

Adult Basic and Secondary Education and ESL Teachers

SOC: 25-3011 • Career Profile Report

■ Key Facts

\$59,950

Median Salary

5,600

Employment

-14.0%

Growth Rate

■ Requirements & Salary Range

Education: Bachelor's degree

■ Automation Risk Assessment

Low Risk - 10.0% probability of being automated in the next 10-20 years.

This job is relatively safe from automation due to its creative, social, or complex problem-solving requirements.

■ Work-Life Balance

8.2/10 - Excellent work-life balance

■ Personality Fit (RIASEC)

Higher scores indicate better personality fit for this career type.

Realistic	3.8/10	Investigative	6.6/10
Artistic	7.6/10	Social	9.4/10
Enterprising	5.2/10	Conventional	6.0/10

■ Top Skills Required

Communication skills, Cultural sensitivity, Patience, Resourcefulness

✓ Strengths

- High Demand
- Flexible Work
- Continuous Learning

■ Challenges

- Burnout Risk
- Rapid Technological Change

■ What They Do

Adult Basic and Secondary Education and ESL Teachers are education professionals who help adults **build foundational academic skills, earn credentials, and develop English language proficiency**. They work with learners who may be improving literacy and numeracy, preparing for a high school equivalency credential, or learning English for work, community life, or further education. Their role combines instruction, mentorship, and practical support for diverse adult learners.

This career is well suited for individuals who enjoy teaching, working with diverse populations, and helping adults achieve educational and personal goals.

What Do Adult Basic and ESL Teachers Do?

Adult basic and ESL teachers design and deliver instruction tailored to adult learners' needs and goals.

Common responsibilities include:

- Teaching reading, writing, math, and basic academic skills
- Providing instruction in English as a Second Language (ESL)
- Preparing learners for high school equivalency exams or workforce readiness
- Assessing student skill levels and learning progress
- Adapting lessons for varied backgrounds, abilities, and learning styles
- Using practical, real-world examples relevant to adult life
- Maintaining attendance, progress records, and assessments

Types of Adult Education Instruction

Teachers may focus on specific adult learning goals:

- Adult Basic Education (ABE): Literacy, numeracy, and foundational academic skills.
- Adult Secondary Education (ASE): High school-level coursework and equivalency preparation.
- ESL / English Language Instruction: Speaking, listening, reading, and writing in English.
- Workforce and Career Readiness: Skills for employment, testing, or job training.
- Civics or Community Education: Language and skills for civic participation.

Skills and Abilities Needed

Adult education teachers combine instructional expertise with cultural awareness and flexibility.

Core Professional Skills

Personal Qualities That Matter

Education and Certification Pathway

Requirements vary by employer and program type:

- Bachelor's Degree (common): Education, English, linguistics, or a related field
- Teaching or ESL Certification (often required): State or program-specific credentials
- Adult Education or TESOL Training: Specialized preparation for adult learners
- Continuing Education: Required to maintain credentials and skills
- Practical Teaching Experience: Classroom or community-based instruction

Where Do Adult Basic and ESL Teachers Work?

Adult education teachers work in a variety of community and educational settings:

- Adult Education Centers and Programs

- Community Colleges and Continuing Education Programs
- Community-Based and Nonprofit Organizations
- Correctional or Rehabilitation Facilities
- Workforce Development and Training Centers
- Online or Hybrid Learning Programs

Work schedules may include evenings or weekends to accommodate adult learners.

How Much Do Adult Basic and ESL Teachers Earn?

Earnings vary by setting, funding source, and experience:

- Part-Time or Program-Based Teachers: Often earn hourly wages
- Full-Time Instructors: Typically earn salaried education pay
- Experienced or Credentialed Teachers: May earn more with specialization

Compensation may depend on public funding or program budgets.

Is This Career Difficult?

Teaching adults can be challenging but deeply rewarding. Educators work with learners who may face time constraints, language barriers, or past educational setbacks. The challenge lies in adapting instruction, maintaining motivation, and supporting progress while respecting learners' lived experiences.

Who Should Consider Becoming an Adult Basic or ESL Teacher?

This career may be a strong fit if you:

- Enjoy teaching and mentoring adults
- Value cultural diversity and inclusion
- Are patient and encouraging
- Like practical, goal-oriented instruction
- Want to make a direct impact on learners' lives

How to Prepare Early

- Study education, English, linguistics, or related subjects
- Volunteer with literacy or ESL programs
- Learn about adult learning theory and cultural competency
- Practice clear communication and instructional skills
- Explore adult education or TESOL certification pathways

Adult basic and secondary education and ESL teachers open doors to opportunity by helping adults build essential skills, gain confidence, and participate more fully in work, education, and community life through supportive, practical instruction.