

NOTES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS APPOINTED IN FRANCE IN 2014-2015

Disclaimer: Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in these notes. However the British Council cannot accept responsibility



Notes for English Language Assistants appointed to France 2014-2015

Congratulations on your recent allocation to a post as an English Language Assistant in France.

This document contains important information and advice regarding a variety of practical and administrative matters affecting UK assistants in France. They should be read carefully, retained for reference and considered in conjunction with any papers issued by the French authorities. It is important that you take this information with you whilst doing your year abroad in order to be able to consult it at all times when problems/questions arise.

If your permanent (UK) home address, personal e-mail or phone number should change at any time from now on, please inform us immediately by sending an e-mail to assistants.uk@britishcouncil.org. We may need to contact you during the year with updates to these notes, invitations or urgent messages.

We hope that you find the following information useful and that you enjoy the year ahead.

Best wishes

Language Assistants Team, British Council

Table of contents

The basics	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Co-operating partner▪ Role of the language assistant▪ Period of appointment▪ Predecessors▪ Staying on a second year	
Arrival	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Passport and visas▪ Foreign Commonwealth Office Information▪ Induction meeting▪ Travel to France	
Money matters	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Monthly Allowance▪ Erasmus Grants▪ Currency and banks▪ Income tax▪ Insurance	
Administrative matters	16
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Absence from school▪ Solving problems	
Settling in	18
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Accommodation▪ Creating social networks▪ Travelling around France▪ Personal Safety▪ Taking a car abroad▪ Buying a car in France▪ ISIC card▪ Study Abroad Opportunities▪ Phoning home and mobiles▪ Useful websites	

Teaching tips and resources **29**

- Observation Period
- British Council teaching resources
- Language Assistants Manual
- The Guide de l'assistant de langue
- TeachingEnglish webpage
- LearnEnglish Webpage
- Facebook
- Teaching materials
- British Council in France
- Useful teaching websites

Miscellaneous **32**

- Public Holidays

Useful contacts **32**

Book list **35**

The basics

Co-operating partner

The assistantship programme in France is administered by:

CIEP (Centre international d'études pédagogiques),

1 avenue Léon Journault,

92318 Sèvres Cedex.

Tel: 01 45 07 60 98

Fax: 01 45 07 60 76

E-mail: assistant@ciep.fr

Website: <http://www.ciep.fr/en/assistantetr/index.php>

Jennie Burke is specifically in charge of British Council ELAs: burke@ciep.fr

Role of the Language Assistant

The role of a language assistant is a very important one and one that we hope you will enjoy. Please remember that you are a **paid member of staff** with the responsibilities and required professionalism that this entails. Please refer to our website for more information on your role: www.britishcouncil.org/languageassistants-your-role.htm

As a language assistant you are also an **ambassador for the UK and its culture**. The way you behave will influence how those around you view the UK and you should endeavour to be a positive example. If you set a bad example, you could damage the reputation of the programme and adversely affect the experience of future assistants.

Your first-hand experience of life in the UK is an excellent resource and you should draw on this during your lessons. We provide a lot of advice to help you incorporate cultural content into your lessons.

It is important to be resourceful and use your initiative. If you do not think that you are being used sufficiently, make suggestions of topics that you could discuss with the students, activities you could do.

It is also very important to make sure that you are familiar with the education system in France as will help you know what to expect when you start teaching at your school(s). Please see the Eurydice webpage for specific information: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/eurypedia_en.php

Period of appointment

The period of appointment for UK assistants in France is **1 October 2014 – 30 April 2015**.

Assistants are expected to work 12 hours a week. Those who have been appointed to more than one school will be asked to divide their time between the schools concerned. You can request information regarding how your timetable will be arranged from the head of the host school, however this information will most likely not be available until you arrive.

The maximum number of schools to which you can be appointed is three. Please contact us if you have been appointed to more than three schools. If the different schools are several miles apart and you have to travel between two on the same day, you are entitled to ask for help towards travel expenses. Under no circumstances should an assistant be required to buy a car just to get to their schools. If no regular public transport serves your school(s) and there are no lifts available to your school(s) please inform us of the situation.

Assistants are entitled to the usual school holidays, details of which can be found here www.education.gouv.fr/pid184/le-calendrier-scolaire.html or you should be able to obtain the dates from the school secretary. You should not be absent on other occasions without prior permission. Attending the induction course does not give assistants the right to take leave at a later date.

If you have not already done so please fill in the online [Acceptance of Assistantship survey](#) providing the full name/s and address/es of the school/s you have been allocated to once you have received the details.

Each *académie* differs as to when they organise appointments and send out information. The British Council is involved in allocating assistants to an *académie* and sometimes age group but has no control over choice of town, size of town, school environment or when information is sent out. We encourage *académies* to send information out as early as possible. If you do not receive a reply from your school or local authority by mid-September it is a good idea to ring the school(s) to ask about accommodation and give them an idea of your anticipated arrival date.

You should also ask them for some information about the school(s) that you will be working in. For example, it may be useful to know the age range of pupils, the average class size, the general level of ability, the social background of pupils, the facilities availability and if you should bring any specific materials from home. It is also important to enquire about the dress code for teachers and any other general school information.

Predecessors

Contact details of assistants appointed to your area in 2013-2014 were included in a separate email. It should be noted that schools do not necessarily receive assistants from the same Anglophone country each year, and the British Council holds records of assistants from the UK only. Past assistants have emphasised how useful it is to contact former assistants in their area and have described their advice as invaluable.

Staying on a second year

Under guidelines set out by our partners at CIEP, it is not possible for English Language Assistants to remain for a second year.

Arrival

Passports and visas

Assistants must be in possession of a standard 10-year passport before leaving the UK and are advised to ensure that it will not need to be renewed before October 2015. Those who are not in possession of a passport, or need a new one, should complete the application procedure as soon as possible either through a regional Passport Office or online at: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/abroad/passports>

Holders of a UK passport and nationals of other EU countries do not require a visa to enter France. Assistants from the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man were advised to check their passports to ensure that the following statement does **not** appear: 'the holder is not entitled to benefit from EU provisions relating to employment or establishment' as this means you will require a visa in order to work in France.

If you have dual nationality (UK/Irish/other) you should ensure that your UK/Irish passport is valid and you should use this one to travel while in France. This will save you considerable complications with the local authorities (Social Security etc.). This does not apply if one of your passports is French.

Foreign Commonwealth Office Information

Before travelling to France you should ensure that you check the [FCO's travel advice pages](#) and ensure that you have subscribed to updates so that you receive any important changes to the FCO's advice. During a crisis, advice for British nationals will be published on the travel advice website and updated regularly, so by subscribing you will ensure that you are aware of any updates. You can register for emails using this link: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKGOVUK/subscriber/new>

We also recommend that assistants read the '[Advice for Travellers](#)' documentation provided by the FCO.

Induction meeting

As mentioned in the 'Notes' sheet we sent via email attachment in July, the French local authorities will organise a 1- or 2-day 'induction course' or information meeting (*un stage*) for all foreign language assistants. **Please note the British Council has no involvement whatsoever in the organisation of these meetings. You will receive details about your stage from your académie (local education authority) so this is just for your information.** The format of the *stage* varies from *académie* to *académie* but it provides you with useful information about your placement directly from the local education authorities and is a great chance for you to meet other assistants in your region. **Attendance is expected.**

The arrangements for the *stage* in each *académie* are made by the local *Inspecteur pédagogique régional d'anglais* (IPR) in conjunction with the *Centre Régional de Documentation Pédagogique* (CRDP). It is paid for by the French government and if the *stage* is more than one day long, accommodation is provided free of charge, usually in a local youth hostel or university hall of residence (*résidence universitaire*).

The dates for all the *stages* will be available on the [CIEP website](#) from early September onwards.

You may already have heard from your *académie* with details about the *stage*. If you have not received any information from the *académie* however, then this may be because your *stage* takes place after the official start date of 1 October. In this case, details of your *stage* will be waiting for you at your host school.

If the course takes place before 1 October:

The French *académie* which appoints you will send you details before you leave the UK. They may well arrive separately from the *arrêté* because they may be sent from a different office. Look out for a sheet marked *Stage d'accueil* (or *Stage de formation*) *des assistants de langue*. It may have a map and perhaps a *stage* programme attached to it. You need to complete the reply slip (*bulletin réponse*) and return it to the address it specifies.

When the *stage* is over you should go straight to your school so that you give yourself time to settle in before taking up duty on the starting date of 1 October. You are advised to arrive during school hours if you are unable to inform the school in advance of an exact arrival time. There is, naturally, nothing to stop you from going to the school before attending the induction course in order to introduce yourself and sort out your accommodation.

If the course takes place on 1 October:

In a few *académies* the *stage* may take place on 1 October itself; if this is your situation, the school will expect you as soon as the *stage* is over.

If the course takes place after 1 October:

You should be ready to start work in your school on 1 October and attend the induction course subsequently as instructed.

Travel:

You are expected to arrange and pay for your own travel. You should not book travel until you have received confirmation from the British Council that your International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) has been received and approved. Neither the British Council nor the French local authorities can be held responsible for any assistant's flight cancellation or re-booking costs.

Accommodation:

Accommodation will only be provided if the *stage* is more than one day long. Unless a specific rendez-vous is given on the French course information sheet, you should "check in" at the reserved accommodation in the afternoon or early evening. Staff at the hostel or *résidence universitaire* may not be available to give you the key to your room if you arrive later. If a late evening arrival is unavoidable you should check in advance with the CRDP or place of accommodation to ensure this will not cause a problem.

Programme:

You will be provided with a copy of the course programme by the French co-ordinators but as a general rule you should expect the course to start at 9am on the morning following your arrival. **However the arrangements vary considerably from one *académie* to another, and you must read your *stage* information sheet (from France and in French) very carefully.** The subjects covered during the *stage* will also vary but will probably include talks on the French education system, administrative formalities when living/working in France, teaching English as a foreign language, the local area, and the do's and don'ts of being an assistant.

Please note:

- It is not possible to attend a course in an *académie* other than the one in which you have been appointed

- Accommodation arrangements permitting, it is sensible to arrive in France a few days before 1 October in order to settle in.

France in general does not cater well for vegetarians, and the CRDP/university restaurants providing meals at the induction courses will be no exception.

Travel to France

You are responsible for the cost of your own travel and any travel to and from your place of appointment during the year. The following websites may help you when booking your travel:

www.raileurope.co.uk	www.ryanair.com
www.eurostar.com	www.jet2.com
www.directferries.co.uk	www.flybe.com
www.eurolines.co.uk	www.thomsonfly.com
www.skyscanner.net	www.opodo.co.uk
www.britishairways.com	www.expedia.co.uk
www.easyjet.co.uk	www.aircaraibes.com (Outre Mer)
http://www.interrailnet.com/	

Booking in advance for all forms of transport is highly recommended. Past assistants have warned to check the baggage allowance for outward and return journeys when travelling by plane as sometimes the cheaper airlines have quite a low baggage allowance.

Working as a language assistant gives you a great opportunity to travel around France and you should make the most of your free time. Try to avoid coming home every holiday and experience as much of the surrounding area as possible.

Money matters

Monthly allowance

The gross allowance payable to UK assistants in France as of September 2013 is €964,88 per month, from which a compulsory deduction will be made to the *Sécurité Sociale* of approx. 17%. Most of this 17% deduction goes towards your health cover under the French state system. The state provides 70% cover – see section 14. The net monthly pay therefore is approx. €800. The money deducted for social security is not reclaimable from the French or UK state. The language assistant allowance is usually updated every year in September so it may be liable to change.

Please note that you will not receive the full payment in October and you must have submitted all of the relevant documentation and have opened a bank account by 10 October in order to receive 70-80% of your payment at the end of the month. The remaining 20-30% of October's payment will be added to your November payment. You should therefore ensure that you take around €1000 - €1500 (though some assistants get by with less) and about £1700-£2200 if appointed to *Outre-mer*, Corsica or the Paris area. You may wish to consider taking a credit card to cover initial costs. This amount may differ depending on your location and how much rent you are required to pay in advance. Be aware that you are often charged for using your British debit card to withdraw money abroad. You may wish to check what your bank will charge you to use this service. Your monthly allowance is adequate to survive on but you will need more if you intend to travel.

Given the higher cost of living and the longer journey involved, assistants appointed to one of the *départements d'outre-mer* are likely to receive a monthly allowance which will be approximately 40% higher than the rate for mainland France. Last year these were €1351 (€1119 net) for Guadeloupe, Martinique and Guyane and €1482 (€1223 net) for La Réunion. Once again this may change when the allowance is reviewed in September. The 40% *remuneration supplémentaire* is often delayed by several months so please do not include this in your budgeting plan and expect only to receive around €800 for the first few months (keeping in mind the reduced October payment mentioned above).

Extra Hours

If you wish to supplement your income by giving private tuition in English, you are strongly advised not to advertise in local papers or public places. (Please read the relevant sections of our Personal Safety leaflet which can be found at the bottom of this page: www.britishcouncil.org/languageassistants-looking-after-yourself.htm). In general pupils are easily found through school or private connections, i.e. by word-of-mouth. However, it is essential to check that the other English teachers in your school(s) do not mind, so that you are not perceived to be 'stealing' their private pupils. The going rate for private one-to-one tuition seems to be €10-25 per hour depending on how much preparation for the lesson you plan to do and how much your pupils can afford.

Should you wish to obtain paid work in any other educational institution e.g. teaching work in the public or private sector, you must clear this with the *académie* to which you are appointed beforehand. Each *académie* has slightly different rules on what type of extra work you are permitted to take on so it is imperative that you check with them before you accept any other work. If they do not allow it, you must abide by this ruling.

Erasmus grants

Language assistants who are currently on their compulsory year abroad **may** be entitled to an Erasmus grant. Please contact the Erasmus coordinator at your university for further information.

Currency and banks

You are advised to wait until you arrive in your town of appointment in France before opening a bank account. This will allow you to research all the local options, seek recommendations and choose what will be most convenient for the rest of the year.

It is essential that you open a bank account soon after arriving in France in order to receive your payments. Assistants are usually entitled to open a normal *compte courant* which provides a cheque book and cash card; some banks also offer a 'student account'. NB Make sure that you do not end up opening a savings account as your school will not be able to pay your allowance into this.

You may find glossary of France banking terms useful: [French banking terminology](#) and the following website gives some advice on opening a bank account in France although it is not specific to language assistants: <http://france.angloinfo.com/money/banking/opening-an-account/>

When opening a bank account you can ask for a cheque book and a *carte bancaire* (otherwise known as a *carte bleue*) but you will be charged a monthly fee for this. It may be worth enquiring about a *Carte Bleue Internationale* which allows you to withdraw cash from any branch of any bank in France (or abroad). However, banks do charge extra for this card.

The number of official documents required in order to open a bank account seems to vary from one bank to another but you are likely to be asked to show one or more of the following:

- i) passport
- ii) certificate of appointment (*arrêté d'affectation* or *arrêté de nomination*)
- iii) *procès-verbal d'installation* – issued upon arrival at the school
- iv) *attestation de logement*, obtainable from school or landlord as appropriate

It is advisable to take with you photocopies of the documents listed above (including the relevant pages of your passport) as these may well be requested.

You are advised to note that in France it is illegal to write a cheque without having sufficient funds in the bank. **You are also advised to keep your account open for a month or so after the contract with your school has ended to ensure that all outstanding payments have been received.** Please do check on the conditions for transactions relating to your account. For example it might be that you can only close your account in the same branch in which you opened it.

Income tax

A Double Taxation Agreement exists between the UK and France. Under this agreement UK assistants are normally exempt from French income tax for a period of up to 2 years. However, it is normally the case that 100% of the remuneration received abroad will be liable for UK tax. It is important to know that the agreement only covers teaching jobs. You might be taxed for any non-teaching jobs and should check how much you are allowed to earn per year without having to pay taxes.

You are reminded that the UK tax year extends from 6 April to 5 April and that income earned in the UK between April and the start of your assistantship may be taken into account when you're own or your parents' tax liability is being assessed.

Enquiries regarding UK income tax should be addressed to a local tax inspector, not to the British Council. We cannot assist you in this area because we are not trained in tax, cannot give advice on how your personal circumstances will affect your tax, and for data protection reasons. Please check <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/> for information about who to contact.

Insurance

You are strongly recommended to take out travel insurance for the period between leaving home and taking up your appointment, and again for the period between ending your appointment and returning to the UK. The British Council is unable to advise on private insurance packages, you are recommended to consult an insurance broker for professional advice and to check whether you are covered by your parents' insurance policy. Undergraduate assistants may find that a "study abroad" policy purchased online may be an option. Please be aware that some insurance policies, usually 'backpackers' insurance, do not allow for trips home during the year and it is important to check the small print of your policy to make sure that you are covered.

For the time before and after your official period of appointment as an assistant, you will need a UK-issued European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). The EHIC card will also be useful for any trips to other EU countries. It covers any medical treatment that becomes necessary during your trip, because of either illness or an accident. The card gives you access to state-provided medical treatment only. It provides no top-up on the cover of the sécurité sociale while you are in France during the period of your contract. To apply for a card please use the following link: www.ehic.org.uk. You can also obtain an application form from the post office.

Residents of the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands are not eligible for the European Health Insurance Card. Residents of the Isle of Man need to take out fully-comprehensive insurance (which should include repatriation by air ambulance) before travelling to another country. Applicants from Guernsey should contact the Health and Social Services

Department on: 01481 725241 for advice. Applicants from Jersey should contact the Employment and Social Security Department on: 01534 445505 for advice.

Please see the FCO website for more information regarding healthcare in France: www.gov.uk/living-in-france#french-health-insurance-and-social-security

If you take regular medication, please ensure that you have a supply before you leave. It is also important to find out where your nearest doctor, dentist and hospital as soon as you arrive. You should ask your school for information about the facilities in your area and always advise staff and your landlord of any medical conditions.

In addition to health insurance, it would be wise to consider insuring your personal possessions. You should also check your parents' household insurance as this sometimes covers possessions away from home. Furthermore, cover for personal liability is often overlooked but it is extremely important. If you were the cause of an accident of any kind – e.g. cycling on the road – the resulting costs, practical and legal, could be prohibitively high.

Securité Sociale

Assistants serving on the official scheme contribute automatically to the *sécurité sociale (la sécu)*. *Sécurité sociale* decrees that on average 70 percent of the cost of medical treatment will be reimbursed as well as 35-65% of the cost of prescriptions (NB some are not reimbursed) and 80% of hospital fees. Please note that this can vary depending on circumstance.

Registration with the *sécurité sociale* should be arranged through the school *Intendant* (bursar) or staff at the *Inspection académique* who will be familiar with the procedure. You will require a certified translation of your full birth certificate. Please refer to the Birth Certificate notes to find out how to do this.

You will subsequently receive an *attestation d'affiliation à la sécurité sociale* and a *numéro d'affiliation* pending issue of your *Carte Vitale* (social security card), which may take several months to come through. It is very important that you keep the *attestation* carefully and note this number as it will have to be quoted on any claim for reimbursement that you make before the card is issued.

If you have already worked in France before your assistantship and were enrolled in the French social security system at that time, you should use this number again and not go through the process of obtaining a new one. Give the *numéro d'immatriculation* to your school *Intendant*.

Contributions paid to the French social security scheme may be taken into account in assessing certain benefits under the UK social security scheme on return to this country. Further information may be obtained from the Inland Revenue, Centre for Non-residents, Room BP1301, Benton Park View, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE98 1ZZ (Tel: 0845 9154811).

Procedure for visiting a doctor and reimbursement of medical costs

Since 1 July 2005 all residents in France have been asked to choose "*un médecin traitant*" as their general practitioner. This doctor must also be consulted for referral for any specialist treatment. For a certain time you can go to a specialist without having seen your *médecin traitant* before but the fee for the specialist will be higher so do enquire about the cost in advance.

Over 95% of all doctors and dentists in France support a trade union agreement that sets their fees; these practitioners are said to be *conventionnés par la sécurité sociale*. There are “médecins conventionnés” (those who adhere to the medical agreement) and “non-conventionnés” (those who do not adhere to the agreement), but within the “médecin conventionné” group there are two sectors, 1 and 2. Both sectors adhere to the medical agreement, but Secteur 1 doctors have their fees set, whereas sector 2 doctors have more freedom about how much to charge. The patient will be reimbursed the same percentage in both cases. The website <http://ameli-direct.ameli.fr/> allows people to check which Sector the doctor is in. As for the “non- conventionné” doctors - the reimbursement rate is lower than for “conventionné” doctors. It is worth knowing that for minor complaints pharmacists provide excellent advice free of charge, and in emergencies they are licensed to prescribe medicine as well.

A few things to consider:

- i) Ensure that the doctor or dentist you choose is *conventionné(e)*.
- ii) A visit (*consultation*) with a médecin traitant for sector 1 costs €20-30 and you must pay this on the spot. The doctor will give you a *feuille de soins* or *feuille de maladie*, a form which states how much you were charged and is to be forwarded to the *sécurité sociale* in order to be reimbursed by bank transfer. You may be given a prescription (*ordonnance*) too.
- iii) When you buy what the doctor has prescribed, the pharmacist will enter the details into the computer. You will normally pay just the sum which is not reimbursed by Social Security (i.e. 35% of the cost of the prescription).
- iv) In order to join some sports clubs it is sometimes necessary to obtain a certificate to prove that you have a good level of health.

Since the *sécurité sociale* generally reimburses no more than approx. 70% of medical expenses incurred (0-65% for prescribed drugs, 80% for hospital costs), assistants are strongly advised to take out additional medical insurance. As employees of the *Ministère de l'Education Nationale* you are entitled to subscribe to the MGEN (*Mutuelle Générale de l'Education Nationale*). This cover will only commence 3 months after you join and start paying your subscription. Every school in France has an MGEN representative, usually a teacher, whom you should contact early in the year if interested in joining the scheme.

Assistants who register as 'regular' students at a French university can obtain additional medical cover at a reasonable price by joining the LMDE (*La Mutuelle Des Etudiants*). Both the premium and the cover with the LMDE are slightly less than with the MGEN.

Please note that if you take sick leave before having completed 4 months' and 4 days' service you will not be entitled to sickness benefit (*indemnité journalière*) which usually amounts to 50% of your gross allowance and is calculated on a daily basis. Since mid 2012, for all French workers, the first day of sick leave is unpaid.

An important point to note is that the official date of the beginning of the working period is the date inscribed on the *procès verbal d'installation* by the Head of the School. If you are an assistant serving in one of the *départements d'outre-mer* you should check the procedure

with the Rectorat as this might be different to that of mainland France. You must obtain a medical certificate with dates if you are off work for illness at any time.

Further information about the *sécurité sociale* and procedure to follow in case of absence is contained in the publication *Le Guide de l'assistant de langue* under the section '*Votre Installation en France*'. This booklet is produced by the CIEP and can be accessed from the CIEP website at <http://www.ciep.fr/assistantetr/> - scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on "*Guide de l'assistant de langue en France*".

Administrative matters

Absence from school

Please remember that you are a member of staff and must therefore adhere to the holiday dates set by the school. If you cannot work because of illness you should inform your school(s) and local education authority (if applicable) immediately and within 48 hours by telephone. Any sick leave must be justified by a medical certificate from your French doctor (*médecin traitant*). It should contain exact dates and cover the entire duration of the absence. This must be sent to the school or to the *Inspection académique* as soon as it is issued. You must also send your *arrêt de travail* to the *securité sociale*. Any prolonged absence on account of illness should be reported as soon as possible to the CIEP and to the British Council.

Requests for leave of absence for any other reason should be made in advance to the head of the school(s) who is within his/her right to refuse it. You are reminded that if you are absent from school without prior authorisation, your allowance will be discontinued from the first day of your absence.

If it becomes necessary to resign from your post, you must give sufficient prior notice in writing of your intended departure to the school, the CIEP and the British Council, setting out your reasons in full. If you are an undergraduate you must also inform your university/college in the UK.

Solving problems

Conditions in schools in France differ from those in this country. Any difficulties should be discussed with your mentor teacher and/or the teacher of the class concerned in the first instance. If the problem cannot be solved then talk to the head teacher or get in touch with your contact at the local education authority (if applicable). Satisfactory solutions can usually be found through such consultations but if the problem remains unresolved, you may contact the CIEP (contact details can be found on page 4). The British Council in the UK can only offer advice and should only be contacted when all other attempts to solve the issue have been made. Problems are dealt with most quickly and effectively locally and British Council will instruct you to take the steps mentioned above.

To avoid problems at school, it is a good idea to form a good working relationship with other members of staff. You should introduce yourself to all members of the English department. It is important to be patient and polite and to be aware of the work pressure of others. Please remember that it is not good practice to correct the teacher in front of students. You should always be punctual, responsible and prepare adequately for your lessons. Furthermore, meeting regularly with your mentor gives the opportunity for them to feedback about your performance and for you to raise any concerns or issues.

Do tell people if you have problems or if you need information as otherwise they will assume everything is ok. The authorities will not appreciate it if you suffer in silence and complain six months later. A lot of past assistants may tell you that their assistantship in France was the best year of their life. This can raise expectations and often leads to people feeling low especially during the first few weeks until they settle in.

The assistantship year is a wonderful opportunity to absorb French language and culture and gain much in life experience and transferable skills. However it is perfectly understandable that when abroad in a completely different environment there may be times when you feel homesick, have trouble with pupils or colleagues or with your living situation and so on.

In these instances it can be useful to know that you have access to an anonymous, non-judgemental English-language phone service. [“SOS Help”](#) is a telephone listening service for the English-speaking community in France, similar to the Samaritans. It is administratively attached to the French service “SOS Amitiés”. The telephone number is 01 46 21 46 46. Although it is based in Paris it serves the entire country. All calls are confidential and trained listeners are available every day from 3pm to 11pm, 365 days a year. In addition to compassionate, non-directive listening they provide information on community services and resources available for English-speaking callers.

Settling in

Accommodation

Your school(s) are not obliged to provide or find you accommodation, but they may be able to offer you somewhere temporary to stay for the first few days or weeks, thus giving you some time to look for permanent accommodation. You should however not assume that your school will do this and should discuss your arrival and initial accommodation arrangements with them in advance. Please note that if your school does offer you accommodation you are not obliged to accept it but remember, if you do accept it, you will have to abide by the school's rules.

The first thing to do when looking for permanent accommodation is to ask your mentor teacher if they can recommend anything. For example, they may know a local family with a room to rent, or already have somewhere in mind for you to stay. If your school cannot help, your best contacts are your predecessors at the school or in the area.

Consider going to your teaching location to arrange accommodation in advance of the induction course or of starting your job. Past assistants have emphasised the need to look for accommodation as early as possible. The first weeks of your assistantship will be busy as you will be finding your way around an unfamiliar town, dealing with bureaucracy and trying to make a good impression at school. Having accommodation lined up can make this easier. For temporary lodgings while you look for something permanent, investigate the possibility of staying in a youth hostel. **Do not** take out a contract on your accommodation **until** you know the location of your schools.

Please note that the British Council is not in a position to provide or to help find accommodation.

Once you get to France the following suggestions may be of interest:

- advertise on the school/staff notice board and ask around the staff; do **NOT** advertise in local papers or public places
- buy the local newspapers early in the morning and telephone likely numbers immediately
- ring the local university halls of residence or check their flat share adverts and notices, or advertise on their notice board that you are looking for a room
- ask local friends'/acquaintances' landlords if they have any further accommodation to let
- write to or visit as soon as possible any student or youth organisation in the area that might have details of available lodgings: the local tourist office may have a list of such organisations
- find out about local religious organisations as they often know of rooms to let
- accommodation agencies may be able to help but you should **be very wary** of paying large fees and deposits, and always read the small print in any leases or agreements to be signed. **Look for small agencies as often their fees are lower**
- search for a room or flat on the internet
- if in or near a university town, visit the university accommodation office (*service logement du CROUS*) and check student noticeboards. In university towns accommodation ads are often displayed on noticeboards at the *Restau-U* (*U=universitaire*), in university buildings (students advertising at the beginning of the year for people to share with), in bookshops, laundrettes and supermarkets.

- some towns have lists of rooms and flats available which are produced and distributed by the *mairie*, citizens' advice bureau, tourist office or equivalent organisation within the locality; (sometimes the *mairie* owns or keeps a flat specially for the foreign language assistants).
- If your home town or university town is twinned with your town of appointment or a place nearby, it would also be worth contacting the local *mairie*. A special effort is sometimes made to help assistants from twin towns in their search for accommodation.
- *De particulier à particulier* and *J'annonce* are weekly publications which advertise flats to rent. Both have websites which are worth a look (see table above).
- Families sometimes advertise for lodgers on noticeboards. If you are interested in this possibility you **must** clarify whether or not you will be allowed visitors and will be expected to help with housework or children (12-15 hours per week is typical).

Some website you may find useful are:

Temporary accommodation:	www.hostelbookers.com www.hostelworld.com
Permanent accommodation:	www.cidj.com www.unhaj.com www.anil.org http://www.campusfrance.org/fr/page/trouver-un-logement www.pap.fr www.jannonce.fr www.apartager.com www.avendrealouer.com www.kijiji.fr www.vivastreet.fr www.colocation.fr www.leboncoin.fr

Beware! Some ads in papers do not make it clear if the rental is handled by an individual or an agency. Check when ringing up to arrange viewing; otherwise you may have to pay an agency fee which may be the equivalent of one month's rent.

When you go out looking for accommodation, take a *dossier* of papers with you including as many of the following as possible: your *arrêté d'affectation*, *bulletin de paie*, *lettre d'un garant*, *relevé d'identité bancaire* (or RIB), *pièce d'identité*. In France "*tout ne marche qu'avec des papiers*"

Landlords may ask for 1 month's rent as a deposit (*caution*) and 1 month's rent paid in advance. Always ask (insist if necessary) for a receipt for the money you pay, both deposit and rent. If you do live in privately rented accommodation, **check your contract carefully to see how much notice you must give to move out – in France a minimum of**

three months' notice is usually the legal requirement. You may also have to give this notice in writing by registered mail.

Assistants who intend to rent accommodation privately through a landlord or letting agency should be aware that they are legally obliged to take out an insurance policy in case of accident. This is usually known as *assurance habitation* or *assurance logement* and can be obtained from the MAIF

A formal contract to rent an apartment sometimes requires the signature of a guarantor. If you do not know anyone resident in France who is prepared to act as your guarantor (i.e. undertake to pay your rent/debts should you default), it may help if you have a formal letter from your parents, written in French, stating their financial guarantee: see suggested format enclosed. Alternatively, your *responsable* or a friendly teacher at school might be prepared to 'take the risk'. It is worth trying to find a French guarantor as a number of landlords are reluctant to accept a guarantor from outside France.

Living in a *foyer* is particularly recommended if you can find a good one and is a good place for making French friends. However, bear in mind that most of them have night curfews and strict arrangements regarding overnight guests (there might be a charge for guests and restrictions on the nights that they can stay). As one past assistant put it:

"Foyer- Definitely a good place to start...(but) see it for what it is - a very cheap option but with some restrictive rules..." (ELA, France 2008-09)

Some *foyers* do not accept assistants on the principle that you are officially employed rather than full-time students. However, there are *foyers de jeunes travailleurs/-euses* for young people in employment. The atmosphere is sometimes very international; the facilities can be excellent. In addition, if you stay in a *foyer* you can claim APL (see next paragraph 21) and the management may even arrange this for you. *Foyers* often ask for a deposit of 1-2 months' rent.

We recommend that you take photos of your room and the flat when you move into your long-term accommodation and when you leave to help you get back any deposit you may have to pay, which is usually dependent on the accommodation being in the same condition as when you first arrived. When you leave your accommodation, remember to cancel any personal contracts e.g. internet or utilities.

When you do find accommodation, please ensure that you have checked health and safety issues (temporary and long term) such as fire alarms and exits, gas leaks, electrics, water etc.

When looking for accommodation please follow the advice given in our [Personal Safety leaflet](#). When you have found some-where to live, even if it has been arranged for you, do not sign any agreement you are not comfortable with and make sure that there is a period of notice written in the contract to avoid problems should you decide to change your accommodation during the year.

Housing Benefit

Assistants are entitled to claim housing benefit (*aide personnalisée au logement* or APL) from the French state if they have an official rental agreement and the rent exceeds 25% of their net monthly allowance. The right to housing benefit and the amount of the rebate varies according to the individual's previous earnings, but it is possible to get back up to half the rent. You should register your claim as early as possible with the local CAF (*caisse*

d'allocations familiales). Check with them what documents are required for your application, but it is advisable to bring copies of previous payslips) etc. A piece of advice to note: check that your room/flat is 'declared' by your landlord/landlady and ask for an official contract: otherwise you are not eligible for APL.

Please see the website www.caf.fr where you can do a self-assessment to check your eligibility for APL, download the relevant forms and calculate the allowance you might receive. It is becoming increasingly more common that people get the ALS (Allocation de Logement à caractère Social) which works the same way than the APL.

"Organising CAF will require a lot of information and a lot of paperwork. The process will take a long time and they will contact you several times for documents (possibly the same one more than once as things tend to 'go missing') but don't worry, everything will get done. Persevere, receiving the APL (money to help with rent costs) is worth it in the end. (ELA, France 2012-13)"

"The CAF is the single most frustrating thing to organise whilst you are in France but it is also the most useful! The best advice for this would be to take original copies of EVERYTHING (passport, work contract, accommodation contract, birth certificate, foreign bank account details etc.) AND PHOTOCOPIES!"(ELA France 2012-13)

Taxe d'habitation

In France *taxe d'habitation* (equivalent to UK Council Tax/ Northern Ireland Rates) is due from every individual who on 1 January is registered as officially renting a flat (furnished or unfurnished) or living in property that they own. The liability for *taxe d'habitation* is not related to the amount a person earns or to whether he/she pays income tax. This means that English language assistants are liable as much as any other citizen in France

NB The French authorities will issue you a demand notice which may well reach you after your return to the UK, even a year later. The French authorities issue bills for the *taxe d'habitation* in October after you complete your assistantship. To avoid administrative complications and the possibility of being charged interest, you are strongly advised to settle the account before you leave France and this can be done by going to your local Centre des impôts. Should you rely on the tax office to catch up with you after your departure, you must at least ensure that you pay promptly when they do, or you will be charged 10% interest on each subsequent bill. Bear in mind that once you return to your studies, you might find it much harder to pay than you would at the end of your assistantship. If you persist in refusing to pay, you run the risk of court action or ending up on an international credit blacklist.

For more information regarding this, visit the government website that explains all the criteria for the tax, including information about who may be exonerated from this tax: [La taxe d'habitation](#)

Creating social networks

Even if you have been to France before it is possible that you will find some things strange at first and will need a little time to settle in. On arrival, the thought of making friends and mixing with the locals can seem like a daunting task, but as long as you are prepared to put yourself out there, it is a part of the experience which previous assistants have found the

most enriching. Give yourself some time to adjust – you don't need to feel like a local within a week and in the beginning you'll have a lot of administrative matters to deal with.

The best way to start is with colleagues at school. Make sure you always seem positive, enthusiastic and willing to learn. Socialise as much as you can with colleagues and accept all invitations to events, dinner etc. Tell people what your interests are and ask them to let you know what's going on in the local area. Do keep in mind that teachers can be very busy, especially during exam periods.

Apart from your work in the classroom you may be able to attend other classes in subjects which interest you. You will find that you become much more integrated into school life and gain considerably more from your stay if you become involved in activities organised by the school, such as sports days, theatre or music productions or modern language societies. Go to school 'open days' or parent evenings as these are also a good way of meeting people. If you hear about something happening which interests you, ask if you can become involved. Don't wait to be invited as people may assume that you're not interested.

It is also a good idea to get in touch with other people in the area before you leave. One useful way to do this is to get in contact with a previous assistant in your region and ask them to give you any e-mail addresses or numbers of contacts they made. Another excellent way to meet new people is to set up language exchanges with local people who want to practise their English. You could also enrol at a local language school, join Erasmus societies (at a local university), offer English lessons to colleagues/locals, join a club and join assistant groups on social networks such as Facebook. There are often Facebook groups for people who are new to the city/town, which organise different events to help people make new friends - just search for 'new in "city name"' Previous assistants have also suggested joining a local Couchsurfing group as they often organise social activities.

You should be very careful about how you use social networking sites while you are an ELA. Keep your profile private so that it can only be seen by people you intend to see it. If you invite other teachers to be 'friends', remember to remain professional in what you say on your wall and be careful what you say about your employer.

You should not exchange personal contact details with students, invite them to be 'friends' or accept similar invitations from them. This is likely to be regarded as inappropriate behaviour. Check with teachers about the school's internet policy, particularly regarding any online communication involving students either in or outside school.

It is exceptionally important that you understand issues around child protection, both to protect the students and also to protect you from any damaging and potentially serious accusations.

Here are some other ways to meet people within the area:

- live with other students/native speakers
- enrol for an evening class, join a sports club, music group, choir etc.
- enquire about joining the local university and attending lectures
- get involved in the local culture and join clubs that you couldn't join in the UK
- volunteer for a charity, society, festival, etc.

Former assistants have recommended not spending all of your time with other assistants, as you won't be able to integrate into your community and life in France. On the other hand, don't feel that you must cut yourself off from them – assistants can provide a very good support network for each other, as you understand each other's experiences. Don't forget

that there may be language assistants from other countries in your area. You may wish to ask your employer if they have contact details.

As a golden rule, **try to say yes to every social opportunity presented to you** that does not compromise your personal safety. Accept invitations to places and activities even if they do not sound interesting as you might meet other people there who do share your interests.

“Get involved in as many things as possible would be my advice for integrating into the community – and also, don’t be shy to say hello to people and start a conversation, even in passing, with people you meet. A few good people I got to know in the village I was living in I met on public transport!” (ELA France 2012-13)

Travelling around

Living in France for a year provides you with a great opportunity to explore and get to know the country. The French Tourist Office is a valuable source of general information about France and of specific information about particular regions. The website is <http://uk.franceguide.com/> and the address of the office is Lincoln House, 300 High Holborn WC1V 7JH London. There is also a France Information Line on tel: 09068 244123 (calls cost 60p per minute).

Accommodation

Information about youth hostel facilities in mainland Europe is available from the International Youth Hostel Federation at www.hihostels.com. Hostel availability and booking forms are also available from this website.

Other good hostel and cheap hotel websites include www.hostelworld.com, www.hostelbookers.com, www.booking.com and www.laterooms.com. These sites include reviews from previous visitors that can give you a good idea of the quality of the accommodation. Sometimes these larger websites do not give information on smaller hostels so you should also do some local research online.

Buses and metro

Once in France you will find it cheaper for local travel to buy a *carnet* of 10 tickets for buses and the *métro* than to buy one ticket at a time. Those working in Paris and its suburbs will find that *le passe Navigo* (details available at any *métro* station or at http://www.ratp.fr/fr/ratp/c_20601/forfait-navigo-annuel/orange.php) also offers a good discount on normal tariffs and past assistants recommend purchasing one straightaway.

NB: A previous assistant advised being careful and aware on the RER train which goes to the suburbs of Paris. Don't sit alone in a carriage especially late at night.

Train

The main website for train travel in France is www.sncf.com.

See www.voyages-sncf.com for information on cheap train fares. You can also book Eurostar tickets on this website and if you are aged between 12-25 you will be able to get a discount on the price if you purchase a railcard. The term for peak-time is *période blanche* and for off-peak - *période bleue*. You can save money by travelling off-peak, but the time periods can change on holiday weekends, so be sure to check details online.

For long journeys in France various options exist including:

- The SNCF Discovery fares for 12-25 year olds (proof of age required, approx. 25% discount on tickets for off-peak travel, fares are subject to limited availability so it is advisable to book in advance)
- The *Carte de Réduction Jeune* 18-27 (from 25-60% off fares). This card can also be bought in the UK (need passport photo): ring Rail Europe on 08448 484 064.

The *Carte de Réduction Jeune* 18-27 costs €50 for one year and has been described as 'well worth it' by former assistants. It can be bought on <http://www.sncf.com/fr/tarifs-reduits/carte-jeune>

"It's worth buying an SNCF Carte Jeune, it costs 50€ and you get big discounts on national and international train tickets for 12 months! Another good idea is to look into car sharing; it's a lot more common in France than in the UK!" (ELA, France 2010-11)

Car share

In many areas of France where public transport is less frequent people get around by car share. This website formalises these arrangements and has been recommended by previous assistants: www.covoiturage.fr

Flights

For cheap flights go to the CROUS (student welfare centre) at the nearest French university, equipped with your International Student Identity Card (ISIC).

The following sites may also be useful for internal flights in France:

www.skyscanner.net

www.airfrance.co.uk

www.aircorsica.com

Other useful travel websites:	www.budgettravel.com
www.lonelyplanet.com	www.roughguides.com
www.lonelyplanet.com/thorntree	www.worldtravelguide.net

Outre Mer

Please note that the public transport system in Outre-mer is not as well developed. Previous assistants have recommended buying a car if possible or a bike if you don't have a licence

Personal safety

It is very important to stick to the same health and safety rules as you would at home and always heed advice given by local people. Please see refer to the [Personal Safety Leaflet](#) which provides an emergency telephone number as well as essential guidelines on how to avoid potentially dangerous situations.

We strongly advice that you spend some time looking at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website and check it regularly as there is a lot of useful and up-to-date information provided. We also recommend that assistants read the 'Advice for Travellers' documentation which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/supporting-british-nationals-overseas/supporting-pages/advice-for-travel>

Please also refer to the FCO website for information regarding sexual attacks:
<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/when-things-go-wrong/rape>

Taking a car abroad

If you plan to take a car to France for the period of your assistantship, please ensure that you take out adequate insurance for the full period and **be aware that many insurance companies will only insure you for periods of up to 90 days**. Past assistants have advised looking into insurance well in advance in order to have the time to shop around for a suitable policy. All UK motor insurance policies offer the minimum legal protection required by EU countries and Switzerland. This gives third party cover for bodily injury or damage to property.

The British Council is unable to recommend specific insurance companies but former assistants have suggested the MAIF (*Mutuelle Assurance des Instituteurs de France*) (www.maif.fr), AXA (www.axa.co.uk), AGF (www.agf.fr) or *Crédit Mutuel* (www.creditmutuel.fr). Assistants in France have often found it cheaper to insure their car locally in France than to insure it with a UK insurance company. When taking out local insurance it is worth presenting proof of a No-Claims Bonus as this is valid in France. However, ask your home insurer for advice beforehand.

Many insurers offer 24-hour UK telephone numbers in case you need help in an emergency. Make sure you have these details with you when you travel abroad.

The website of the Association of British Insurers (www.abi.org.uk) has general information on driving abroad, including the document 'Motoring Abroad' (see link below), which has useful information on Motor Insurance cover and Green Cards. A Green Card is an internationally recognised document that provides evidence that the policyholder has minimum insurance cover:

Motoring Abroad:
<https://www.abi.org.uk/~media/Files/Documents/Publications/Public/Migrated/Motor/ABI%20guide%20to%20motoring%20abroad.ashx>

If you require information on driver licensing you should contact Drivers Customer Services (DCS), Correspondence Team DVLA, Swansea SA6 7JL (Tel: 0300 790 6801, or using the online email service which can be found here: <https://emaildvla.direct.gov.uk/emaildvla/cegemail/dvla/en/index.html>)

Information on vehicle licensing or registration can be obtained from Vehicle Customer Services (VCS), DVLA, Swansea, SA99 1AR (Tel: 0300 790 6802) There is also a website at www.dvla.gov.uk. UK licences are recognised in all EU countries plus Switzerland, for as long as they remain valid.

You will need to research the laws on driving in France, including adapting your head lights for driving on the right and carrying the correct equipment for use in emergencies.

Providing a car is not hired out or sold, nor used for commercial activity in France, it can be imported under the Temporary Importation Scheme. You can obtain information about this from the AA, the RAC or your nearest French Consulate.

Alcohol limit for drivers in France: the limit in France, introduced in autumn 1995, is 50mg of alcohol (compared with 80mg in the UK) per 100 ml of blood. For most drivers this means that 2 glasses of wine or 2 small bottles of French beer will be enough to put them over the limit. French police can breathalyse drivers at random. Drivers who test positive face fines of up to £4,000 for alcohol levels between 50 mg and 80 mg. Higher levels carry greater penalties. (Source: The Times, 21 May 1996). The website www.alltravelfrance.com gives information on driving in France.

Buying a car in France

Once a car is bought, the change of ownership must be registered immediately at the nearest préfecture or sous-préfecture. Here you will be given a list of the various documents required to complete the procedure. You can also consult the website for the préfecture of the académie to which you have been assigned to see what will be required.

Necessary documents include a certificat de vente (filled in and signed together with the previous owner of the car), a demande de certificat d'immatriculation, a carte grise and the equivalent of an MOT test certificate (only required for cars more than 5 years old). It is also necessary to present a photocopy of your identity card (passport), an attestation de domicile, a stamped addressed envelope and payment of approx. €150.

ISIC cards

International Student Identity Cards cost £9 and are available online and from student travel agents such as STA and BUNAC. They can be used to obtain cheap entry into certain museums, theatres, cinemas and art galleries throughout Europe. They may also entitle you to certain travel concessions. Please see www.isiccard.com for further information. Please note that in order to obtain an ISIC card you need to be a full time student.

For non-students who are under 26 there is the International Youth Travel Card (£9), which can be bought in the same way – see <http://www.statravel.co.uk/youth-identity-card.htm> for further information.

All assistants under the age of 30 (or 26 depending on the country or region), can also buy the European Youth Card. Holders of the card are eligible for discounts at a range of places and on a range of services. For more information on the discounts and where you can buy the card, go to www.euro26.org.

Study opportunities

The French Embassy in London provides UK universities with full information on how to make an application to attend a French university. If you are appointed in or near a university town and you wish to follow a course of study, you should contact your own Modern Languages Department in the first instance if you have any questions. When enrolling, you should take with you copies of your birth certificate, GCSE and A Level certificates and, if possible, a letter from your university/college in the UK confirming your current academic status. It is advisable also to take photocopies of all these documents, and a number of passport photographs.

Holders of student cards from foreign universities are often eligible for a number of benefits including subsidised meals, accommodation services and reductions on theatre/cinema tickets.

If you are appointed in a town where there is little or no possibility of access to a university, you should not ignore study opportunities offered by local cultural centres, institutes, libraries and colleges of further education as well as CNED correspondence courses: contact the local tourist office (*syndicat d'initiative*) for details. Much can also be gained from sitting in on school lessons

Phoning home & mobiles

The Country code for France is +33. Telephone numbers in France have 10 digits, the first 2 of which are the area code. (Paris/Ile de France is 01, the west/northwest 02, the east/northeast 03, the southeast and Corsica 04, the southwest 05.) When phoning within the local area, it is still necessary to use the area code.

To phone abroad from France the code is 00 followed by the country code. When phoning France from abroad the first 0 of the standard 10-digit number must be omitted (as when dialling an area code in the UK from abroad).

If you set up a phone line or internet connection, past assistants have warned to check phone subscription charges with France Telecom first. You may be charged for a full year's subscription even if you end your phone contract earlier than this. For this reason assistants often recommend getting a pay as you go mobile rather than one on contract. To avoid internet contracts you may want to explore other options of internet access such as dongles (clé internet).

Many land lines in France now have free phone calls to French mobiles AND to land lines in Europe.

NB If you buy credit for a French mobile, it only lasts for a certain length of time. The larger the sum the longer it lasts.

Be aware that calls to the UK from a mobile can be expensive.) Previous assistants have recommended using Skype and www.voipbuster.com as an alternative.

Sales assistants frequently encourage assistants to take out 24 month contracts on the basis that this can be cancelled when you leave France by providing proof that your assistantship contract is over and you will no longer be living in France. In reality cancelling these contracts is very difficult and previous assistants have advised against signing up to them.

Useful websites

You can read case studies written by former assistants on our website:
<http://www.britishcouncil.org/languageassistants-ela-success-stories-main-page-2.htm>

Year Abroad Advice: www.thirdyearabroad.com

Teaching tips and resources

Observation period

When you first arrive at your school(s) you should ask for a period of observation of 1-2 weeks. It may not be offered to you automatically. Observation will allow you to familiarise yourself with the school environment, to experience classroom management techniques as well as to get to know the names, faces and personalities of your pupils and gauge their level of English.

Try to note the following:

- how the teacher starts and ends the lesson
- how the teacher speaks to pupils
- how the teacher involves all pupils, including shy ones, in the class activity
- what the teacher's attitude is to pupil errors and error correction
- how the teacher controls disruptive behaviour, lateness and lack of effort

British Council teaching resources

The British Council produces and co-produces a range of resources specifically for Language Assistants. Making use of these will help you greatly to deliver interesting and useful classroom activities and will support you in solving problems in the classroom.

The British Council is also closely involved with the teaching of English abroad. Local branches develop useful resources and organise a range of cultural activities, which may be of interest to you and your school. For information on forthcoming events, go to <http://www.britishcouncil.org/fr/france-english.htm>

Please note that many foreign schools are anxious to establish links with UK counterparts in order to share information and arrange pupil exchanges. Assistants are encouraged to help in whatever way possible in establishing such links and there is information and guidance on the British Council website: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/learning-ie-school-partnerships>

You may also wish to find out if your school has any eTwinning projects or set up a project yourself: www.britishcouncil.org/etwinning.htm

Language Assistants manual

'Language Assistant' by Clare Lavery is a resource book designed for language assistants and provides information on all aspects of the role. This can be downloaded here: www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/whole_manual.pdf. Please read this carefully as it is extremely useful in preparing you for your assistantship.

The *Guide de l'assistant de langue*

The *Guide* is a very useful publication containing information on the role of the assistant, the French education system, administrative formalities, integration into the school, practical matters and many useful addresses and explanations of abbreviations. If it is not given out at the induction course (*stage*), it is available on the website at www.ciep.fr/assistantetr/ - scroll

down to the bottom of the page and click on “*Guide de l’assistant de langue – Édition 2014-2015*”.

TeachingEnglish website

TeachingEnglish.org is an online resource centre produced jointly by the British Council and the BBC has a specialised Language Assistants micro-site: <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/language-assistant>

On the site you will have access to:

- Teaching tips
- Essential UK: Seasonal lesson plans based around UK topics
- Primary tips: Help getting started with primary-level students
- Classroom games

LearnEnglish website

The British Council Learn English website is an excellent free online resource for students of English with lots of games, stories, listening activities and grammar exercises: <http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/>

This may be a useful tool for you to use for your teaching but also to pass on to your students for them to access from home.

Facebook page

Our Facebook page provides an opportunity to discuss teaching ideas and share your experience with other assistants (we send approximately 3000 Language Assistants around the world each year).

https://www.facebook.com/EnglishLanguageAssistants.BritishCouncil?ref=tn_tnmn

In addition, the CIEP also have a Facebook group for assistants which you may like to join:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Assistants-de-langues-en-France/226575134067849>

Teaching materials

One way of making language learning real for your pupils is bringing authentic materials from the UK into the classroom. Take the opportunity to collect a variety of resources while you are still at home.

Past assistants have found that the following materials worked well: Photos of family and friends and your home town, lots of postcards, examples of UK coins and notes, train tickets and timetables, stamps, posters and tea towels to decorate walls, Christmas cards and crackers, posters and games, UK TV programmes and listings, magazines and local newspapers, CDs, photos of school uniforms, a school timetable and school report, flashcards, word searches, maps, tourist brochures, UK food (marmite, jelly, chocolate, custard, mince pies, gravy granules, etc), adverts, menus, cartoons, comic books, DVDs (e.g. Ready Steady Cook for catering students), simple recipes e.g. scones, recordings of the weather forecast, London tube map, tapes of friends’ accents and conversations, bingo, Taboo etc.

The more materials you can find the better. Think about what worked well for you as a language student and about which items you find interesting when you are in a foreign country. You can also ask your host school(s) whether there is something specific they would like you to bring and to find out about topics you are likely to be asked to cover during your assistantship.

The British Council in France

The British Council is closely involved with the teaching of English abroad and organises a range of cultural activities which may be of interest to assistants. Those requiring further information should telephone 01 49 55 73 00 or fax 01 47 05 77 02 or write to the British Council at 9 rue de Constantine, 75340 Paris Cedex 07. The website is www.britishcouncil.org/france

Useful teaching websites

Teaching websites	www.onestopenglish.com
www.englishclub.com *	www.bogglesworldesl.com
www.cambridgeesol.org/teach *	www.developingteachers.com
http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/teachers *	www.tes.co.uk
www.letssingit.com	http://projectbritain.com
www.lyrics.com	http://www.slideshare.net/
www.enchantedlearning.com	www.prezi.com
www.cartoonstock.com	www.busyteacher.org
www.puzzlemaker.com	http://www.eslprintables.com/
www.skyline-english.com	http://www.vanda51.blogspot.com/
www.eslcafe.com	www.bbc.co.uk
www.eslpartyland.com *	www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc
www.eslgold.com	http://news.bbc.co.uk
www.esl-lab.com	www.royal.gov.uk
www.eslflow.com	
www.eslflashcards.com	www.visitbritain.com
http://funschool.kaboose.com/	www.visitscotland.com
www.learnenglish.org.uk/kids	www.discovernorthernireland.com

Miscellaneous

Co-operating partners abroad have requested that the attention of British visitors be drawn to the severe penalties imposed for drug offences and for taking part in unlawful political demonstrations which may result in heavy fines and prison sentences. You are therefore strongly advised not to become involved in these activities.

Married students should note that the allowance is intended to provide for one person only. However, if an assistant's spouse remains in the UK and is unemployed, he/she may be barred from income support or be required to refund whatever was received as such since the start of the assistantship. Enquiries should be made well in advance in order to prevent financial difficulties from arising during a married assistant's period of appointment.

Please note the British Council is not the employer of UK assistants abroad and should not be given as a referee in future job applications. In general the head of the school would be the most appropriate referee.

Public Holidays

<u>January</u> 1 New Year's Day <u>May</u> 1 Labour Day 8 1945 Victory Day 9 Ascension <u>July</u> 14 Bastille Day	<u>August</u> 15 Assumption <u>November</u> 1 All Saints' Day 11 Remembrance Day <u>December</u> 25 Christmas Day
---	--

Useful contacts

15 Medical Assistance - Samu	18 Fire Brigade - Pompiers
17 Police	112 European Emergency Call (also use if dialling from a mobile phone)

British Embassy and consulates in France

Please take note of the address of the Embassy below in case of emergency or loss of your passport.

British Embassy

The British Embassy

35, rue du Faubourg St Honore
75383 Paris Cedex 08
Tel: +33 (0)1 44 51 31 00 Fax: +33 (0)1 44 51 41 27
Opening Hours: 9h30-13h00/14h30-18h00
www.amb-grande-bretagne.fr

British Consulates-General in France

Paris

18 bis, rue d'Anjou
75008 Paris
Tel: +33 (0)1 44 51 31 02 Fax: +33 (0)1 44 51 31 27

Opening Hours:
Monday/Wednesday/Thursday/Friday
09h30 - 12h30 and 14h30 - 17h00 Tuesday
09h30 - 16h30 (remaining open throughout the lunch break)

Bordeaux

353, boulevard du President Wilson
33073 Bordeaux Cedex
Tel: +33 (0)5 57 22 21 10 Fax: +33 (0)5 56 08 33 12
Opening Hours: 9h00-12h00/14h00-17h00 Monday to Friday

Lille

11 square Dutilleul
59800 Lille
Tel: +33 (0)3 20 12 82 72 Fax: +33 (0)3 20 54 88 16
Opening Hours: 9h30-12h30/14h00-17h00 Monday to Friday

Lyon

24, rue Childebert
69002 Lyon
Tel: +33 (0)4 72 77 81 70 Fax: +33 (0)4 72 77 81 79

Opening Hours: 9h00-12h30/14h00-17h00 Monday to Friday

Marseille

24, avenue du Prado
13006 Marseille
Tel: +33 (0)4 91 15 72 10 Fax: +33 (0)4 91 37 47 06

Opening Hours: 9h00-12h00/14h00-17h00 Monday to Friday

British consular offices abroad will advise or help in case of serious personal difficulties but they cannot do the work of travel agencies, information bureaux, banks or the police. You are advised to register with, or at least locate, your nearest British consulate as soon as possible after arrival.

Thank you for reading and have a great year!

Book list

Dictionaries

- BBC English Dictionary (BBC English/Harper Collins)
- Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (Longman)
- Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (Oxford University Press)
- Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture (Longman)

Grammar reference books

- A Practical English Grammar (A.J. Thomson & A.V Martinet, Oxford University Press)
- Current English Grammar (S. Chalker, Phoenix)
- Basic English Usage (M. Swan, Oxford University Press)
- Practical English Usage (M. Swan, Oxford University Press)
- Discover English (R. Bolitho & B. Tomlinson, Macmillan Heinemann)
- English Grammar in Use (R. Murphy, Cambridge University Press)
- Advanced Grammar in Use (R. Murphy, Cambridge University Press)
- How English Works (Michael Swan and Catherine Walter, Oxford University Press)
- Learner English (Michael Swan & Bernard Smith (eds.) Cambridge University Press)

Basic methodology books

- The Practice of English Language Teaching J. Harmer Longman
- How to Teach English J. Harmer Longman
- How to Teach Grammar S. Thornbury Longman
- How to Use the Internet in ELT D. Teeler & P. Gray Longman
- One to One Peter Wilberg Language Teaching Publications

Also look out for the series of handbooks and source books for language teachers published by CUP, Longman, Macmillan and OUP.