How to Become a Teacher

Job Description
A teacher is responsible for providing an educational atmosphere where students have the opportunity to fulfill their potential for intellectual, emotional, physical, spiritual and psychological growth. This person is responsible for organizing and implementing an instructional program that will result in students achieving academic success.

Work Environment
Teachers typically work indoors in a well-lighted facility, such as a school, day care center, religious center, community center, etc. During play activities, a person might work outdoors for short periods of time. Teachers can work part-time or full time, some work long hours, and some work 9-10 months per year.

Career Outlook
Elementary School Teachers is one of the fastest and largest growing occupations for 2004 – 2014. The growth projections for teachers in California average 19.7 percent.

Income
Most teaching jobs range from $20,000 - $121,000 depending upon the type of credentials, level of education, years experience, and educational system employed (public or private).

Top monthly salary in California:
1. Preschool Teacher ($2,932)
2. Kindergarten Teacher ($4,802)
3. Elementary School Teacher ($5,231)
4. Middle School Teacher ($5,258)
5. High School Teacher ($5,432)

Education & License Requirements
For all teaching grade levels, education requirements vary from state to state. Requirements are based on employer requirements, level of education and training, and the source of funding for programs. The information provided is based on California data.

1. Preschool Teacher – Also known as Nursery School Teacher
Teaches children two to five years of age

Preparation:
• Early Childhood Education (ECE) college level courses
• State teacher certification
• Demonstrated ability to work effectively with young children
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Requirements for license:

• Five-year regular teaching permit:

  Regular permits require:
  24 semester units of ECE, and
  16 semester units in general education, and one of the following:
  Two experience periods* as a paid aide or assistant in a child development
  program, or
  Three experience periods as a volunteer in an instructional capacity, or
  One experience period with a Limited Instructional Permit, or
  Two or three semester unit field course work and one experience period.

• Complete 16 semester units of course work in general education toward a
  Bachelor’s Degree
• Pass California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST)
• 24 semester units of coursework in Early Childhood Education (ECE)
• 2 years of experience as a paid Assistant in a child development program (other
  exceptions, please visit Eureka.org for more details)

Local Colleges:

CSU San Jose State University
  • B.A. and M.A. degrees in Child and Adolescent Development

CSU San Francisco State University
  • B.A. Degree in Child and Adolescent Development
  • M.A. Degree in Early Childhood Education (Education)

2. Kindergarten Teacher
Kindergarten Teachers specialize in teaching children after one year of Preschool
Please see the requirements of Elementary School Teacher

3. Elementary School Teacher
Teaches Kindergarten through 8th grade

Preparation:

• Multiple Subject Teaching Credential
• B.A. Degree in Liberal Studies or Liberal Arts; or choose a college that offers a
  Teacher Education program that allows a student to qualify for a degree and
  credential simultaneously, such as SJSU
• A Liberal Arts program includes teacher preparation courses in most of the
  following: Art, Child Development, Early Childhood Education (ECE) Theory,
• Education Media, Language Arts, Math, Music, Psychology, Science, Social
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Requirements for license:

• 5 years work experience directly related to each subject listed on the credential
• High School Diploma or GED
• One of the following: California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST); National Teacher Examination (NTE); Single Subject Assessment for Teaching (SSAT); Multiple Subjects Assessment for Teaching (MSAT)
• Fingerprinting and criminal background check
• CBEST for first-time applicants
• Credential renewed every 5 years

Local College:

CSU San Jose State University

• B.A. Degree, Child and Adolescent Development, Preparation for Teaching
• Multiple Subjects CLAD/BCLAD Teaching Credential
• Masters of Education, Curriculum and Instruction (Education)

4. Middle School Teacher

Elementary School Teachers specialize in teaching teenagers in junior high
Please see requirements for Elementary School Teacher

5. High School Teacher  - also known as Secondary School Teacher

Teach students in 9th through 12th grade in a particular subject matter

Preparation:

• B.A. Degree that qualifies a person for teacher certification
• Single Subject Teaching Credential in the teaching subject
• Demonstrated teaching skills

Local Colleges:

CSU San Jose State University  UC Berkeley
CSU San Francisco State University  UC Davis
CSU East Bay  UC Santa Cruz
CSU San Diego State  UC San Diego

Requirements for license:

• 5 years work experience directly related to each subject listed on the credential
• High School Diploma or GED
• One of the following: California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST); National Teacher Examination (NTE); Single Subject Assessment for Teaching (SSAT); Multiple Subjects Assessment for Teaching (MSAT)
• Fingerprinting and criminal background check
• CBEST for first-time applicants
• Subject-matter exams required for multi-subjects applicants, unless subject matter equivalent is obtained from a California college or university
• Credential renewed every 5 years
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Certification
There are several avenues toward certification

• **College**: Four- or five-year college degree programs in Elementary Education or Secondary Education will lead to certification upon graduation.
  
  • You have the option at certain colleges to earn your license to teach if your major has an associated Teacher Preparation Program.
  • Take state licensing test to be a teacher in the subject matter of the B.A. degree.

• **Graduate school**: Getting a Master’s degree in education isn’t absolutely necessary to becoming a teacher, but some schools require that a teacher pursue a Master’s in Education or another specialty subject within a certain number of years after being hired. A degree in higher education is also required to advance into school administration. Many teachers choose to work toward a higher degree after teaching for a few years.

• **Emergency Teaching Credential**: States can issue emergency credentials to college graduates who want to teach but who have not yet met the state’s minimum requirements for regular credentials. These are given under the pretense that the teacher will eventually take all of the required courses for valid certification (so the teacher must take classes outside of work while they are teaching). A teacher with this credential usually works as a substitute teacher until all requirements are completed.

Exams

• **Meet the criteria for an elementary-level 5-year Multiple Subject Preliminary Teaching Credential**. You must pass the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST) with a passing score on the appropriate subject matter tests OR complete a commission-approved elementary subject matter program. In addition, you must pass the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA) and complete a multiple-subject teacher preparation program, which includes a successful student teaching experience.

• **Meet the criteria for a secondary-level 5-year Single Subject Preliminary Teaching Credential**. You must pass the CBEST, with a passing score on the appropriate subject matter examination OR complete a commission-approved subject matter program OR (for "Specialized Science" candidates) complete subject-matter course work from the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

  In addition, you must complete a single-subject teacher preparation program, which includes a successful student teaching program.

Obtain a Professional Clear Credential after you complete 5 years of work with a 5-year preliminary credential. For both the elementary and secondary levels, this credentialing is detailed and changes from year to year. Check the Department of Education Web site for the most current requirements.
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Sources of Additional Information

Association of Teacher Educators (ATE)
www.ate1.org
703-620-3110

California Department of Education
http://www.cde.ca.gov/index.asp

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
www.naeyc.org
1-800-424-2460

North American Montessori Teacher’s Association
www.montessori-namta.org
440-834-4011

Teacher’s Union
American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
www.aft.org
1-800-238-1133

The State of California Commission on Teacher Credentialing
1900 Capitol Ave.
P.O. Box 944270
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 45-7254

Employment Development Department
http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/

Bureau of Labor Statistics
http://www.bls.gov/

Worknet Career Videos: Preschool and Kindergarten Teachers
http://www.sjclmi.org/WkNT_ENG/calcareer/31303E.HTML