internet using digital images and power point.
- Offer to take pictures of students before leaving to share with future Uruguayan students.
- Depending on ETA's computer literacy, perhaps create a web page for class exchanges.
- Invite schools or classrooms to start a pen pal relationship with a Uruguayan school. This will foster authentic cultural exchange between students in Uruguay and the United States and further promote Fulbright's objectives.