

## One Year Testimonial by Adeline Brown

I was always one to play it safe. I liked things that I know, and I found it unnecessary to go out of my comfort zone. I kept my head down in school, worked really hard through college and university and graduated with a degree in Journalism. I was going through the motions. Despite thoroughly enjoying my degree, I still wasn't sure what I wanted to be "when I grow up." I applied for graduate jobs non-the-less... because everyone else was. I wasn't thrilled or excited; I just thought that's what I was supposed to do. Right?

I got an interview for a great job in the capital. It was a career job that would set me up for the rest of my life. I travelled to London and got to the final stages, so had a 1-2-1 chat with one of the founding members. We talked about my CV and my experience, which was good. But he said something to me which has stuck ever since. "You're CV is great, Adeline, but you don't have much **life experience**, do you?" I tried my best not to look offended and blabbed on about why I should get the job... but I knew he was right! It's as though he put into words something that I already knew, but chose to ignore. I didn't get the job. Rejection is never good, but this was bitter sweet - he gave me a chance. If I'd got the job, I'd have been stuck...Plodding along in life, probably in quite blissful ignorance thinking my life was OK.

Instead, at one of the many cross-roads in life, I took a different route. I refused to find a career job. A serving job would do for the time being, to save some money for my new plan. I wanted to travel. I wanted to get **life experience**. I always fancied the idea of teaching, and my friends and family said I might be good at it. I also knew I wanted to be gone for an extended period, so teaching ESL would be perfect.

Whilst working I completed an online TEFL certificate, just to boost my job prospects and get a theoretical foundation of teaching. The day I 'graduated', I looked up at the world map in my kitchen and thought "Now, where the hell do I go?!" Narrowing my search wasn't easy; I had no idea where to start. I considered Latin America, or Europe, or Africa. My sister had travelled to South East Asia the year before and said her favourite place was Thailand. Many of my friends, too, had caught the 'travelling bug', and they all loved Thailand. I'd seen the pictures and read it had relatively cheap living costs, and travel in SE Asia looked wonderful. So that's where I decided I wanted to spend the next year of my life.

Super English was the first (and only!) job that I applied for. Having browsed the webpage for quite a while, and reading testimonials like this, it seemed like a really friendly, supportive and welcoming agency to work for. So I was thrilled to have got the job following a Skype interview with Peter. I realised how much I wanted this job, and actually felt excited, which is far more than I can say for the job I almost got in London.

When I told my friends and family they were shocked, but no-one was more surprised than me when I well and truly left my comfort zone, by getting on a one-way flight to the other side of the world all by myself. Go me!

I was nervous of course, landing in Thailand. I had prepared myself for the culture shock, but the heat was more than I'd imagined (and I'm not complaining!). I was kindly picked up by Peter at the airport and was taken straight to the 'Big house', which was already almost full with incoming teachers. Everyone was buzzing with excitement and expectation, and the 'uni atmosphere' was really great. Everyone was learning and exploring together, and the returning teachers were so helpful with showing us newbies around. I did so many cool, exciting, fun, new things in the first two weeks that there was no time for homesickness. I think that goes for the rest of the year too, actually. You're constantly thankful for the experiences that you miss home less than expected. I do miss family and friends a lot, but if that's the only negative aspect about being away, then that's not such a bad thing, is it?!

The training Super English provided was very encouraging and helpful before starting the semester. Especially for those of us who have had little-to-no experience in a classroom. We learnt and discussed things that were to prove vital not only for the first few days of teaching, but for the rest of the school year.

Never-the-less, everyone had those 'first day' jitters. But, thankfully, Thidamaepra is a wonderful, wonderful school. The children are absolutely adorable, and will never fail to put a smile on your face. You have a great deal of resources for teaching, and the staff – both English and Thai – are there to help, always with a gracious smile. After the first day or two, you wonder why you were so nervous in the first place. This past year I have grown so much as a person, but even more so as 'TeechaAtaleen'. I have been given the freedom to manage the classroom in my own way, and to plan and deliver lessons as I choose. The learning curve has been off the scale! I have developed more than I thought possible, and know that the classroom experience here will help me no-end in all other teaching ventures.

Ultimately, the decision to live and work abroad in Thailand has been the best of my life. It may sound cheesy, but it's true. It has been phenomenal. I have gained excellent professional experience in a job that I now hope to pursue, I have met many incredible people, and I have seen some amazing places. This experience has opened my eyes to the world, and made me even more adventurous. I have changed so much, for the better. As my time here comes to an end, I am planning to travel South East Asia before returning to England. But not for long. I hope to teach abroad at least one more time before starting my new career as a teacher in the UK. I am so grateful for this year, which has, without doubt, been the best of my life. Thank you to everyone who made it so wonderful.

Adeline Brown







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# Thidamaepra MEP Phuket English Camp







