

Languages assistant testimonials-September 2011



Veena Preethi



in my small town.

"Each morning I would arrive at my elementary school and exchange greetings with my adorable students and friendly co-workers. I was happy to be there and they were happy I was there. I am returning next year because I had such a positive experience at my school and

I am an aspiring teacher and this past year as an auxiliar has given me confidence in the classroom.

I was able to observe and learn from several teachers' styles of classroom management. I learned some basic teaching methods, such as rewarding good behaviour because it is more constructive than constantly singling out bad behaviour. carry these lessons with me on my journey as a teacher.

Not only did I teach English, but I learned a great deal about Spanish language and culture in return. I went from barely being able to string together a sentence in Spanish to being able to maintain a conversation. I was thrilled. I attribute much of improvement to being surrounded by friendly townspeople with whom I could practice speaking. In addition to learning the language, I also explored the culture through dance. I enrolled in weekly flamenco classes and at the end of the year I was delighted to perform alongside my Spanish classmates. I settled comfortably into small-town Spanish life, but I also knew I should take advantage of the opportunity to explore. So I travelled. For me there is no better way to learn history than to immerse myself in the art, architecture and people of a country. I travelled through my region, Andalucía, as well as to Morocco and central Spain. On each trip another layer of the countries' rich and diverse pasts came to life. I know that speaking Spanish and understanding Spanish



culture and history will enrich the rest of my life"

Arcos de la Frontera, Cádiz

In my time as an auxiliar, I have progressed so far both professionally and personally, both as a teacher of English and a student of Spanish. I am excited to return to Spain and continue learning!

Languages assistant testimonials-September 2011



**Renata Abra
Skaletzky**



"This last year that I spent in Spain was an incredible growing experience. I became immersed in an entirely new culture, learned to converse in a different language, and determined that teaching is the career that I am certain that I want to pursue when I return to America.

I know that I was a positive attribute to the school this year and that I have a lot more to learn and contribute to the students, teachers, and the school. I can see how incredibly important this program is for Spain's future and I believe it is going to create many positive changes for the country as this young generation grows up and is able to communicate proficiently in English. It feels extremely gratifying to take part in helping to make this change for the Spanish people".



Colegio Vicente Alexandre,
Móstoles (Madrid)

Languages assistant testimonials-September 2011



Lauren A. Rodriguez



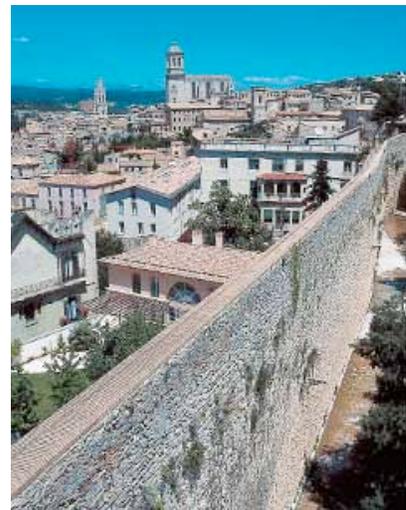
"My experience in Girona was truly a year of growth. It was an amazing opportunity to live and learn abroad.

I learned about the culture and politics in Catalunya and I also learned from my friends that were from around the world. I was able to travel every weekend, exploring Spain and other parts of Europe.

At school, I loved working with primary school children.

They were so kind, patient, and seemed to really want to know more about me; most children had never met anyone from California before. This motivated me to improve my lesson plans and to create fun and stimulating activities in English. Going the extra mile always made a difference in student participation and experience.

Overall I would recommend the program to anyone who is willing to dedicate a year abroad to changing your life and the lives of others".



Girona, Cataluña

Languages assistant testimonials-September 2011



Alissa Eve Weinstein



"I loved living and working in Spain. Getting the chance to immerse myself in a new culture and language has thoroughly enriched my life - both personally and professionally.

I knew before leaving that I enjoyed teaching, but after working at primary schools for three years in Spain, I have learned that my calling is to work with young children.

Young students are enthusiastic, quick-learners, affectionate, and direct in expressing their understanding, confusion, pleasure, or displeasure.

After working in a bilingual setting for the last two school years in Cantabria, I have a better sense of the best ways to teach --the more hands-on and fun the activity, the more the children will love what they're doing and learn at the same time. Also, when given a chance to express their creativity, young learners can amaze you with their clever and colorful ideas.



Santander, Cantabria

Spanish culture is open and warm and, for those who truly want to integrate themselves (as I did), it is an easy place to feel included and comfortable. The teachers I worked with at both schools were supportive and welcoming and this made my transition to Spanish life smoother. In addition, both my Spanish language skills and my professional teaching skills have dramatically improved in the last few years. And for this I am very thankful".

For more experiences on Northern Spain, please watch <https://goo.gl/GmAHmy>

Languages assistant testimonials-September 2011



Monique Rao



“My past year in Spain has by far been one of the best most rewarding experiences of my life. As I mentioned above I hope to one day work for the UN or any affiliated international

organization or NGO, so teaching English abroad was really the perfect background I needed. I don't believe that I could have asked for a more rewarding experience than working with children. I feel like that I learned just as much from them about their Spanish/Galician language and culture as they learned of mine. Although Galician weather was a bit harsh for my Californian bones, I was pleased to be placed in a region so rich in culture. I feel I gained such a unique experience learning about things that pertain solely to Galicia such as the Magosto festival or drinking a wonderful white wine called Albariño. As difficult and emotional as it was to leave Galicia, I'm sure it will be equally joyful to return to the autonomous region where I had the best experience in Spain I could imagine”.



San Xenxo, Galicia



Pontevedra, Galicia

Languages assistant testimonials-September 2011



Judith Porto Gonzalez

“Mi testimonio como asistente se remonta a Toulouse (Francia) entre los años 2001-2003, pero persiste en mi memoria como el primer día y he querido aprovechar la oportunidad que se me ha dado para compartir mi experiencia con vosotros.

Tuve la suerte de formar parte del equipo de lectores del Department d’Etudes Hispaniques de la Universidad Toulouse Le Mirail como asistente de español.

Como bien sabéis los que habéis sido asistentes y como intuís los que vais a serlo, este año en el extranjero os marcará

para siempre, profesional y personalmente.

Lo mucho que aprendí del estupendo equipo de docentes, de mis propios colegas asistentes y de mis estudiantes es algo impagable. Si uno está abierto a escuchar a los demás, a trabajar en equipo y a enseñar con humildad el enriquecimiento será mutuo.

Mi vocación en la enseñanza del español como lengua extranjera se reafirmó en aquellos dos años y 8 años después sigue siendo mi pasión.

Os deseo mucha suerte a los que vais a comenzar esta aventura y espero que disfrutéis tanto como yo”.



Castillo de Pambre



Vilar de Donas



Palas de Rey, Camino de Santiago, Galicia

Languages assistant testimonials-September 2011



Christine Samsom



"I have now completed almost a year in Spain, and it's been an incredible and educational experience.

In fact, I am looking forward to spending another great year at my school. I count myself very lucky, as I've had an amazing experience working in Spain.

Before I came to Spain, I was actually working full-time at a public relations firm in Santa Barbara, California. It was a good job, but I was yearning for a drastic change and I wanted to live abroad.

Becoming an auxiliar was a great decision and I've never looked back.

Now, I actually have been doing 2 jobs, the Language Assistant Program and I also work at humanitarian non-profit organization doing communications and outreach. I've been able to balance the 2 jobs and gain perspective in the different fields.

From the beginning, my colleagues at my school made me feel very welcome, like part of a family. I worked with 1st, 2nd, and 4th graders teaching English, Science/Social Studies, and Arts and Crafts. I was impressed at the level of English of my students, my 4th graders were very fluent and spoke almost no Spanish inside the classroom. I've been able to go on field trips (Reina Sofia museum, Siguenza, Theatres). My school had great celebrations for Halloween, Carnival, Peace Day, and the end-of-the-year, that I was able to participate in. I've been able to spend time with my school colleagues outside of school (dinners, going out) and have learned a lot about them and Spanish culture.

Additionally, I also give private English classes to various people, some children and some adults, including a journalist for Telecinco (a Spanish TV channel). Giving private classes is a very rewarding and interesting experience, and it has made me consider pursuing future opportunities in language education.



Madrid

My advice for future auxiliares is to really make an effort to integrate yourself into Spanish society, and branch out of your comfort zone and make Spanish friends and go to less-touristy spots. I highly recommend going to language exchanges (intercambio de idiomas) or having a language exchange friend to practice speaking the language".

Being in Spain also gave me the opportunity to travel extensively! Throughout my first year I traveled to various cities around Spain, and visited some cities in Portugal, Morocco, Turkey, Bulgaria, and Italy.

One of the best things about the program is the opportunity to become part of another culture and learn another language. It wasn't easy at first, but I've been able to become competent expressing and communicating in Spanish! Being in a foreign country where you have to open a bank account, get your hair cut, find an apartment, etc. ALL while speaking a foreign language is an intimidating but rewarding challenge. I look forward to continue improving my Spanish skills in the next year.

Languages assistant testimonials-September 2011



Lisa Marie Paer- Colegio Salvador Dalí (Madrid)

"Overall, I had a wonderful experience in Spain. I got to meet new people I would have never met otherwise, travel a lot, and experience an entirely different culture. I got to improve my Spanish and also learn things about English I hadn't known before".



Lleida, Catalunya

"The experience at my school was phenomenal. I have been raving to all my family and friends in the U.S. about how generous, kind, and caring the staff at my school were. I feel like I have a family in Spain now. I was so lucky to be chosen to work there. I created a connection with every single student and teacher.



Each person opened up into their family with open arms. I would recommend any new auxiliar to take the place at my old school in a heartbeat".

Lillie Kasim



Colegio Practique I, Lleida

Languages assistant testimonials-September 2011



"My year in Madrid was absolutely amazing! I have been to Madrid before, but this was my first time actually living there. It was definitely one of the greatest experiences in my life. I was able to learn a lot about the culture, food, and the language. I now have extensive knowledge about Madrid and Spain. I hope to go back and learn even more and visit places that I have yet to visit".

Marselis Josef

CEIP Esperanza, Madrid



"I had studied abroad in the same exact city and the two experiences could not have been more different. I was on my own this time, so I felt that I really could build a comfortable life that combined both



Samantha Merle Hurado

American and Spanish elements.

This experience is mind opening and I am able to see things from other points of views. Living in another country is hard, so I have confidence to face challenges".

CEIP Colón, Córdoba, Andalucía



Mezquita de Córdoba

Languages assistant testimonials-September 2011



Plaza de Castilla, Madrid

"Oh boy, I've had a wonderful time, and it's a great program to put a pause on your life and think about what you're doing and what you've done. It throws you into an educational experience foreign to your own. I saw good things and bad things, and similarities and differences".

Esteban Gil

Colegio Ginés de los Ríos, Parla, Madrid



"My school was fantastic and the experience was great. I plan to teach once I return to the US and hope to speak Spanish well enough to contribute to bilingual programs here in California".

Amy Dell

CEIP Doctor Fleming, Málaga



Málaga



Torremolinos

Languages assistant testimonials-September 2011



"My experience as a cultural ambassador in Murcia was very great. For the first time I was able to experience teaching others, in the high school and also by giving private classes to children and adults.



Murcia

It was very beneficial learning to work with a wide age range of students. Part way through the year I began living with a Spanish family and really enjoyed the experience of being taken care of by a Spanish mom and eating food that was very natural and fresh and which took much time to prepare. I enjoyed the lifestyle in Murcia. With this lifestyle, I am able to have more time for myself and feel more comfortable and relaxed. I was able to participate in many classes and cultural activities in the city of Murcia and make local friends".



Brianna Stehle



Puerta de Alcalá

"I was an auxiliar de conversation for a year and a half in Madrid and I absolutely had an amazing time. While I was there I had the opportunity to meet a lot of amazing people that I still keep in touch with. The teachers and staff at the school that I worked with were all very nice and very helpful. I highly recommend this program to anyone that wants the opportunity to have a unique experience of living abroad".

Karla Nastasha Basurto

Nuestra Senora del Remolino in El Molar, Madrid

“Spain is a gorgeous country with so much to explore and do! Any amazing city is a quick train ride away. The people are really kind, the food and wine are exquisite, and the beaches are lovely.

This past year I was blessed with being able to teach English at Juan de Távara in Puertollano. The staff was so welcoming and trusted me with all the activities I chose for each different age level. Having different subjects on different days made my experience very well rounded and more pleasant. The students were aware of the expectations that came with the bilingual program and all of them were appropriately picked and had an adequate English speaking and listening level.

The professors allowed me to choose and guide all activities for their classroom during the assigned given hour. They were a pleasure to work with because they were all so open minded towards me sharing my American holidays and traditions. I was allowed to be creative and could bring in items, treats, and videos which helped enhance the students learning and become more interested in learning English. They provided me with any needed items such as English books, a pen drive, internet, a powerpoint cannon, chalk, etc. I had full access to the English and normal library in the school. They are a devoted bunch that will stop at nothing and welcome new innovative ways to keep the interest and motivation in learning and teaching English”



Ciudad Real, Castilla la Mancha

**Jeannette Rocha
Monroy**

Puertollano, Ciudad Real

Languages assistant testimonials-September 2011

“Choosing to live in Spain while working as an English teaching assistant was the best and most rewarding decision of my life. Not only was I given the opportunity to live abroad, travel, and to meet amazing people but most importantly to grow as an individual. This is mainly due to the nature of the program as it gives you full independence. The program forces you to interact with the real world as you make your own decisions regarding living situations, budgeting, and how you choose to spend your money and free time. Since coming home, my family and friends, but most importantly I have noted the positive changes in me. While in Spain, I was able to work with secondary school children and adults at I.E.S Vega de Mijas in Málaga. I was very lucky to be placed at a school that is extremely dedicated to teaching English through various projects that expose the students on making the world a better place. This is why I am very happy to be returning for a second year to continue the amazing experience of teaching and of living in a place that is full of culture, wonderful people, and eases the opportunity to expose myself to the rest of the world”.

Andrea Bobadilla

I.E.S Vega de Mijas, Málaga



Puerto de Málaga

Languages assistant testimonials-September 2011

"Over the past two years, I have experienced my share of ups and downs in Spain. I spent my first year as a language assistant in a small town in Mallorca where people were not as friendly as I had hoped. Although I already spoke Spanish, there was a definite language barrier which made it difficult to connect with the Mallorquín speaking staff. The students, however, were very receptive.

I lived in the city of Palma and tried effortfully to be active in the community. I took advantage of my free time by volunteering; taking Spanish classes at the EOI; apprenticing in a well-known, traditional Mallorcan bakery; and compiling a [blog](#) for assistants in the Balearic islands.

I also encountered a few unfortunate events: a bike accident and getting robbed by a co-worker. These events, although dramatic and drawn-out, were both learning experiences and I now have a better understanding of the legal system in Spain.

I am very optimistic about moving to Madrid and look forward capitalizing on my experience abroad when I return to the U.S".

Hannah Cowdrey

Palma de Mallorca



Palma de Mallorca, Islas Baleares

Languages assistant testimonials-September 2011



La Giralda de Sevilla

“My participation in the Auxiliares de Conversacion Program has allowed me to greatly improve my communication in Spanish, understanding of the Spanish culture, and teaching and teamwork skills. As a result of this program, I have greater confidence in myself and my language ability and am more flexible to varying situations. In addition, I am able to understand other points of view better than before”.

Miranda Richelle Erk

IES Francisco Rivero, Los Molares, Sevilla



Feria de Abril, Sevilla

Languages assistant testimonials-September 2011



"Living in Spain for the past year was amazing. I have really enjoyed teaching and after this experience, I really want to become a certified teacher. Working in this program has helped me figure out what I want to do for the rest of my life and I am so grateful. I really enjoyed working with young children and I felt that I made learning English something fun for them. When I was in the classroom it didn't feel like work because I loved being with the kids so much.

**Stephanie
Janeen Campbell**

Everyone I worked with at my schools was very pleasant and kind to me and I still keep in touch with the teachers that I worked with. At the end of it all, I was really sad to leave. My teachers, students and I were crying and it really was an unforgettable experience. I'm so excited to participate in the program again!".

IES Baltasar Porcel and La Purisima



Andratx, Mallorca



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