

# Teaching English in Thailand

by ReadWorks



Michelle Gadot had never been to Thailand before. She didn't speak the language, and she didn't have family members who lived there; in fact, she didn't know anyone who lived there at all. But in 2007, Michelle found herself teaching English to children in one of the busiest cities in the world: Bangkok.

Michelle was twenty-two years old when she went to Thailand. (In fact, she had her twenty-third birthday the day after she arrived in the country.) After she graduated from Ithaca College in 2006, she worked as a server for a year. "I didn't know what I wanted to do for a career," she said. "But I've always wanted to travel and live abroad. When I heard about the programs available for young people to move overseas and teach in different countries, I thought, 'That's perfect for me!'"

She moved back into her parents' home in New Jersey to save money for her trip. She worked at a café and saved as much as she could, knowing that she wanted to travel as often as possible while she was in Asia. When finally she found a placement teaching English to high school students in Bangkok, she booked a plane ticket to Thailand for October of that year.

Bangkok is the capital of Thailand, a small country in Southeast Asia known for its food, beaches, and culture. The city sits on the Chao Phraya River, and is home to more than eight million people. It is one of the most modern cities in the region.

Thailand is a popular destination for people who want to teach English. Other countries in Asia, such as China, Japan, and South Korea are similarly popular. Young people from English-speaking countries, including the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, flock to these areas to live and teach abroad. Usually, hiring packages for new teachers include airfare to and from their home countries, training, housing, and salary. Teachers are expected to work full-time.

Michelle signed a contract to teach for four months in Thailand. She was very excited to meet new people and experience a different culture. She had traveled a little bit with her family before moving to Thailand, but she had never lived outside the United States for a substantial amount of time.

The first thing that surprised Michelle about Bangkok was the rain. It was monsoon season when she arrived, so for hours, the sky poured water onto anyone unlucky enough to be caught without an umbrella.

She liked that the streets seemed to come alive every morning. "There were people setting up makeshift restaurants on the corners. And the food," she gushed, "was amazing. I still dream about the papaya salad."

At work, Michelle noticed that Thai schools were very different from American schools. "I was surprised by some things," she explained. "Some things were very different than when I was in school."

She went on to explain that in Thailand, the students were greeted every morning by their principal. They also practiced Buddhism in school and prayed every day.

Students went to school from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., and they were very excited to learn English. Michelle played games with them and read them stories to help them practice the language.

But it wasn't all work for Michelle. "I really tried to travel as often as I could. I took weekend trips to nearby beaches, and visited temples and museums as much as possible. And I went to Laos and Cambodia too."

Michelle found it easy to travel in Thailand. "It's a great place to travel if you're a tourist. Everything is set up to make things easier for you-buses, boats, planes."

Although Michelle loved her time in Thailand, she began to miss her family. "It was hard being so far from home. And the time difference is about twelve hours. It was difficult to catch my friends and family on the phone at times that were convenient for both of us."

After completing her contract, she taught in Thailand for two more months at a summer camp and then found a short-term teaching job in South Korea. Then, it was time to go home. "It was a life-changing experience. I'd recommend it to anyone."

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Where did Michelle teach English in 2007?

- A. Ithaca
- B. Bangkok
- C. Seoul
- D. Beijing

2. Which of the following shows the sequence of events in the correct order?

- A. Michelle moves in with her parents; Michelle flies to Bangkok; Michelle signs a contract to teach in Thailand; Michelle teaches in South Korea.
- B. Michelle flies to Bangkok; Michelle signs a contract to teach in Thailand; Michelle teaches in South Korea; Michelle moves in with her parents.
- C. Michelle signs a contract to teach in Thailand; Michelle teaches in South Korea; Michelle moves in with her parents; Michelle flies to Bangkok.
- D. Michelle moves in with her parents; Michelle signs a contract to teach in Thailand; Michelle flies to Bangkok; Michelle teaches in South Korea.

3. When Michelle is in Thailand, she has difficulty keeping in touch with family and friends.

What evidence from the passage best supports this conclusion?

- A. The time difference makes it hard for Michelle and her family to find time to talk on the phone.
- B. Before moving to Thailand, Michelle has never lived outside the United States for a substantial amount of time.
- C. Michelle begins to miss her family even though she loves her time in Thailand.
- D. Michelle thinks her time abroad was a life-changing experience that she would recommend to anyone.

4. Michelle moves to Thailand without knowing the language or anyone who lives there. Based on this information, what can you conclude about Michelle?

- A. Michelle hesitates to try new things.
- B. Michelle knows a lot about Thailand.
- C. Michelle is an adventurous person.
- D. Michelle does not make smart decisions.

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A. a woman who goes on a backpacking trip around the world after college
- B. the ways that American schools and Thai schools are different
- C. reasons why Thailand is a popular destination to teach English

D. the experiences of a woman who teaches English in Thailand

6. Read the following sentences.

"Thailand is a popular destination for people who want to teach English. Other countries in Asia, such as China, Japan, and South Korea are similarly popular. Young people from English-speaking countries, including the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, **flock** to these areas to live and teach abroad."

As used in this sentence, what does the word "**flock**" most nearly mean?

- A. move in a large number or group
- B. learn about something by studying it
- C. speak in the native language of a country
- D. move at a slow and steady pace

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Michelle always wanted to travel and live abroad, \_\_\_\_\_ she was excited for the opportunity to go to Thailand.

- A. but
- B. initially
- C. so
- D. such as

8. When Michelle signs her contract to teach in Thailand, what is she excited about?

9. Why does Michelle think that teaching programs in other countries are "perfect" for her?

10. Michelle describes teaching in Thailand as "a life-changing experience." Explain what likely made her experience in Thailand so life-changing. Support your answer using information from the passage.