

Click on a question to go there.

Contents

Salary.....	3
How much will I make?	3
Will I be able to live on my salary?.....	3
Location.....	3
What college will I teach at?	3
Tutoring.....	3
Can I tutor outside students?.....	3
How much can I make tutoring?	3
What age would I usually tutor?	4
What would I teach when tutoring?	4
Holidays.....	4
What holidays do I get off?	4
Do I get Christmas/Thanksgiving off?	4
When does the school year begin and end?.....	4
Health.....	4
Should I buy insurance?	4
Should I bring medicine?.....	4
What about doctors?	4
Housing and Living Conditions.....	5
Will housing be provided by the school?	5
How big will my apartment be?	5
Will I have internet in my apartment?	5
Will I need to pay for my electricity and water?	5
Will I need to buy basic appliances?	5
What appliances should I expect to have?.....	5
Will the apartment be furnished?.....	5
What will I want to buy for my house?	5
Transportation.....	5
How will I get around?	5

Should I get an electric bike?	5
Will my driver's license work in China?.....	6
Airfare	6
Will my airfare be provided by the college?	6
Contract.....	6
Do I have to sign a contract?	6
Should the Mills read the contract and approve it before I sign it?	6
How long is a typical contract?	6
If I want to stay another year, will the Mills help me with my new contract?	6
Food	6
Will the school provide food?	6
How much should I expect to spend on food?.....	6
Language	7
Do they speak English in Hainan?	7
What language do they speak in China?	7
Is it easy to learn Chinese?.....	7
Am I required to learn Chinese?	7
Should I learn Chinese?.....	7
How can I teach if my students don't know a lot of English and I don't know any Chinese?	7
Culture Shock	7
What is culture shock?	7
Will I experience culture shock?	8
Does culture shock ever really end?	8
Will I survive culture shock?.....	8
Will you help me survive culture shock?.....	8
The Mills.....	8
Are the Mills awesome?.....	8
Should I bring Mr. Mills offerings of Butterfingers?	8
How much do the Mills help once I arrive?	8
Will the Mills oversee my teaching?	8
How often will I see the Mills?	8
Dress.....	8
Is there a dress code for teaching?	8
Is there a dress code for life?	8

Internet and Communication	9
Will I have internet?	9
Will I be able to get on Facebook?	9
How can I talk to my family?	9
Phones.....	9
Will my current phone work in China?.....	9
How much is a phone in China?	9
How much will my cell-phone bill be?	9

Salary

How much will I make?

Salary is typically 5000 - 6000 yuan (\$800 to \$1000) a month. In addition, you can make up to 150 yuan (\$25) an hour tutoring in evenings or on the weekends.

Will I be able to live on my salary?

Definitely! \$800 to \$1000 a month doesn't sound like a lot, but it goes much further in China, especially considering that your housing will be provided. When I lived in Wencheng, I lived on about 2000 yuan a month and saved the rest.

Location

What college will I teach at?

The Mills place teachers in several colleges in Haikou, near Haikou, and in the small town of Wencheng about an hour away. What colleges are good for placing teachers in changes every year. What college you will teach in will depend on many factors, including offered salary and the success of contract negotiations.

Tutoring

Can I tutor outside students?

Yes.

How much can I make tutoring?

Up to 150 yuan (\$25) an hour.

What age would I usually tutor?

Most tutees are between 8 and 14 years old. Sometimes highschoolers, college students, or graduates will want a short tutoring session during a long holiday.

What would I teach when tutoring?

Depends on their level. Usually whatever they want or need help with. Often they want to practice their school work. If they're higher level, they often just want someone to talk to in English. Sometimes we read through books with them. Sometimes we use the Mills' phonics books.

Holidays

What holidays do I get off?

Days off are based on the Chinese calendar, as determined by the government on a yearly basis. The main holiday for schools (basically winter break) is Spring Festival, which varies from year to year, but typically starts around or after the New Year's Day and ends after the Spring Festival Week. Usually it lasts 5 – 7 weeks. There are other, shorter holidays scattered throughout the year.

Sometimes having a holiday will mean working during the weekend to make up for one or two of the days. No, it doesn't make sense.

This is this year's calendar.

Do I get Christmas/Thanksgiving off?

We try to get the school to write Christmas and Thanksgiving into the contract. If that doesn't happen, schools are usually really flexible about moving classes.

When does the school year begin and end?

The school year varies by college but usually starts in early September and ends in early July.

Health

Should I buy insurance?

Yes, you should buy travel insurance for the duration of your contract. We can suggest a company. The school will provide a basic insurance package, but it won't cover everything.

Should I bring medicine?

You can buy Western-type medicine here, but sometimes it will be difficult when all your Chinese friends want you to use Chinese Traditional Medicine instead. I would recommend bringing an emergency stash (over-the-counter sinus/cold meds, pain killers, vitamins.) When you're sick is not when you want to deal with culture shock.

What about doctors?

We have a Western-style doctor that we visit. You won't want to go a clinic here.

Housing and Living Conditions

Will housing be provided by the school?

Yes, the school will provide an apartment.

How big will my apartment be?

It varies, but a basic apartment is usually one or two bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen, and a bathroom.

Will I have internet in my apartment?

Yes. Internet is sometimes included in your contract, but if it isn't, it is inexpensive to get.

Will I need to pay for my electricity and water?

No, the school will either pay for your utilities or provide a stipend.

Will I need to buy basic appliances?

No.

What appliances should I expect to have?

Schools typically supply an *air conditioner*, a *refrigerator*, a *stove top* (but not an oven,) a *rice cooker*, and a *clothes washer* (but not a dryer.)

Will the apartment be furnished?

Yes.

What will I want to buy for my house?

Ask to make sure that no one's going home permanently. They might leave some things for you. Otherwise, dishes, decorations, bedding, towels, utensils. Maybe an oven. It depends on the apartment and your tastes.

Transportation

How will I get around?

Towns and cities in China have excellent public transportation systems. It's easy and cheap (1 yuan [15 cents]) to get most places by bus. For quicker transportation in Haikou, you can take a taxi, which starts at 10 yuan (\$1.60) and begins to increment after a certain amount of time. I find that it takes about 20 yuan (\$3) to go from my house to the city center.

If you teach in Wencheng, you may take the intercity bus to visit Haikou (the main city) on weekends. A one-way bus ticket costs 18 – 19 yuan (\$3).

Should I get an electric bike?

If you teach in a college outside the city or you get tired of taking buses, you might wish to purchase an electric bike. You can get a good electric bike for about 2700 –

3000 yuan (\$450 – 500). These do not require a driver's license.

Will my driver's license work in China?

No, China doesn't accept American driver's licenses. You probably don't want to drive here anyway.

Airfare

Will my airfare be provided by the college?

Not to get here. But typically your college will provide a certain amount toward airfare at the end of your contract (but not before.)

Contract

Do I have to sign a contract?

Yes, in order to get a visa, you must sign a contract.

Should the Mills read the contract and approve it before I sign it?

Yes, definitely. Especially since one of our Chinese workers will need to read the Chinese. (The Chinese copy will be the actual binding contract.)

How long is a typical contract?

Contracts are always 1 year.

If I want to stay another year, will the Mills help me with my new contract?

Yes.

Food

Will the school provide food?

Typically not.

How much should I expect to spend on food?

Food (especially vegetables) is cheap in China. For everyday meals, expect to spend less than 15 yuan (\$2.50). For nicer meals, expect 35 – 50 yuan (\$6 – 8). When I lived in Wencheng, I had a mental budget of 200 yuan per week for meals and I doubt I spent even that.

Language

Do they speak English in Hainan?

Depends. Your students will know some English with varying levels of proficiency. Most of them will know (but maybe not be able to use) about as much English as someone with four years of high school Spanish. You will meet a few amazing students that will be able to maintain higher level conversations.

On the other hand, your average fruit salesman on the street will know two words: “Hello” and “Bye-bye.” (And he’ll probably think that the latter is actually Chinese.)

What language do they speak in China?

Almost all Chinese speak Mandarin Chinese (Putonghua). However, most Chinese also speak another dialect or several other dialects of Chinese. For instance, Hainan natives speak Hainanhua (Hainanese). Even mainlanders cannot understand Hainanhua.

Is it easy to learn Chinese?

Yes and no. Spoken Chinese is fairly easy to learn once you get used to the tones. (Chinese has four tones, up, down, up down up, and a hard beat. Almost every word has a tone, and many words have the same sounds but different tones.)

Written Chinese, however, is one of the most difficult languages in the world. Written Chinese is not a phonetic language; instead every word has its own special character.

Am I required to learn Chinese?

No, but you might want to.

Should I learn Chinese?

Probably. You will learn many basic words without even trying. However, actually sitting down and learning the language does help in day-to-day life. It’s easy to find a Chinese person to tutor you.

How can I teach if my students don’t know a lot of English and I don’t know any Chinese?

Patiently.

But really, I don’t have space in this FAQ to say anything more than: It’s very possible and we will help you.

Culture Shock

What is culture shock?

Culture shock is suddenly realizing that everyone is staring at you and then deciding you need to stare back or make funny faces. Culture shock is not killing the cockroach because it’s the size of your pointer finger and then worrying about it running around your house for the rest of the day. Culture shock is crying because the air is slightly colder than usual and it almost feels like fall.

Culture shock is different for everyone. But it's caused by the same thing, the sudden realization that you're not in Kansas anymore.

Will I experience culture shock?

Yes.

Does culture shock ever really end?

Not really.

Will I survive culture shock?

Yes.

Will you help me survive culture shock?

Yes, of course. That's what we're here for.

The Mills

Are the Mills awesome?

They are more than awesome. They are completely made of awesome.

Should I bring Mr. Mills offerings of Butterfingers?

Yes.

How much do the Mills help once I arrive?

They will help you get to your school. They will help you deal with problems with your school. They will host holiday dinners. If I listed every way that the Mills helped us, I would never stop. Sufficient to say, they're like surrogate parents, up to and including patiently answering panicked phone calls in the middle of the night.

Will the Mills oversee my teaching?

The Mills will occasionally come observe your class. They will also discuss your teaching with you and provide suggestions and guidance.

How often will I see the Mills?

That depends on where you teach and what your schedule is. Many of us see them at least once a week.

Dress

Is there a dress code for teaching?

We expect you to dress modestly and professionally, always remembering that you represent the Mills's organization. Guys are not expected to wear ties or suits for teaching. Flip-flops in almost any form, even for woman, are not considered professional in China.

For specific questions about dress, please contact us directly.

Is there a dress code for life?

We expect you to dress modestly.

We do suggest you bring lots of (modest) shorts and light t-shirts. It's hot in Hainan! For specific questions about dress, please contact us directly.

Internet and Communication

Will I have internet?

Yes. Internet may be part of your contract, but if it isn't, it's inexpensive.

Will I be able to get on Facebook?

The proper, government-supported answer is "no." The other answer is "ask us when you get here."

How can I talk to my family?

There are many ways to talk to your family. You will have internet. Many of us use Skype. Some of us use a Chinese program called Wechat. Email always works. There are even ways you can call their phones.

Phones

Will my current phone work in China?

No, not unless you want to spend a lot of money.

How much is a phone in China?

You can get a really cheap phone for 150 – 200 yuan (\$25 – 30), but it will probably break easily. I got my middle-range, touchscreen-less Nokia for about 600 yuan (\$100). If you're lucky, you can get a nice off-brand for less.

How much will my cell-phone bill be?

Chinese phones (or the ones us teachers get) are like trac-phones. You put money on them and then texting and calling uses up your points. I spend less than 50 yuan (less than \$10) a month on my phone.