Technology Checklist

These days, teaching English online doesn't require much in the way of equipment or setup. The checklist below covers what you'll need. While the list might appear lengthy, I think you'll find that very likely you already have most of what you need to get started. Technology needn't be a deterrent to getting started teaching online.

- Suitable room or nook. Before anything else, select the best spot in your home to give classes. It should be as free of distractions as possible.
- Computer, either a PC or Mac. Unless your computer is ancient, it likely is sufficient. You don't need lots of disk space or processing power. Don't invest in a new computer until you test your current one.
- Webcam. Most computers these days have webcams built in, but if yours doesn't have one, you can buy an external webcam to plug into your computer's USB drive.
- Internet connection. If you live in a developed country, your current internet package is likely sufficient for teaching online. Note that some online schools (if you choose to work through a school), do stipulate a minimum connection speed. Yo can test your system's speed for free at a number of websites, such as http://www.speedtest.net/.
- Headset with microphone. While your computer's built-in webcam is probably sufficient for teaching online, I would not rely on its built-in microphone or speakers. The sound quality may be poor, and background noise will prove to be distracting, for you and for your student. You should be able to find a decent quality headset, with microphone, for no more than USD40.
- Skype, which handles the actual connecting of you and your student. Skype is today the *de facto* standard in VOIP (voice over internet protocol) communication. Skype works on most devices (PC, Mac, iPad, cell phones) and is available for download free at www.Skype.com. Note that Skype-to-Skype calling is always free.
- PayPal. You'll need a way to get paid, and PayPal is the most widely-used service out there. It automatically converts payments made in foreign currencies into your home currency (in exchange for a small fee, of course, about 3%). It's free to set up an account. Sign up for free at https://www.paypal.com/gl/signup/account.
- An email account. I like Gmail, but whatever you have should be fine. Email allows you to contact your students and send them materials for class.
- Microsoft Word or similar software, to open and read documents. If you don't already have Microsoft software and don't want to put any more money in Bill Gates' pockets, you can download Apache OpenOffice suite for free at https://www.openoffice.org/download/.
- Adobe Acrobat Reader, to read documents in PDF format. It's available free at https://get.adobe.com/reader/.
- I suggest having a service to allow you to send larger documents to your students. Google Drive (https://www.google.com/drive/download/) and Dropbox

(https://www.dropbox.com/install) are probably the most common of such services.
- Finally, I suggest loading WhatsApp on your cell phone. It's a handy way for you and your student to stay in case anything unexpected arises. It's available for free at the Google Play Store.

Again, you likely have most of the items on this list already. And unless you decide that it's time to buy a new computer, everything on the list is either free or very inexpensive. (Tip: If you DO decide to buy a new computer, save the receipt! You may be able to deduct the cost of the computer on your taxes.)

And notice what ISN'T required: a website! Sure, you can set one up later if you want to, but I'll show you a free and easy alternative, so that you can bypass unneeded tech distractions and expenses, and focus on actually teaching!

To learn more about specific requirements, about Skype, and about getting yourself up and running quickly to teach English online, pick up my guide at the low, low price of only $7, at www.HowToTeachEnglishOnline.net. I'll step you through the entire process.

Technology should not be a deterrent to teaching English online!