

A HANDBOOK

FOR U.S. ENGLISH LANGUAGE
TEACHING ASSISTANTS IN
AUSTRIA
2009/2010

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FOREWORD

The purpose of this booklet is to provide you with advice and information, which you may need before leaving the United States, while preparing for your arrival in Austria, and during your stay in Austria.

The material is general in nature. It is illustrative and by no means comprehensive. Some opinions contained in this document may seem colored by personal experiences of former teaching assistants from whose reports we draw. No two experiences as an English Language Assistant are alike, and you should bear that in mind when reading this handbook.

The midyear survey reports and final reports you complete during the year will offer a good opportunity for constructive comments on the materials provided and experience as an English Language Assistant. These reports will be used to periodically update the information included in this handbook.

If the booklet proves to be helpful in preparing you for your year in Austria, it will have served its purpose.

Please bring it with you to Austria and refer to it as needed throughout your stay.

A Handbook for U.S. English Language Teaching Assistants in Austria 2009-2010

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1. Introduction

Since 1963, 2,524 U.S. college and university graduates have served as English foreign language teaching assistants in Austria under the auspices of a program that the Austrian-American-Educational Commission (Fulbright Commission) has managed for the Austrian Ministry of Education. Although the majority of U.S. teaching assistants are not officially Fulbright grantees, the Commission's management of this program falls under the Fulbright Program's mandate to "promote further mutual understanding between the peoples of Austria and the United States through educational and cultural contacts." Article 2 (10) of the bilateral agreement that established the Commission in 1963 also listed such activities as part of the Commission's mandate: "[to] administer or assist in administering or otherwise facilitate educational and cultural programs and activities that further the purposes of the present Agreement but are not financed by funds made available under this Agreement. . ."

The U.S. teaching assistantship program started small – initially with six positions – and has steadily expanded in recent years. About one hundred forty U.S. teaching assistants will be placed in Austrian secondary schools in all nine Austrian federal provinces (*Bundesländer*) and in communities large and small during the 2009/2010 academic year. They will work at some 200 schools with 1,600 different classes and have contact with an estimated 40,000 students between the ages of 10 and 18.

The mutually beneficial nature of this program is obvious. It contributes substantially to the quality of foreign language instruction in Austria, for teachers and students alike. It is also a fine opportunity for U.S. teaching assistants, who not only serve as linguistic and cultural ambassadors in the Austrian classroom but also, upon returning to the U.S., are truly assets for and advocates of Austria. Given the nature of their work and the number of people they have contact with in an educational setting, U.S. teaching assistants make a considerable contribution to the promotion of mutual understanding.

Working in a foreign institution is just as challenging as living in a foreign culture. The purpose of this *Handbook for U.S. Teaching Assistants in Austria* is to provide incoming teaching assistants with background information on the Austrian school system, the obligations of teaching assistants, pragmatic tips, and resources for instruction. It is based on surveys completed by former U.S. teaching assistants in Austria. The bulk of the text was drafted by Ms. Joan Riegert, who between two stays in Austria as a U.S. teaching assistant, has taught German in the White Bear Lake School system (in a suburb of St. Paul, Minnesota). It was edited by the Fulbright Commission staff and is revised and updated on an annual basis.

2. The Austrian School System at a Glance

2.1 Introduction

The Austrian school system is based on federal legislation that not only provides for a general institutional framework but also centrally regulates a number of detailed issues on a national level, such as school types and curricula. The Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur, BMUKK*) is responsible for overseeing primary and secondary schools, which are administered by boards of education (*Landesschulräte*) in the nine Austrian federal provinces. For extensive information on the Austrian school system, consult the Ministry of Education's website: <http://www.bmukk.gv.at/>

The most striking difference between the school systems in Austria and the United States is that Austria fundamentally has a “two track” system. In the United States, students prepare themselves for different educational and professional careers by choosing particular courses offered in the curriculum of basically one school type: the high school. In Austria, educational differentiation is based upon attendance at one of the different types of secondary schools in Austria. After children complete four years of primary education (*Volksschule*) at the age of ten, their parents make far-reaching decisions about their children's future by choosing one of two educational tracks.

2.2 General Secondary Schools Track

One educational track that students and parents can choose is a school designed to provide four or five years of mandatory general education (*Hauptschule*). (Nine years of compulsory education are required by law in Austria). After completing the *Hauptschule* at the age of 14 or 15, most teenagers in this track enroll in trade schools (14% of Austrian students) or vocational-technical training or apprenticeship programs (40%). (Note: *Hauptschule* students with exceptional grades also may transfer into the other “higher school” track at the age of 14.)

2.3 “Higher” Secondary Schools Track

The other educational track is an eight-year “higher school” track designed to prepare students for a university education or further academic or professional training. They can choose the general track (*allgemeinbildende höhere Schulen, AHS*) (20%) or attend schools, which provide advanced vocational training (*berufsbildende höhere Schulen, BHS*) (23%). In order to enroll in an Austrian university, students must complete one of these “higher schools,” which generally speaking have a more rigorous curriculum than an “average” U.S. high school. (Note: 73% of U.S. eighteen year-olds complete high school.)

Age	U.S. Grade	Austrian <i>Schulstufe</i> or <i>Klasse</i>	Primary and Secondary Educational Paths in Austria			
6	1	1	General Primary Education <i>(Volksschule)</i>			
7	2	2				
8	3	3				
9	4	4				
10	5	1	"Higher" Secondary Schools <i>(Höhere Schulen)</i> Lower-Secondary Level: <i>(Unterstufe)</i> AHS		General Secondary Schools <i>(Hauptschule)</i>	
11	6	2				
12	7	3				
13	8	4				
14	9	5	Upper-Secondary Level <i>(Oberstufe)</i> AHS (general academic)	Upper-Secondary Level <i>(Oberstufe)</i> BHS (vocational technical)	Trade schools (2-3 year programs)	Vocational-technical training and apprenticeships
15	10	6				
16	11	7				
17	12	8				
18		9*			Labor market	
19			University studies, <i>Fachhochschulen</i> , "colleges" (<i>Akademien</i>) for teachers, social workers, health professions, etc., "white collar" labor market			

* Note: Many higher secondary vocational-technical schools (BHS) have 5 years in the upper level.

Education at a higher secondary academic school lasts for an overall period of eight years. The "higher school" track is split into a lower-secondary level (*Unterstufe*) of general education (ages 10-14) and an upper-secondary level (*Oberstufe*) of specialization (ages 15-18). After completing the lower-secondary level, students may move into a variety of different four-year upper-secondary level programs with varying fields of generalization or specialization. Therefore, the second most important educational decision in a student's academic life in Austria is made at the age of fourteen.

Most teaching assistants will be working with students on the lower or upper levels of higher secondary schools.

2.4 Higher Secondary Academic Schools (AHS)

The purpose of lower- and upper-secondary academic schools (*allgemeinbildende höhere Schulen, AHS*) is to give students a broad and extended general education and to provide them with the skills and knowledge necessary for a university education or for more specialized education or training at post-secondary technical and vocational colleges called *Fachhochschulen* or *Akademien*.

The upper-secondary academic school (*Oberstufenrealgymnasium*) only comprises of the 5. Klasse – 8. Klasse (U.S. grades 9 to 12) and may be attended after successful completion of the fourth year of a lower-secondary school. Students conclude upper-secondary academic schools with comprehensive oral and written exams in three to four subjects (including German, Mathematics, and one foreign language) called the *Reifeprüfung* and are awarded a secondary school leaving certificate called the *Matura*, which entitles them to enroll in an Austrian university. With the exception of arts and music universities and

university degrees in medicine, there are no entrance exams at Austrian universities. Acceptance into Austrian universities is based on the principle of open access to all students who have a Matura.

There is a core curriculum taught in all school types up to the *Reifeprüfung*-exam. In addition to compulsory subjects, individual school types provide for further specialization in certain subject areas depending on their special focus. Compulsory subjects are: German, foreign languages, history and social studies, geography and economics, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology and ecology, psychology and philosophy, musical education, art classes, handicrafts (at the lower-secondary level), and computer science.

There are several different types of AHS schools, which have some autonomy in placing their educational emphases. However, it is common for these “different schools” to be structured as curriculum track options within one school administrative structure and building. The individual “school types” are:

Gymnasium is the “classic” lower- and upper-secondary academic school. English is studied from the 1. Klasse (U.S. grade 5) onwards. Usually, Latin is studied from the 3. Klasse (U.S. grade 7) onwards, and a third foreign language is studied from the 5. Klasse (U.S. grade 9) onwards. Many schools, however, opt for different offers.

Realgymnasium is a lower- and upper- secondary academic school beginning at the 3. Klasse (U.S. grade 7). It offers either Latin or a second foreign language, emphasizes mathematics and science with descriptive geometry (at the upper-secondary level), geometrical drawing (an elective at the lower-secondary level), and projects emphasize practice-oriented education (labs, computer science).

Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium is a secondary academic school emphasizing economics.

Naturwissenschaftliches Oberstufenrealgymnasium is an upper-secondary academic school for natural sciences.

Oberstufenrealgymnasium mit Instrumentalunterricht is an upper-secondary academic school specializing in instrumental music.

Oberstufenrealgymnasium mit bildnerischem Schwerpunkt is an upper-secondary academic school emphasizing art and handicraft classes.

2.5 Higher Secondary Vocational-Technical Schools (BHS)

After completing the **Unterstufe** (1. Klasse to 4. Klasse, U.S. grades 5 to 8), students may opt to move into a variety of different upper-secondary schools that provide specific vocational and technical training with an additional 5 years of education. The core curricula of these different school types reflect their respective fields of specialization.

Students also conclude these higher secondary vocational schools with comprehensive written and oral exams (*Reifeprüfung*) and are awarded a *Matura*, which entitles them to enroll at an Austrian university. In addition to the *Matura*, they also receive technical-vocational education diplomas that certify their skills and entitle them to work in certain fields or professions.

Individual “school types” are:

Höhere technische Lehranstalten (HTL) are intensive five-year upper-secondary level programs for engineering (39 hours per week) with various fields of specialization in engineering. During the first two years, the emphasis is on general education. After the second year, students may further specialize in their respective fields.

Handelsakademien (HAK) are five-year upper-secondary level programs in business administration. They provide students with an integrated business (commercial) education, which qualifies them for white-collar jobs in commercial and administrative branches.

Höhere Lehranstalten für wirtschaftliche Berufe (HLWB) are upper secondary programs designed to prepare students for occupations in the service industries. They offer classes in a third foreign language, business, ecology, nutrition and business management, business organization and industrial management, human ecology, social administration, social services and health care and cultural tourism.

Höhere Lehranstalten für Tourismus (HLT) are specialized in tourism and offer additional choices in the following areas: foreign languages and business, hotel management, tourism management and cultural entertainment.

Bildungsanstalten für Kindergartenpädagogik und Sozialpädagogik (BAKIP) train nursery school teachers and non-teaching supervisory staff.

Höhere land- und forstwirtschaftliche Schulen are designed to provide students with the technical and managerial know-how for the fields of agriculture, forestry and related sectors.

Lists of Austrian schools, most of which have their own websites, can be found on the information server of the Federal Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture:

<http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/schulen/index.xml>

2.6 Post-Secondary Schools

There are several post-secondary schools available in Austria, including universities (Universitäten), universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulen), academies (Akademien), and teacher training colleges (Pädagogische Hochschulen).

Students who have received a Matura certificate are eligible to pursue study at university. As mentioned above, with the exception of arts and music universities and university degree programs in medicine, there are no entrance exams at Austrian universities. Acceptance into Austrian universities is based on the principle of open access to all students who have a Matura. The academic calendar of universities runs on a two-semester calendar with a winter semester (October – February) and a summer semester (March – June). The tuition fees of Austrian universities are relatively inexpensive compared to those of American universities. There are no tuition fees for EU citizens, while the tuition fees for non-EU citizens currently are approximately 370 Euros per semester.

University students can pursue studies in a wide range of academic subjects. However, unlike American students, they are not required to take general education courses outside of their academic major.

For non-EU citizens, application to an Austrian university has to be completed at least one month before the semester starts. Applicants must submit an official transcript, application form, and additional documents outlined in the application materials. Please consult the university websites for more detailed application and course information, as well as appropriate deadlines and fees. Additional information regarding study at the University of

Vienna can be found at: <http://www.univie.ac.at/studentpoint>. (English version at <http://studieren.univie.ac.at/index.php?id=364>)

3. Austrian School Life

3.1 Who's Who?*

* The gender-neutral or gender-specific use of terms (i.e. chairperson instead of chairman) is more frequent in English than in German, where there is a grammatical gender (*der, die, das*) that also has to be taken into account. Most positions and titles can be "feminized" by adding the suffix "in" to the singular form: e.g. *Direktor, Direktorin*. In many circles the (politically correct but grammatically contested) upper case "I" is used in the plural to indicate male and female members of a group. Technically, *Studenten* refers to male university students, *Studentinnen* to female university students, and *StudentInnen* (note the upper-case I) to male and female university students. Over the past years, however, the gender-neutral term *Studierende* has been introduced and is now employed in most cases. You may also hear the following titles: *Schüler/Schülerin/SchülerInnen* for the pupils at your schools; *Professor* or the slightly more formal *Herr/Frau Professor* used by the pupils to address their teachers; *Herr Kollege/Frau Kollegin* used by teachers to address colleagues who they do not have close personal relationships with; and *Herr/Frau Direktor*.

Who is responsible for what at your school? Whom do you turn to for help? What is the institutional hierarchy? This is a short list of positions that should help you get oriented at your school:

DirektorIn: The principal of the school is responsible for management and budget issues and public relations, a position that corresponds to a principal in the U.S.

Direktion: The main administrative office at the school.

AdministratorIn: This person is usually in charge of scheduling classes and teachers and arranging substitute teachers/lessons.

SekretärIn: This is the person who takes care of all of the school's paperwork (your file included), calls and mail. It is a good idea to get along with this person. He/she knows how to get things done if you have questions. He/she is responsible, for example, for handling matters related to health insurance and salary payment.

Hauswart/Schulwart/Portier: The building custodian is also an important person to get along with if you have any needs or requests (keys, supplies, etc.).

Klassenvorstand: This is similar to a homeroom teacher in the U.S. This teacher takes care of the administrative paperwork (attendance, report cards, and mailings) for his/her class (e.g. the "5A"). Often, the *Klassenvorstand* follows the same class from the first year until the class finishes its school career.

Konferenzzimmer: This is usually a large "faculty room" where teachers have their desks and mailboxes, as well as spend time between classes or during free periods in their schedule. **You might want to ask your *KontaktlehrerIn* if there is a spot or desk for you to work and/or leave materials, as well as a mailbox (*Postfach*) for correspondence with teachers.**

KontaktlehrerIn; BetreuungslehrerIn: This is the "contact" or supervisory teacher who will plan your schedule and will show you around school. **If you have any problems or questions, this is the person to go to first.**

KlassensprecherIn: This is the student elected to represent his/her class (e.g. the "5B").

Schulgemeinschaftsausschuss (SGA): This is a committee made up of teachers, parents, students, and the principal. They discuss issues regarding school policies.

Elternverein: This is the PTA, which tries to keep open lines of communication between teachers and parents. They also raise money for special school projects or special requests.

3.2 How schools are structured

A typical school day starts at about 7:45-8:15 a.m. and has six 50-minute morning periods (*Stunden*) that last until about 1:30-2:00 p.m., even though the exact times differ from school to school. Most students will go home after the morning periods, but one or two days a week they might have afternoon classes, which are usually physical education, or electives and small group classes. This may vary however depending on the students' grade level. Schools may have a small lunchroom (*Buffet*), but lunch is not a part of the student's schedule. Some schools also have classes on Saturdays; however, each year, an increasing number of schools are opting for a five-day school week. Austrian schools basically run on a five-day week and ten-month school year.

As opposed to an American high school, the teachers move about the building between classes, not the students. Students generally have all their classes with the same group of people and in the same classroom. Each grade level is divided into various sub-classes (e.g., the 5th class into 5A, 5B, 5C, etc.), and these sub-classes spend the majority of the school day and their school careers together. This can have an impact on the student behavior, class dynamics, and your instruction style.

Each class follows a weekly schedule, as opposed to the American daily or every-other-day schedule. That is, Austrian students do not have the same subjects at the same time every day, but rather their subjects are arranged into a weekly plan: three hours of English, four hours of math, etc., at various times throughout the week.

Students have instruction in a variety of different subjects in the course of the week. Their core subjects (*Hauptfächer*) are math, German, English and a second foreign language (French/Italian/Spanish and/or Latin). Some of the other subjects (*Nebenfächer*) are history, geography, physics, chemistry, biology, philosophy and psychology, music, art, physical education, etc. Austrian students are used to doing a fair amount of homework and have to master a relatively large body of information. Their workload can be quite demanding and requires a high level of cognitive skills.

Grading in Austria is based on a one to five scale:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1 | <i>Sehr gut</i> |
| 2 | <i>Gut</i> |
| 3 | <i>Befriedigend</i> |
| 4 | <i>Genügend</i> |
| 5 | <i>Nicht genügend</i> |

This scale does not translate 1:1 into the American A to F scale insofar as a “4” is considered not only a passing but also an acceptable grade. Students' academic performances are based to a great extent on major written examinations (*Schularbeiten*), two or three of which are given in the course of the semester. Many students consequently tend to “learn for the test.”

A full-time teacher teaches about 20 periods a week and is usually licensed to teach two subjects, in which he/she has completed academic studies. Austrian teachers, like their

students, also have a weekly schedule. Each day can be very different: for example, an English teacher might teach three English classes one day and five the next. The presence of teachers is dictated by their teaching schedules, and if they have other duties, such as hall supervision during breaks (*Gangaufsicht*), office hours for parents (*Sprechstunden*), and substitute periods (*Supplierstunden*). If they only teach during the first and second periods, they may go home afterwards, or they may not come in until the late morning if they only teach fifth and sixth hours. These are definitely things to be aware of if you would like to talk to a specific teacher. Usually there is a master teacher schedule posted in the *Konferenzzimmer*, in case you need to see when a specific teacher should be at school.

In the classroom students use tables and chairs as opposed to individual desks. Since the classroom "belongs" to the class and each teacher comes in for his/her lesson, the students in each class usually decide how they want to arrange the tables and how to decorate their classroom. Their ideas and plans have to be approved by their homeroom teacher (*Klassenvorstand*).

Many teaching assistants find that the school rules and discipline system are less strict and straightforward than those found in American schools. Austrian teachers often rely on their own strategies for creating and maintaining class discipline, as there are often no school-wide detention or demerit systems in place. Some differences in rules observed by former teaching assistants include: the lack of dress code (though students must wear slippers or *Hauschuhe* in school), the presence of a smoking-area on the school grounds, and the lack of standard disciplinary punishments for disruptive students during or between classes. It is important to realize that as a teaching assistant you will be largely responsible for establishing a productive classroom environment.

Classroom instruction is more traditional in nature than in the U.S., with the majority of teachers using a frontal instruction approach. Many teaching assistants have observed the differences between Austrian and American educational philosophies and how they manifest themselves in the group dynamics of the classroom. European schools tend to emphasize the importance of cognitive achievement and mastering the material. American schools tend to emphasize communication and socialization. Open criticism of students who do not perform well is common in Austria, and grades frequently are announced in class so that all students know how their classmates are performing. By American standards, there is less emphasis on "nurturing" and enhancing the self-esteem of students.

The facilities you will be working in will probably be well kept up, even if the buildings themselves are old. American schools can be recognized by their spacious "campus" settings: playgrounds, sports fields, tennis courts and big parking lots. Austrian schools are less conspicuous. Usually, sports facilities in Austrian schools are much smaller than their American equivalents, because if students play sports, they will usually play on a club or team which is not affiliated with the school. A big parking lot is not necessary because many teachers and students walk, bike or take public transportation to school. Some teachers do drive their cars to school, but most students do not because Austrians cannot get driver's licenses before they are 17 or 18 years old.

Austrian schools have a longer break at Christmas (generally from December 24 to January 6), a semester break (a week sometime in February), and an Easter break (the week before Easter), but a shorter summer vacation (two months). Roman Catholic Church holidays (e.g., Assumption, Pentecost) are also observed by the state as public holidays in Austria.

Austrian Holidays and School Breaks

Austrian Holidays	2009	2010
New Year's Day	January 1	January 1
Epiphany	January 6	January 6
Easter Monday	April 13	April 5
May Day/Labor Day	May 1	May 1
Ascension Thursday	May 21	May 13
Pentecost Monday (Whit Monday)	June 1	May 24
Corpus Christi	June 11	June 3
Assumption Day	August 15	August 15
National Holiday	October 26	October 26
All Saint's Day	November 1	November 1
Immaculate Conception of Mary	December 8	December 8
Christmas	December 25	December 25
St. Stephen's Day	December 26	December 26

School Breaks	2009/2010
Christmas Break (<i>Weihnachtsferien</i>)	December 24, 2009 through January 6, 2010
Semester Break (<i>Semesterferien</i>)*	
Niederösterreich, Wien	January 30 through February 7, 2010
Burgenland, Kärnten, Salzburg, Tirol, Vorarlberg	February 8 through February 14, 2010
Oberösterreich, Steiermark	February 15 through February 21, 2010
Easter Break (<i>Osterferien</i>)	March 27 through April 6, 2010
Pentecost (<i>Pfingstferien</i>)	May 22 through May 25, 2010
Summer Break (<i>Sommerferien</i>):	
Burgenland, Niederösterreich, Wien	July 3 through September 5, 2010
Kärnten, Oberösterreich, Salzburg, Steiermark, Tirol, Vorarlberg	July 10 through September 12, 2010

Each school also has several vacation days (*schulautonome freie Tage*) to use at its discretion. Be sure to confirm the dates of school breaks with each school that you have been assigned to, as school calendars can vary from school-to-school.

* Schools with a focus on tourism may have a different schedule of school breaks.

4. Getting Started

If you have a previous history of medical problems or are on a regular regime of medication, you should definitely bring background information, prescriptions, or copies of relevant **medical records** with you.

Look into the status of your **student loans**. The teaching assistantship is not a graduate fellowship or scholarship, and you will not be considered a “full-time student” during this time. It is, however, a legitimate full-time educational pursuit (analogous to student teaching in the U.S.), and program participants have not had any problems with loan deferments in the past. In some cases, it suffices to provide the lending organizations with a copy of the letter of appointment you initially received in April outlining the dates and the nature of your teaching assistantship. Once you have arrived in Austria, the Commission Secretariat also can issue a confirmation that you are participating in the program as a teaching assistant, which should suffice for the purpose of loan deferrals.

To safeguard your valuable papers and to assist you in the event of loss, you should make **photocopies** of important documents and materials, such as your passport, plane tickets, driver’s license, credit cards, birth certificate, etc, and keep the copies in a separate place. It also makes sense to copy any Austrian IDs you obtain and keep a set of copies in your apartment.

If you plan to drive a car in Europe, inquire at your AAA and apply for an international driver’s license. In Austria, you can drive with your U.S. license in some cases, but it is subject to limitations. You are advised to consult with the local motor vehicle licensing authorities before driving and encouraged to investigate insurance issues in particular. Local Austrian automobile clubs could also advise you on legal and insurance issues (www.oeamtc.at/ and www.arboe.at/)

4.1 Austrian residency permit

As of January 2006, a restrictive new residency permit law (*Fremdengesetz*) went into effect in Austria. In May 2009, you received detailed information on how to apply for an *Aufenthaltstitel* at an Austrian (honorary) consulate. Further instructions for following up on your residency permit will be provided at the orientation seminars.

4.2 Housing Information

Teaching assistants are responsible for identifying their own housing and can rely on the following information and resources to do so. Past teaching assistants have lived in dormitory rooms (*Studentenheimplätze*), single apartments or apartment shared with other students (*Wohngemeinschaften*), and rooms rented in a private home. There are of course positive and negative aspects to each of these options, in terms of cost, privacy, comfort, and opportunities for German language use.

For example, renting a room in a private home usually imposes certain restrictions on privacy and the use of kitchen and bathroom facilities. However, it may also offer you more opportunities to use the German language and experience Austrian culture. Teaching assistants frequently have preferred to rent small apartments, to share an apartment with one or more subtenants, or to live in a dormitory. The latter does not put many rules and regulations on its occupants and is the most inexpensive type of accommodation. However, dorm rooms must be booked in advance and frequently entail contracts that cannot be terminated on short notice.

Some General Remarks on Housing in Austria: Many Americans, especially those from suburbs or smaller cities, are accustomed to housing which is cheap by European standards. Therefore, they frequently feel that the rents in Austria are too high for what they get. The prices and standards of Austrian housing differ from those in the U.S. for a number of reasons. There is a high degree of pressure on the Austrian real estate market. It is a "seller's market," and the rents for the types of accommodations and short-term lease arrangements many grant recipients seek are relatively high. Many Austrian residential buildings are old - for example, over 50% of the buildings in Vienna were built before World War I - and have been adapted to meet modern standards. However, the Austrian concept of "convenience" is somewhat more modest than its American counterpart. Furthermore, the Austrian concept of space is different than the American one. An apartment, which Austrians might consider sufficient or even "spacious" may be "small" by American standards.

Consequently, many furnished sublet apartments do not quite meet American expectations (for the rent paid) or standards (in terms of "normal conveniences" in U.S. terms). From the medium price range and up, apartments will usually have central heating and a bathroom. Dishwashers are not nearly as common as in the U.S., and refrigerators are small with correspondingly small freezing compartments. Do not expect a microwave. Some apartments may be furnished with a washing machine for clothing (but not a dryer). Laundromats and dry cleaning are expensive by American standards. Bedding and kitchen utensils may or may not be provided. Unless agreed upon otherwise, rents do not include the costs of heating (*Heizung*) and utilities (*Betriebskosten*) or charges for the telephone. You will be responsible for cleaning and maintaining a sublet apartment, and accountable for any damages. If something is damaged or out of order when you move in, inform your landlord immediately so that there are no misunderstandings when you leave.

A watertight contract written by a lawyer and/or notary may prevent unpleasant surprises but will involve additional expenses. Most grantees and landlords do, therefore, without it and rely on agreements in the form of a letter confirming the basic details of subletting space (*Untermiete*).

NOTE: You will be required to submit written documentation that you have secured housing in order to have your residency permit processed. In some Austrian provinces, the authorities will require a formal contract.

The relationship between you and your landlord will be a matter of mutual trust. However, it is best to be as specific and as clear as possible about expectations and obligations. Try to keep the period of notice (*Kündigungsfrist*) down to one month as set by law in the absence of a special agreement and do not sign a contract that may force you to remain in an apartment for a specific length of time. Avoid engaging a realtor or other agents since fees will amount to up to three months' rent. Most landlords ask for two or three months' rent as a deposit (*Kaution*) in addition to the rent for the first month to cover possible utility bills, damages and the like when moving out. The deposit will be refunded in full if it is not needed.

Resources for Finding Housing: The following resources are available for finding housing in Austria. Keep in mind that some resources listed may be more appropriate for urban areas, whereas others may be more appropriate for rural areas.

Contact with your school: You can contact your future school(s) and solicit advice. If you have been assigned to a smaller community (as opposed to a larger urban center), people from your school will have a good idea of what the local housing market looks like and be able to inform you accordingly. Generally speaking, teaching assistants assigned to smaller communities do not have much of a problem identifying housing because the host schools are familiar with the teaching assistant's needs and the (usually limited) opportunities.

Teaching assistants at schools in urban centers should not expect their schools to be so forthcoming in identifying housing opportunities. You may want to ask your school for the contact information of former teaching assistants who may be able to advise you on housing options near your school.

Austrian National Union of Students (*Österreichische Hochschülerschaft, ÖH*): The Austrian National Union of Students has chapters at each of Austria's 18 universities, which are situated in seven cities: Vienna, Graz, Leoben, Linz, Klagenfurt, Salzburg, and Innsbruck. The ÖH branches maintain online "brokerages" (*Börsen*) for student housing. These websites have interactive search engines that allow you to specify the type, size, cost, and location of the housing you are seeking.

For the ÖH's housing "brokerage," go to <http://wohnen.career.at/>.

(N.B. This is also the website for both the *ÖH University of Vienna* and the *ÖH WU Vienna*.)

Additional university housing websites:

<i>ÖH University of Graz</i>	http://boerse.htu.tugraz.at/wohnen/index.html
<i>ÖH University of Innsbruck</i>	http://www.oehweb.at/index.php?id=36
<i>ÖH University of Linz</i>	http://boersen.oeh.cc/view_wb.php
<i>ÖH University of Klagenfurt</i>	http://www.oeh.uni-linz.ac.at/boerse
	http://www.oeh-klagenfurt.at/

ÖH branch offices also have Social Service Offices (*Sozialreferate*) that may be of assistance in finding housing. Links to the branch offices of the Austrian National Union of Students can be found at <http://www.oeh.ac.at/> or on the websites of Austrian universities. (For links to Austrian university websites, please see the Austrian Fulbright Commission website: <http://www.fulbright.at/>).

NOTE: The closer you get to the beginning of the academic year in Austria (October 1), the tighter the market for student housing gets in university cities. Therefore, TAs are advised to either plan in advance or arrive early to identify appropriate housing.

Once you have arrived in Austria you can also browse housing opportunities that are posted on **bulletin boards** at the respective offices of the Austrian National Union of Students.

Austrian Exchange Service - Housing Office: (*Österreichischer Austauschdienst WohnraumverwaltungsGmbH*) The Austrian Exchange Service is a non-governmental organization that manages a series of scholarship and exchange programs for the Republic of Austria. The ÖAD WohnraumverwaltungsGmbH is a private organization responsible for administering student housing in dormitories and apartments of various sizes. ÖAD housing is situated in the seven Austrian university cities mentioned above. See the ÖAD website: <http://www.housing.oead.ac.at/>

For details contact: ÖAD WohnraumverwaltungsGmbH, Alserstraße 4/1/1/3, A 1090 Vienna, Tel.: (+431) - 4277 / 28152; Fax: (+431) - 4277 / 28150; e-mail: housing@oead.ac.at . ÖAD offices can provide you with information on what options they have and will reserve housing for you if you are willing to make a (non-refundable) reservation deposit.

Newspapers: The Fulbright Commission website (<http://www.fulbright.at>) has links to newspapers that can provide you with an overview of the housing market (*Immobilien*) throughout Austria. You may also wish to consult the following websites:

<http://www.immobazar.at/> (A database with search functions; mostly for eastern Austria)

<http://derstandard.at/anzeiger> (The on-line version of one of Austria's larger newspapers)

Online resources:

www.easywg.de

www.jobwohnen.at

www.sws.or.at

www.wohnnet.at/wohnungen-in-wien.htm (for Vienna)

<http://vienna.de.craigslist.at> (for Vienna)

Please see Appendix 11.6 for housing advertisement terminology.

4.3 Orientation Program

The Austrian Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture organizes two orientation sessions for incoming teaching assistants in conjunction with the respective provincial Boards of Education (*Landesschulräte*) from the provinces in which assistants will be teaching.

These orientation sessions – one for teaching assistants in eastern Austria (Vienna, Lower Austria, Burgenland and Styria) and the other for TAs in western Austria (Vorarlberg, Tyrol, Salzburg, Carinthia, Upper Austria) run from **Monday, September 28** (late afternoon) **through Friday, October 2, 2009**. Attendance at this orientation seminar is mandatory. Participants are expected to pay a fee of €70 (in cash) on-site to help defray the costs of the seminar, which includes room and full board. After the conclusion of the seminar, you are expected to report for work at your contact school (*Stammschule*) on **Monday, October 5**.

Your participation in your assigned orientation program is important (and mandatory), as it will provide you with important background information on the Austrian educational system, your duties as a teaching assistant, and also give you an opportunity to meet other teaching assistants.

The organizers of the respective seminars will expect you to be present. Should you for some reason not be able to attend or arrive late, notify the Fulbright Commission in advance.

What to pack for the seminar:

- *Hausschuhe* (slippers), as street shoes are not allowed inside the buildings
- Towels, soap
- Warm clothes
- Track suit or sweatpants
- (for Saalbach only) hiking shoes

Seminar Venues

A. The seminar for teaching assistants assigned to schools in **Wien, Niederösterreich, Steiermark** and **Burgenland** will be held at:

Schloss St. Martin

Kehlbergstraße 35, 8054 **Graz (Steiermark)**

At your arrival, please go directly to
Exerzitienhaus der Barmherzigen Schwestern
Mariengasse 6a, 8020 Graz

B. The orientation seminar for teaching assistants assigned to schools in **Kärnten, Salzburg, Tirol, Oberösterreich, and Vorarlberg** will be held at:

Bundesschullandheim Saalbach
5754 Hinterglemm 38 (Province of Salzburg)
Email: info@bslh-saalbach.at
Internet: www.bslh-saalbach.at

Travel itinerary: from Salzburg central train station by train to Zell am See, from there by bus to Hinterglemm.

Please make arrangements to arrive at your seminar venue by 6 pm at the latest.

4.4 Security Issues

Since September 11, 2001, there has been a heightened awareness of security issues among U.S. citizens. The U.S. Government publishes official travel directives and advisories for U.S. citizens abroad. If you wish to consult this information, log on to the Department of State website at <http://www.travel.state.gov>. For relevant news releases and statements with a more "local" or Austrian focus, you also may consult the U.S. Embassy website in Austria: <http://www.usembassy.at/en/index.html>. The Austrian-American Educational Commission is in regular touch with the U.S. Embassy in Vienna and informs grantees on an equally regular basis, if there are any warnings, alerts, or specific issues of concern. Please note, however, that the Commission has no further sources of information on security issues outside of the official sources listed above.

Registering with the U.S. Consulate in Vienna:

U.S. citizens staying longer than three months in Austria are not required, but are encouraged to register with the U.S. Consulate in Austria. The address is: Gartenbaupromenade 2 (in the Marriott Hotel) 1010 Vienna. The telephone number is: (+01) 313 39. It is advisable to keep the U.S. Consulate informed of your arrival, address and departure. The relevant form can be completed online at the U.S. Embassy's website: <http://www.usembassy.at/en/embassy/cons/ibrs.htm>

Those who register with the Embassy will also receive relevant email updates regarding security concerns and events of interest throughout their stay.

5. Once you arrive....

Checklist

- **Within three business days of your arrival: register with the local “Meldeamt” (registration office).**
- **Follow up on your residency permit!**
- **As soon as possible: open a bank account**
- **The Monday after the orientation: report for work at your *Stammschule* (*Dienstantritt*) and get your job contract (*Dienstzettel*)**

5.1 Registration with the local Austrian authorities: *Meldezettel*

Please note: Registering with the Austrian authorities and securing your residency permit follow two separate procedures!

Within three business days of entering Austria, you (and your dependants) technically are required to register with the appropriate authorities.

In Vienna, you should register with the *Magistratisches Bezirksamt*; consult <http://www.wien.gv.at/mba/mba.htm> for addresses and office hours.

Elsewhere in Austria you should register with the local *Magistrat* or *Gemeindeamt*. Consult the Fulbright website at http://www.fulbright.at/us_citizens/teaching_resource.php for a link to a search engine that will help you identify the appropriate office. Type in the zip code (*Postleitzahl*) of the place where you will reside in Austria, and the search engine will show you where to go for official registration in that area.

In order to register with the Austrian authorities, you will need:

1. A completed *Meldezettel* registration form
2. A signature on the *Meldezettel* from your landlord/landlady
3. Your passport and supporting documents if applicable.

1. You will be required to fill out a **registration form** (*Meldezettel*) which is available both on-site at these Austrian registration offices and online. It is easy to **download** the form, fill it out on your computer, and print it using the following links:

<http://www.help.gv.at/documents/meldez.pdf> or
<http://www.help.gv.at/Content.Node/documents/meldez.pdf>

2. **Fill out the form** and **have it signed** by the person renting you your accommodation or by the owner of the house you are living in (*UnterkunftgeberIn* or landlord/landlady) in Austria. Once you have collected your landlady’s or landlord’s signature (bottom left hand corner of document) on the *Meldezettel*, your form is ready for the registration office.

3. **Bring your passport and any other relevant documents** (e.g. marriage license for spouses) with you to the **appropriate office**.

The authorities will record your personal data, passport number, and current and home addresses and assign you a twelve digit “central registration number” (*Zentrale Melderegister-Zahl* or *ZMR-Zahl*), which you use in any further official business to identify yourself.

Please note that this number will be used to ascertain if you have a valid residency permit as well as its expiration date. In Austria, the *Meldezettel* is an important document for identification purposes. Furthermore, you are required to deregister with the authorities at the end of your stay in Austria.

Please keep the Fulbright Commission informed of your contact information. As soon as you get settled, please inform the Fulbright Secretariat of your address, telephone number and current e-mail account (if available). Also notify the Fulbright Secretariat should you move throughout the course of the year.

5.2 Your first day at work (Monday, October 5, 2009): *Dienstantrittsmeldung*

As soon as the orientation program for teaching assistants is over, you are expected to report for work at the “main school” to which you have been assigned (*Stammschule*). You may want to arrange a meeting time with your contact teacher prior to your arrival, as he/she may or may not have a scheduled lesson at the time you arrive. On the first day, you should go to the *Direktion* and complete the appropriate paperwork. The school will then inform the appropriate authorities that you have reported to fill the position to which you have been assigned (*Dienstantrittsmeldung*) which, among other things, is the prerequisite for your being paid. Your school should provide you with a “job description” (*Bestellung*). A sample for this document is on page 39 of the German *Fremdsprachen AssistentInnen Austausch. Leitfaden für AssistentInnen 2009/2010* from the Ministry of Education. You should provide your vital statistics for the personnel in the *Direktion* and make sure that they register you (and your dependents) for your health and accident insurance (*Kranken- und Unfallversicherung*). If you already have your bank details, you should give them to the personnel in the *Direktion*. You may be asked to provide a written confirmation (*Bestätigung*) from the bank, verifying your account information.

Once you are registered, the authorities should issue you an insurance number (*Sozialversicherungsnummer*) and corresponding green e-card. This number is used to identify you for all physicians and health delivery systems.

You should be introduced to the teacher responsible for supervising you (*BetreuungslehrerIn*) and run through the details of your class schedule at this time. Sometimes, teaching assistants are asked to work with the supervising teacher to organize their timetables. You may be allowed to make small requests regarding your schedule for a day off or time to sit-in on another class in school. However, keep in mind that your primary role in Austria is to serve your school as a teaching assistant.

Teaching assistant work schedules vary from school to school, based upon the needs, schedules, and preferences of the teachers. Past teaching assistants have received schedules in the following formats:

1. **Sign-up list:** Teachers sign-up on a schedule posted in the *Konferenzzimmer* for the teaching assistant, according to their teaching needs and schedule. This means that the teaching assistant will likely have a different schedule each week and work with classes on a less regular basis. However, this also means that the teaching assistant may be asked to deal with more specialized or topical lessons.
2. **Fixed odd/even weeks (*ungerade/gerade*):** The contact teacher assigned a fixed timetable in which the teaching assistant has two class schedules, one for odd and one for even weeks. Teaching assistants may also have a fixed one-, three-, or four-week plan depending on the number of classes he/she will work with.

If you have been assigned to two schools, you will also need to discuss which days you will work in each school, depending upon the location of the schools and class schedules. Past teaching assistants have coordinated work with two or more schools in the following formats:

1. **Odd/even weeks:** The teaching assistant works 13 hours in one school each odd week and then works 13 hours in the second school each even week.
2. **Alternating days:** The teaching assistant works for six hours in one school on two days of the week and for seven hours in the other school on two days of the week.
3. **Same-day switch:** If the schools are within close proximity of each other, it is possible to work in both schools within the same day, perhaps even in consecutive lessons.

Keep in mind that your teachers may choose to deploy you in a variety of ways. You may be asked to teach lessons to whole classes, to half of the class (while the teacher works with the other half of the class), or to small groups. Your role may include cultural, conversational, or topical lessons. You may also be asked to teach directly from the book or using materials, which you have prepared. Therefore, maintaining flexibility is of utmost importance.

Opening up a banking account for your salary: *Gehaltskonto*

Teaching assistants are salaried employees of the school board of the province in which they teach. Salaries are paid in Austria by bank-to-bank transfers. Therefore, you should open an account for your salary (*Gehaltskonto*) at a local bank as soon as possible because this information should be included in your *Dienstantrittsmeldung*, which will be submitted to the local school board by your *Stammschule*.

Take your passport and your *Meldezettel* to the bank and inform them you wish to open a *Gehaltskonto*: not a *Konto* (account) or *Sparkonto* (savings account) but a *Gehaltskonto* (salary account). A synonym for the *Gehaltskonto* that may be used is *Girokonto*. Please note: Do not open a U.S. dollar account at an Austrian bank. It will be of no use to you and is very expensive as well.

Keep in mind that unlike in the U.S., you will be paying the bank for their services on a quarterly basis. These charges will be automatically deducted from your account at the end of the quarter (~10-20 Euros per quarter), and you will most likely not earn interest on your account. If you are studying at an Austrian university, you will be able to open a student's account that costs less. Inquire about this possibility at your local bank.

You should provide your *Stammschule* with the following information

- your account number
- the routing code of the bank (*Bankleitzahl BLZ*)
- the name of the bank
- the address of the bank

Teaching assistants will receive their salaries around the fifteenth of the month. The first salary (for October) will most probably arrive in November, as it takes some time for your information to get into the system. Please make sure to bring sufficient funds to cover your expenses in the first 6 to 8 weeks of your employment. The longer you wait to establish an account the longer you will wait to get your first payment.

If inordinate delays arise in connection with the payment of your salary, inform the *Direktion* of your *Stammschule*.

Banking vocabulary

<i>Bankomat</i>	ATM machine; cash dispenser
<i>Bankomatkarte</i>	ATM card (issued by bank) for withdrawals at ATM machines (national and international)
<i>BLZ</i>	<i>Bankleitzahl</i> = routing number; a 5 digit numerical code for individual banks
<i>Dauerauftrag</i>	Customer order form for regular (recurring) payments
<i>Einziehungsauftrag</i>	Customer order form to regularly pay incoming bills from specific companies (phone, utilities, etc.)
<i>Erlagschein</i>	An "invoice" used to make payment via bank-to-bank transfer
<i>Gehalts/Girokonto</i>	salary account, private checking account
<i>IBAN</i>	International Bank Account Number
<i>Konto</i>	Account
<i>Konto-Auszug</i>	Account or bank statement; balance sheet (can be printed out from a machine in the bank foyer)
<i>PIN</i>	Four-digit code to access your ATM card; to be kept secret
<i>SWIFT or BIC</i>	<i>Bank Identification Code</i> = combination of letters designating bank
<i>Sparbuch</i>	Savings account
<i>Spesen</i>	Bank charges
<i>Überziehungsrahmen</i>	Overdraft frame. Note: You will likely be charged (high) interest on an overdraft balance.
<i>Überweisung</i>	Bank-to-bank transfer

5.3 Some Details about the Austrian Insurance Plan: *BVA – Versicherungsanstalt öffentlich Bediensteter*

During the period of their assignments in Austria (note: not beforehand or afterward), teaching assistants are covered as "employees" by the health and accident insurance program of the *BVA – Versicherungsanstalt öffentlich Bediensteter*. For detailed information on the conditions and extent of coverage, teaching assistants should consult the BVA website at www.bva.at or call the BVA Hotline at 05 04 05.

A month or so after you have started working, you should receive a special electronic insurance card (*E-Card*), which looks like a credit card, and insurance number (*Sozialversicherungskarte, Sozialversicherungsnummer*), from the agency responsible for insuring you. Bring this so-called e-card with you whenever you need treatment. It has all relevant data for the physicians and insurance agency.

Coverage includes treatment for illness and injuries, eye examinations, basic dental care, pregnancy, medication, therapeutic and laboratory services (if prescribed by a physician), medical supplies, hospitalization, etc. Many Austrian physicians or hospitals have contracts with the BVA. Make sure that the health care provider you consult has a BVA contract before going in for treatment. Health care providers bill the BVA directly for the costs of treatment, and the BVA bills you for 20% of the total. This insurance has a 20% deductible (*Selbstbehalt*) for out-patient treatment; in-patient treatment (hospitalization) is covered in full.

Austrian medical insurance also covers medication. A prescription fee (*Rezeptgebühr*) of € 4.90 is collected for each medication prescribed. The physician responsible for prescribing the medication must be consulted if additional medication is needed, and he/she will issue another prescription.

If you go on vacation outside Austria, you may request an *Urlaubskrankenschein* (also called *Auslandsbetreuungsschein*) in the event that you become ill while away from your place of residence. Austrian health and accident insurance is valid in EU countries as well as in Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Iceland. You need to check that your e-card has “Europäische Krankenversicherungskarte” written on the backside (above the signature) and take your card with you during your travels.

NOTE: The insurance coverage for U.S. teaching assistants does not apply to the United States. Should you visit the U.S. in the course of your assignment, you must provide for adequate insurance coverage yourself either by contacting a U.S. insurance company or a local Austrian insurance company that will provide you with a moderately priced *Reiseversicherung*. Before traveling outside of the European Union (e.g. in Eastern Europe), you should inquire if there are insurance reciprocity agreements between Austria and the countries you will be visiting. The BVA currently has bilateral agreements with Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro und Turkey.

Health insurance for accompanying dependents: Children are insured free of charge under the auspices of parental insurance. Spouses may be insured free of charge if they are exclusively engaged in child-care. Otherwise, insurance premiums have to be paid to insure accompanying spouses. The rate of premium is 3.4% of the gross salary of the primary insurance carrier.

If you fall ill

If you get ill and are unable to work, it is important to call in sick at your school or schools immediately on the first day to let them know that you will not be coming to work. You are required to get a note from your doctor (Krankenstandsmeldung) that you are ill, which has to be forwarded to the BVA. Please inquire at your school whether you are required to bring a confirmation from a physician (this may depend on the duration of your illness).

5.4 Your Salary and Taxes

The Provincial Board of Education (*Landesschulrat*) or the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture are responsible for disbursing your salary to you on a monthly basis at the middle of the month. It takes a certain amount of time for the authorities to get your information into the system, so your first salary payment will most probably take longer to get to your account. In light of the fact that you are paid at the middle of the month, **it is important for you to bring enough personal funds to cover the costs of your first 6-8 weeks.** In the first month your expenses will be a bit higher, as it costs a bit more to get set up and settled in.

You will receive a monthly salary slip (*Gehaltszettel*) from your *Stammschule* that records your gross income (€ 1,290) and deductions for health insurance and income tax resulting in a net take-home income of about € 1000. You may also receive an unofficial document of your pay by printing out a *Kontoauszug* at the machine in the foyer of your bank. In early March and again in early June, you should receive an official document stating your yearly earnings (*Lohnzettel*).

Teaching assistants from some European countries are exempt from paying income tax in Austria by virtue of special bilateral agreements. This exemption does not exist for U.S. citizens and therefore income tax should be deducted from your salary. It is important for you to draw this to the attention of the *Direktion* at your school and confirm that *Lohnsteuer* is listed on the pay sheet that you will receive when you print out a *Kontoauszug* at the bank.

Income tax in Austria is progressive and calculated upon the basis of annual income. In light of the fact that teaching assistants work only three months in one year (October-December) and five months in another (January-May), the amount of the taxes deducted each month is somewhat higher than it would be if they were employed for a full 12 month period.

Therefore, at the end of the calendar year or upon conclusion of their stays, teaching assistants may apply for a partial tax refund around January. This entails getting forms from a local tax office (*Finanzamt*) and submitting a formal request called an *Erklärung zur Durchführung der Arbeitnehmerveranlagung*. To find the Finanzamt responsible for your Arbeitnehmerveranlagung go to: http://dienststellen.bmf.gv.at/ListDst_Auswahl.asp. Consult pages 16-17 of the *Leitfaden für AssistentInnen* for details or ask the staff at your school for advice. More information will be mailed out about both the Austrian and U.S. taxes during the year.

Information on U.S. taxes and downloadable IRS forms for filing taxes are available on-line at: <http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/>

Note: Teaching assistants are responsible for all taxes and tax declarations in Austria and the United States. The Fulbright Commission secretariat does not advise students on U.S. or Austrian taxes.

6. Life as a Teaching Assistant

6.1 Your Duties

It is important for you to recognize that you will be expected to conduct yourself as an employee of the school or schools to which you have been assigned, and you will be treated as such.

The status of foreign language teaching assistants has been carefully circumscribed by law in Austria (a decree or *Erlass* from the Ministry of Education), which outlines what you may and may not do. The details about your legal rights, duties and responsibilities, as well as your payment, are an integrated part of the so-called “Lehrbeauftragtengesetz” (teacher’s employment law).

You will receive the official guidelines for your position as a teaching assistant – ***Fremdsprachen AssistentInnen Austausch. Leitfaden für Assistent/innen 2009/10*** – along with this booklet. It addresses many of the issues raised in this handbook in a more detailed manner. Most importantly, the *Leitfaden* is an official document from the Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture. **Read the guidelines carefully and bring them with you.** Individual teachers with whom you will work may not be aware of your obligations or limitations, and you may want to show them the guidelines so that they are informed.

The guidelines are clear in theory, but practical application thereof may sometimes be more difficult. This is certainly not an excuse to be uncooperative. Some teaching assistants in the past have also “violated” the guidelines because they wanted to assume more responsibility in the classroom than they were supposed to. It is important to use common sense and discretion in interpreting and following the guidelines.

You are expected to:

- Carry out your teaching duties with the utmost dedication. This involves thorough preparation of your lessons and the incorporation of advice given to you by your supervisory teachers.
- Teach 13 hours per week.
- Familiarize yourself with the rules and customs of your school. (Ask your contact teacher to introduce you to the peculiarities of your school's "institutional culture.")
- **Communicate** and **cooperate** with your teachers in all matters ranging from the preparation of lessons (e.g. with regard to what your teachers expect from you) to the solution to problems that might arise.
- **Discuss** any problems that arise with your contact teacher (first) and/or principal.
- Try to create real-life situations when repeating materials that have been previously covered by teachers. (Younger students might also enjoy playing games.) Do not hesitate to enrich lessons and supplement books by including your personal experiences.

Teaching assistants are not formally licensed to teach in Austria. Therefore, you MAY NOT:

- Teach on your own without supervision.
- Grade or correct work. If you are interested in doing so, ask the teachers if you can assist them. The final decision and responsibility, however, always are with the teacher.
- Do corridor supervision (*Gangaufsicht*) on a regular basis.
- Perform administrative tasks.
- Teach new chapters of grammar.
- Go into the lesson unprepared.
- Be used for substitute teaching.

Only in exceptional cases may you be asked to **substitute** for another teacher. In this case the principal bears full responsibility. Make sure you know exactly what is expected of you in the lesson.

It is important for all teaching assistants to recognize that they have a **contractual relationship** with the school authorities. If teaching assistants are **negligent** in the execution of their **duties**, their contracts may be **terminated** by the school authorities.

Compliance and confidentiality

- Remember that you are an employee subject to the directives of your superiors: you are required to comply with requests made by your superiors within the framework of your employment as a teaching assistant.
- You also are required to be discreet. Any matters addressed in staff meetings or parent-teacher meetings are not to be discussed outside of school.

Make the most of your time at school!

- Join in on lessons in other subjects - it is always rewarding to watch your classes interact with other teachers.
- Join teachers during their office hours; attend PTA meetings and similar events.

- Try attending the final oral exams (*Matura*). They provide an excellent opportunity for you to witness the results of your efforts.
- Join your class on day trips and remember that school tours or parties are an excellent opportunity to get to know teachers and pupils in a relaxed atmosphere.

6.2 Expectations and Adjustments

When you said "yes" to this teaching position, you said yes to what could be an experience of a lifetime. This opportunity is really what you make of it. **The cliché is true: you will get out of it what you put into it.**

Most teaching assistants previously have lived and/or studied abroad. It is important to recognize that there are a number of differences "the second time around." **First of all, you will not be a student on a program with other students; you fundamentally will have to fend for yourself.** Second, you will be working in a different cultural and institutional environment, and the way things work may not be all too clear to you at the beginning. Being a teaching assistant demands a considerable amount of flexibility and capacity to solve problems.

You may be placed in a very small town or in a large city and, in either case; **you will need to adjust to your new home. That takes time. Allow yourself that time.** In the words of one teaching assistant, "Don't despair if you don't get assigned to where you wanted to go. It may take a while to get used to your surroundings (i.e. NYC to Wieselburg), but you may like it. It's a great experience."

Another teaching assistant who had a hard time adjusting said, "I found that it was tougher for me to be stared at by the townspeople than to be overlooked by my colleagues. Until last month (December) most people didn't reply to my greetings, but all of the sudden it's like they all agreed to embrace me with open arms! Just don't get discouraged with the small town mentality. You'll find your own way soon enough."

Some TAs have found that it takes Austrians a bit longer to warm up to new people than their American counterparts. Keep in mind that living and working in Austria is likely a great endeavor for you, one that could prove to be a life-changing experience. However, in some schools (particularly urban schools), you may be just one of many language assistants that the school has had over the past few decades.

Not only will you be learning how to adjust to a new living situation, you will also be adjusting to new working conditions. It may be difficult at first to learn how to work with many different teachers, who each have a different teaching style and different expectations of you and of their students. You will also be working with different ages of students with varied skill levels. As one assistant said, "Each teacher has a different 'style' and you need to adapt to each one's needs. After a few months, it is easy to understand what they expect from you. But again, this takes time." Another assistant observed: "The tasks became clear only after I understood the expectations that each teacher has in class."

As you will likely be working with many different teachers and classes throughout the year, you may wish to have a system by which to organize your weekly schedule and responsibilities. It will most likely be your responsibility to speak with teachers regarding the lesson plans. Try to do so at least a day in advance, so that you have ample time to gather materials and prepare the lesson. You may also wish to request the contact information for your teachers and provide them with yours in the event that a class is cancelled or you fall ill.

Most problems teaching assistants have had in the past have been based on an insufficient understanding of the way things work or a lack of communication (or both). If you do not understand something or are unhappy about something, you have to **communicate** in order to address these problems. You can always turn to your *KontaktlehrerIn/BetreuungslehrerIn* or another teacher in times of need or complication. The official route for lodging a formal complaint, the *Dienstweg*, may often not be the best way to solve problems.

It is important to establish a good rapport with fellow teachers from the start of your assignment. Many times you will be better off if you can find a teacher with whom you can connect and communicate openly about any problems that arise. A teaching assistant told us, "I receive support from many teachers, regardless of the subject they teach. I have gone to a few teachers with some personal issues and they have helped me."

Another resource you have is other teaching assistants. Sharing difficulties and achievements with your colleagues can give you new perspectives on your work as a language assistant, as well as strategies to address potential problems. Fellow TAs can also provide you with information about events and travel in Austria. As one TA said, "Get to know other assistants in other areas. I have friends in Linz, Salzburg and Tirol I have visited."

It is important for teaching assistants to recognize that they are in an **intermediate position** between teachers and students. One of the initial questions that comes up is "Where do I fit in?" As an employee of the school and a teaching assistant, you are a representative of an educational institution. However, in some cases you might be just a few years older than the students you have in class. You should try to maintain a healthy, balanced relationship with both teachers and students, and it is important that one group does not feel like you are taking the other's side. As one teaching assistant observed: "We assistants are definitely in the middle: we aren't teachers or students. I say, take advantage of the situation and use it to everyone's benefit." Avoid situations where you *publicly* disagree with your teachers, thus creating a situation where they (or you) may lose face. If a teacher corrects you in the classroom situation, deal with the correction graciously and with humor.

Although you are "not a teacher and not a student," it is important for you to establish a certain amount of **authority**. Teaching assistants who are too chummy with students ultimately have great problems (not only with the students, but also with the teachers) because they are not taken seriously. It is important also for you to **dress appropriately** (look like a teacher) when you are in the classroom (although "faculty dress codes" may vary widely from school to school). Generally, dressy casual is the appropriate dress for teachers (khaki pants, nice jeans, skirts, and sweaters).

Classroom discipline is an issue which teaching assistants frequently find difficult because they have observed that – by American standards – there is less discipline in the classroom in general and fewer school-wide disciplinary policies and systems at the teacher's disposal (detention, demerits, etc.) It is therefore necessary when you start teaching to establish authority in the classroom. Be friendly but clear about what behavior you will and will not accept. Do not be afraid to ask your teachers for help with discipline if you need it. Here is some advice from past assistants: "Students are excited to have someone new, but it's important to show that you can really teach something. If they see that you are nervous, they will heckle you." "Don't put up with unruly pupils. They learn fast who is in control and it is hard to regain control once you lose it."

Remember, respect is not something that a classroom of teenagers is going to give you automatically. You have to expect it and to command it. Furthermore, if you structure the material you wish to present, you are structuring the classroom environment as well. If you come poorly prepared or unprepared and students recognize this immediately, you will

create a disciplinary problem because you do not know how to keep students' attention or structure their time and expectations.

It is a great idea to **socialize** with both students and teachers outside of the school and to **participate in extra-curricular activities**, like school excursions or ski trips. However, it is equally important to remember to establish and maintain **personal and professional boundaries**. Amorous or sexual relations with teachers usually create problems (regardless of the "consenting adults" argument). Amorous or sexual relations with students are not only an abuse of position but also illegal in most cases. Furthermore, gender specific roles and expectations in Europe are different than they are in the United States. The definition of sexual harassment and general awareness thereof is different as is the type of institutional recourse one has to address it.

6.3 Tips from former Teaching Assistants

It is important to recognize the individual nature of the teaching assistant experience. No two teaching assistants will be in the same situation. Teaching assistants assigned to the same school have different experiences from one year to the next. A tremendous amount of your success depends upon your flexibility and attitude, as well as your general approach to interaction with students and teachers.

We asked former teaching assistants what general advice they would give incoming assistants in order to help them have a successful and effective year. Here's what they reported:

General advice:

- "Ask a lot of questions at the beginning." (Pädag. Hochschule, Steiermark)
- "Above all, make a conscious effort not to spend too much time with other Americans, as this is a convenient trap at the beginning that severely limits the potential of your experience abroad." (HAK, Vienna)
- "This is a year for growing and experimenting. Throw yourself into every activity 100%, and the rewards will astound you. If you mess up, laugh it off; the teachers know that everything is new for you, and they love a good laugh, too!! That having been said, you can try out things you never would have back home, with nothing to lose. Opportunities like this don't come around very often, so grab it while you can. You'll be glad you did." (HAK, Upper Austria)
- "Keep talking to people, eventually it will be more than 'Grüß Gott' so hang in there! Don't be afraid to say you don't understand something and ask for help when you need it. Always be prepared and be flexible." (BORG, Upper Austria)
- "Dive in! Become involved in different groups or organizations, take classes at a local university or VHS (*Volkshochschule*), and really explore your community. You feel so much more at home and successful when you actually exert yourself to fit in and experience new things." (HTL, Tirol)
- "Explore! Don't ask why a particular part of the culture is how it is and think our American way is better. I found if I accept the culture I am living in, I am much happier for it. I have so much fun when I actually take part in the traditions and don't just watch. See with an unbiased eye and you get to learn so many cool parts of Austrian culture!" (BHAK, Vienna)
- "Join a Verein or something fun to meet people, especially if you are in a small town." (BG, Graz)

- “German! Brush up your German, especially if you are placed in a small town!” (BORG, Styria)

Materials, lesson plans, and other school issues:

- “Establish clear guidelines with your teachers from the start. Make absolutely sure that it is known what is expected of you, and also what you expect from them. You will be working very closely, but one of the hardest parts of my job was coordinating lessons.” (HIB, Liebenau)
- "I have a folder of last minute lessons and games, which has been very helpful." (BORG, Vorarlberg)
- "Be very flexible! Some days things won't go like you planned. Don't gossip - leave that to the teachers. And just relax." (HLTW, Vienna)
- “Be open to change and be ready to think on your feet. Whenever you plan a lesson, have a back-up plan and a back-up back-up plan.” (HGBL, Vienna)
- “Always remember to talk slower and more clearly than you normally would.” (HTL, Vienna)
- “Things you might bring: If you are an AAA member, go get their free guidebooks and maps for big U.S. cities like New York, San Francisco, etc. NY and SF are units in the textbooks, and you can give out the guidebooks as ‘authentic materials’ to groups of students and have them plan a few days in their particular city. Bring along a few pictures, brochures and newspapers from home, maybe including some job classifieds. Also, everyone wanted me to talk about the American school system. So if you have a yearbook, or can bring along a copy of your class schedule from middle/high school, or some pictures of Homecoming, etc. that is helpful.” (Gymnasium, Vienna)
- “The more assertive I was about taking communication into my own hands, the better my experience got. The more the assistant shows that he or she is independent and willing to take on (limited) responsibility, the better the interactive experience becomes.”
- "Don't listen to comparisons from/to previous TAs. Each teacher has his/her own story. Just do your job as best you can, and enjoy the unique position you're in." (Gymnasium, Tirol)
- “Do not prepare lectures. Prepare interactive worksheets where students can have small tasks to complete toward understanding a topic. With this worksheet as a tool in hand, they are able to form and express their opinions for a discussion 100 % more easily. I did this form for topics of restaurants to violence to teen interests.” (HBLA, Lower Austria)
- "It has taken a little time to adjust to all the different teachers/teaching styles. I've learned you simply have to be flexible and let the teachers decide how to use you." (Gymnasium, Upper Austria)
- "Don't be afraid to present interesting and unusual topics, and maintain healthy lines of communication with your teachers." (Gymnasium, Lower Austria)
- “My advice would be to have fun, don’t be so serious all the time. Their school lives are stressful and although you should teach them and actually work, use the time to be a treat for them ... This is an amazing experience, use it!” (HAK, Tirol)
- "Don't be shy! If you need something or don't understand something, ASK! Ask your teachers what their expectations are. Establish a system for feedback. Speak slowly and clearly. Jump right in and have fun!!" (BHAS, Lower Austria)

- “My advice is to make your experience the way you want it to be and not to rely on your school to know what you want. If the teachers don’t approach you at least a day in advance, then approach them! Smile and be friendly to all if they don’t initiate it. People are friendly and nice, but just have a different manner in which they express themselves. In class you are on stage, performing, don’t let them know you’re nervous and try to make them laugh at least once in every class! Be prepared – they will respect you for this!” (Gymnasium, Tirol)
- “Be open, honest and persistent. If you have a problem, or don’t understand something, ask until you do. If you don’t speak up right away, it will be much harder to change something later, and you don’t want to be roped into doing something which makes you uncomfortable just because you didn’t speak up. Austrians are used to people who say their opinions clearly, and will expect you to do so.” (HAK, Styria)
- “Be flexible. Many times lessons you’ve prepared might not even be used or class may be canceled. Not everything goes as planned, but it’s all part of the challenge of working as a TA.” (HLW, Vienna)
- “Be yourself – make jokes and talk about things you think are funny. A sense of humor in a second language is a little different, so laugh at your own jokes and the class will eventually “learn” how to laugh.” (BRG, Steiermark)
- “Be a part of school events, trips, etc. You get to know teachers and students much better and it helps you with your work.” (BHAK, Lower Austria)

6.4 Commission’s Newsletter “Was ist los?”

The Fulbright Commission issues a newsletter four times during the year to help maintain contact with the Teaching Assistants in Austria. “*Was ist los?*” will inform you of administrative announcements and report on matters of general interest as well as publish occasional articles on Austrian customs or on your experience. Your contributions are welcome and appreciated.

7. What about Austria?

The Austrian Federal Chancellery and Federal Press Service has an information website in English: <http://www.austria.gv.at/site/3327/Default.aspx>

7.1 Language

The importance of knowing German for the success of your stay in Austria cannot be sufficiently stressed. A person's enjoyment and profit from his/her year in this country are almost proportional to the degree to which he/she knows the language. **If you become dependent upon English-speaking Austrians and the American colony in Austria, much of the benefit of your stay abroad will be lost.**

Do not rely upon the standards applied in the U.S.; an "A" in advanced German does not necessarily mean that you are proficient in the spoken language. Teaching Assistants have confirmed this observation over and over. It is, therefore, strongly recommended that you use the remaining weeks before your departure for an intensive study of German. Try to work at the language lab at your school, sign up for a conversation course, or attend activities of the German Club if there is one in your vicinity and practice your German there. Try to enlarge your vocabulary. **Keep in mind that Austrian German not only includes many regional dialects, but also vocabulary words which are different from the High German taught at most American universities and language schools.**

Dependents accompanying you should also make every effort to get a start in German before their arrival. Try to learn the names of foods and the system of weights and measures. For children whom you want to send to Austrian schools, an early start in German is a must. Your children, if attending Austrian schools, will receive instruction exclusively in German, although bi-lingual schools are being established in larger urban centers. Try to speak German with them before you leave - even a little acquaintance with the language will make it easier for them.

There are a number of German language learning possibilities in Austria throughout the whole year. You can start your search at Campus Austria: <http://www.campus-austria.at/campus/frontend.php>. Former TAs have taken language courses at private language schools (generally located in urban areas) such as Berlitz, inlingua, and International House. Courses are also available at *Volkshochschule (VHS www.vhs.at)*, *Berufsförderungsinstitut (BFI www.bfi.at)*, *Delphin Sprachservice (www.dolphin.at)* and at the universities.

7.2 Austrian-American Personal Relationships

You will soon discover that your personal relationships with Austrians are not only vital to your personal enjoyment of your year here, but are also essential to the basic aims of the Teaching Assistantship program. It would, however, be impossible to provide a blueprint of how to make Austrian friends. **Austrians may seem more reserved, maintaining fewer but closer friendships compared to Americans.** Yet making friends is usually not difficult, if you eat a snack or drink coffee in the teacher's lounge, eat at the school buffets, or participate in the activities of student and bi-national organizations as well as the programs offered by your school or local sports clubs.

Social patterns are more formal in Austria, and it takes a while to become accustomed to shaking hands all around, greeting your colleagues and friends whenever you meet them in the hallway or as you enter and exit the Konferenzzimmer, greeting employees when entering or leaving an office or shop, using appropriate titles, etc. While students now use the *Du* form among themselves, the older generation continues to address colleagues with *Kollege* or *Kollegin*. *Fräulein* is never used with titles and never alone, except for waitresses, sales girls, etc. A woman past her twenties is addressed as *Frau* whether she is married or not. It is customary to take along flowers, a bottle of wine, or a small gift when invited to private homes.

7.3 Books and Information on Austria

Try to brush up your knowledge of the country where you will spend a full year. To gain a general idea it is suggested that you do some browsing through one of the guide books such as Grieben's, Fodor's, Baedeker's or Michelin (emphasizing art) and to read at least one of the histories of Austria and Vienna, respectively. The more you learn about Austria before you arrive, the more rewarding your stay will be. At the same time be prepared to have to answer questions about your own country and review your own cultural history.

"Culture Shock! Austria" by Susan Roraff and Julie Krejci is a good start for a general introduction to Austrian customs and etiquette (London: Kuperard, 2001). The American Women's Association in Austria publishes *Living in Vienna: Practical Information Guide for the English-speaking Community*. Although some of the information is "Vienna-centric," much of it pertains to Austria as a whole. Information on ordering copies of this book is available the AWA websites: <http://www.awavienna.com/>.

Gordon Brook-Shepherd has written a tremendous amount about Austria, and *The Austrians: A Thousand Year Odyssey* (paperback: HarperCollins, 1996) provides a good general introduction to Austrian history (and is characterized by a very sympathetic treatment of the Habsburgs). Lonnie Johnson's *Introducing Austria: A Short History* (Riverside: Ariadne Press, 1987) provides a short survey of Austrian history. Anton Pelinka, a professor of political science from the University of Innsbruck and former member of the Austrian Fulbright Commission's board, provides a superb overview and analysis of contemporary Austria in *Austria: Out of the Shadow of the Past* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998). Rolf Steininger, Günther Bischof and Michael Gehler's book *Austria in the Twentieth Century* has interesting articles on Austrian history and politics especially during the interwar years and the time after the end of World War II up to the year 2000 (New Brunswick: Transaction Pub, 2002).

TAs living in Vienna may wish to consult Inge Lehne and Lonnie Johnson's *Vienna – The Past in the Present: A Historical Survey* (Riverside: Aridane Press, 1995, 2nd ed.). The Viennese born US author Frederic Morton has written two exceptionally readable books (available in various paperback editions): *A Nervous Splendor: Vienna, 1888-89*, which is built around the suicide of Crown Prince Rudolf, and *Thunder at Twilight: Vienna 1913-14*, a portrait of cultural life in Vienna on the verge of World War I. Claudio Magris' book, *Danube*, is a good introduction to the history of the Danube basin.

The following Internet websites (and their link pages) may also be helpful in obtaining information about Austria:

<http://www.bmeia.gv.at> (Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs)
<http://www.wien.gv.at> (City of Vienna)
<http://www.austria.gv.at> (Austrian Federal Press Service: Federal Chancellery)
<http://www.austria.org> (Austrian Press and Information Service)
<http://www.austria.info.at> (Austrian National Tourist Office)
<http://www.apa.co.at> (Austria Press Agency)
<http://www.acfny.org> (Austrian Cultural Forum, New York)
<http://www.cas.umn.edu> (Center for Austrian Studies, University of Minnesota)
<http://www.virtualvienna.net> (Online community of English speakers in Austria)
<http://www.tiscover.at> (Tourist Information)

General information on Austria as well as maps and brochures may be obtained from the Austrian Cultural Institute in New York, the Austrian Consulates and the Austrian National Tourist Office in the U.S. (for addresses see Appendix "A"). Furthermore, many Austrian cities and towns have websites, which can be found through an Internet search.

In addition to your specific reference books and dictionaries you may wish to acquire the Duden paperback *Wie sagt man in Österreich?*. A small Webster's English language dictionary and a German language dictionary might come in handy.

7.4 Currency and Financial Matters

The Austrian monetary unit is the Euro (€, E or EUR). As participants in the European Monetary Union (EMU) Austria and most other EU members have pegged their national currencies to the Euro and on January 1, 2002 Euro banknotes and coins were first issued. The present (June 2009) rate of exchange is around 1 US Dollar = 0.72 Euro or 1 Euro = 1.39 US Dollar (USD). Euros are issued in 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 cent and in 1 and 2 Euro coins. Bank notes (bills) are used for 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 Euros.

All teaching assistants are presumed to have sufficient financial resources to meet their annual income tax and other dollar obligations in the U.S. while abroad. It is advisable to keep some funds in an American bank or with a friend for the payment of such obligations. It is expensive to purchase U.S. dollars with Euros and transfer these funds back to the U.S. to cover commitments or expenditures you have there because the Austrian bank charges involved are exorbitant and unreasonable.

Many ATMs in Austria accept U.S. ATM cards (Maestro, Cirrus) and make the transactions directly from your account (at the exchange rate of the day of the transaction). However, beware of withdrawal fees charged by both the Austrian bank and your U.S. bank. Normal banking hours in Austria are Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. -12:30 p.m. and 1:30 - 3:00 p.m. (Thursdays until 5:30 p.m.), but as this may vary considerably, it is important to check the opening hours of your local bank.

Traveler's cheques are a safe and convenient way to carry your money (1-2 % fee). Your bank or Amex (American Express) office will advise you on how to buy and cash them. You can usually exchange dollars at the airport or main railroad station in Vienna upon arrival.

Money transfers to Austria can be made through your bank, the bank of American Express, by American Express Money Order, or by International Postal Money Order. All can be cashed in Austrian currency. Personal checks from American accounts will be accepted by Austrian banks, but allow about four weeks waiting time for the checks to clear, unless you hold an account with the respective Austrian bank. American Express International has a check cashing service for those holding American Express credit cards. The usual form of payment in Austria is with cash or a cash card, or by payment order with an *Erlagschein / Zahlschein*.

There is no counterpart to the U.S. "personal check" in Austria. Therefore, you do not have to worry about opening a checking account.

Credit cards have become increasingly popular in Austria, and major credit cards are accepted in most places, but not necessarily in restaurants and small stores. If you have the PIN code for your credit card, you may withdraw cash at specially designated "international" ATMs in Austria, but you should look into the charges your credit card carrier makes before using this as a method of drawing funds. Charges can be as high as 3% on each transaction.

7.5 Living Standard and Costs

For general information on life in Austria and relevant links, please consult the Commission's website: http://www.fulbright.at/us_citizens/general_living.php

The differences between Austrian and American traditions, habits, income structures, and expectations make it difficult to compare the standards and costs of living. Generally speaking, Americans find Austria to be an expensive country because the prices of goods and services are higher than those in the United States. However, Austrians consider these prices "normal".

When budgeting and planning your stay in Austria, it is important to take the following considerations into account: your fixed or running costs in the U.S. (house and/or car payments, etc.), and the fact that you will be living on "one income" in Austria.

Your Teaching Assistant salary should cover necessary day-to-day expenses for one person in Austria. Teaching Assistants with a family must therefore bring sufficient extra funds to

support their dependents and should not expect to finance their family's stay on one teaching assistant salary.

All teaching assistants should plan on spending more money during the initial month of their stays in Austria due to the "start-up" costs of getting settled and to the fact that it takes a bit of a time to get accustomed to the price structure of commodities and services in Austria.

Housing is a major expenditure for all teaching assistants. Food prices are higher than in the U.S., and clothing can be expensive by American standards. TAs with babies or growing children are advised to purchase items for them in advance in the U.S., which they can grow into. However, there are markets and chain stores in all Austrian cities, which have bargains (by Austrian standards).

There are also a number of trade-offs. For example, public transportation is cheap in all major cities and tickets to many cultural events are reasonably priced (standing room at the Vienna State Opera for less than \$5!).

Depending on your situation, teaching assistants will spend the following percentage of their salary for the items listed below:

Housing	25-50 %
Utilities, heat	5 - 8 %
Food	30-40 %
Laundry, dry cleaning	3 - 4 %
Daily transportation	3 - 5 %
Local travel	6 - 8 %
Entertainment	3 - 5 %
Cultural events	3 - 5 %
Other (medical, clothing)	5-10 %

To help with your budgeting, here are some sample costs (in Euro) that you may incur during your stay in Austria:

Monthly U-Bahn pass in Vienna	49,50
Single fare for city public transportation	1,80
2 nd Class train ticket from Vienna to Salzburg with <i>Vorteilskarte</i>	23,80
Cell phone credit / month	20-35
Movie ticket	5-10
Coffee at a café	2,50-4
Night in a hostel	15-25
Day ski pass	20-40
Dinner at a restaurant	8-20

The following sales taxes (*Mehrwertsteuer*) are used in Austria. **Unlike in the U.S., price tags show prices including taxes.**

For food, medicine, rent	10 %
For gas, electricity, clothing and most other products	20 %
For luxury items (cars, boats, etc.)	32 %

In Austria you are required by law to register and purchase a license for all broadcasting reception equipment (TV and/or radio). More information can be found online at: <http://www.orf-gis.at/>.

7.6 Medical Matters

Medical care in Austria is on par with the standards in any highly developed industrialized country. Fees are usually, but not always, lower than in the U.S. Dental care and maternity care in Austria may be somewhat cheaper, but medical care, hospitals and surgeons are about what might be expected in the U.S. Glasses and contact lenses are more expensive.

Most medications are readily available. However, many require a doctor's prescription. For example, you cannot get over-the-counter anti-histamines in Austria. Medications are only sold at pharmacies (*Apotheke*) where some medications for less serious illnesses such as the common cold can be prescribed on-site. **If you need a specific medicine, bring it in sufficient quantity for the beginning of your stay and bring your doctor's prescription along with you.** Sending prescription drugs using the mail, if they are declared as prescription drugs, inevitably leads to problems with Austrian customs because the authorities will want to know why you are importing prescription drugs into Austria.

Some grantees recommend immunization against the flu and the common cold. Wood ticks in Austria carry a serious viral infection similar to Lyme's disease (which results in meningitis in some cases), and tick immunization is strongly recommended.

Physicians are listed in the telephone directory under *Ärzte* (general practitioners according to location, all other according to field of specialization). If you are in need of a doctor ask your landlord, colleagues or main office at school for the name of their family doctor, or pick out one in your vicinity from the telephone directory. In case of real emergency, where life or death may be a matter of minutes, do not waste time in trying to find a doctor, but call an ambulance (*Rettung*, 144) which generally has a first aid doctor and will take you to a hospital (You will not be able to choose the hospital at which you are treated unless this has been previously arranged by your physician).

Large hospitals operate emergency rooms for accidents (*Unfallstationen*) on a 24-hour basis (long waiting periods are the norm in non-urgent cases). Outpatient clinics (*Ambulanzen*) are open in the mornings on weekdays for the general public where medical care and advice can be obtained for minimal fees or under Austrian insurance coverage (long waiting time). For a list of hospitals, look in the telephone directory under *Krankenhäuser*. For thorough examinations, a consultation at a doctor's office (*Ordination*) is suggested.

A great tool for finding a physician is offered by the *Österreichische Ärztekammer* online. Some of the local *Ärzttekammern* even let you limit your search to physicians who can speak English. Be sure to pick BVA when selecting your Krankenkasse.

Burgenland: <http://www.aekbgld.at/service/aerztesuche.aspx>

Kärnten: <http://www.aekkttn.at/servlets/aekkttn/patienten/arztanfrage/ArztAnfrage.po>

Niederösterreich: <http://cms.arztnoe.at/cms/ziel/100969/DE/>

Oberösterreich: <http://nextdoor.wigeogis.com/kunden/akoo/start.asp>

Salzburg: <http://www.aeksbg.at/nav.jsp?id=15>

Steiermark: <http://www.aekstmk.or.at/cms/cms.php?pageName=46>

Tirol: <http://www.aektirol.at/fas.htm>

Vorarlberg: <http://www.aekvbg.or.at/aek/dyn/distributor?page=extfueall>

Wien: <http://www.aekwien.or.at/997.py>

7.7 What to Pack

Do not take too much with you. When packing, remember that westward-bound shipping charges are higher than eastbound ones for the same weight! And more importantly, you will have to carry the weight of your luggage (i.e. up and down stairs at the airport or train station) and also be able to load it onto the bus or train by which you will travel to your final destination.

Bring with you a complete wardrobe similar to that which you would use in Northern, Mid-Western or New England states and expect to supplement it in Austria with occasional small purchases. For the fall, you may want to bring: pants, jeans, sweaters, long-sleeve shirts, a few short-sleeve shirts, and a light jacket. For the winter, you may want to bring: thick sweaters, a winter hat, scarf, warm coat, and thin shirts that you can use to layer. Such warm winter clothing is imperative, as is rain gear and sturdy, warm footwear. You may do a lot more walking than in the U.S. At the same time do not eliminate summer clothes totally. Temperatures at the end of May can climb up to over 85° F for short periods. It is not unusual to see temperature changes of about twenty degrees centigrade on any given day of the year, and of course differences in temperature between the various regions within Austria. The Austrian standard of comfortable temperature may be somewhat below that of the American. As you may or may not have access to an iron or at-home washing facilities, consider bringing hassle-free, wash and wear clothes.

Men should consider bringing a dark or fairly dark suit. Women may also wish to bring something dressy. Austrians frequently wear dark colors at festive occasions. A tuxedo or a long dinner dress, if already owned, may come in handy in the ball season (or can be rented here). Sports clothes and jeans are quite popular among university students although students dress up somewhat for oral exams. You should also be aware of the fact that Austrians generally do not wear athletic shoes unless they are doing some sort of physical activity. As such, you may also want to bring a pair of shoes that are dressier than those typically worn by college students in the U.S.

Many past TAs have taken advantage of the opportunity for athletic pursuits in Austria. Therefore, you may also want to bring appropriate clothing for both winter and summer sports and any necessary, but small equipment that you have. Sports apparel and equipment can seem expensive compared to American standards.

Past teaching assistants have suggested bringing the following items: special reference books and dictionaries; favorite toiletries, specific medicine for your annual cold and/or vitamins, contact lens supplies; if you are a cook: an American cookbook, perhaps some of your favorite spices or flavorings, measuring cups and spoons for American recipes and some of your other favorite kitchen gadgets.

Bring only electrical appliances, which are convertible to 220 volts/50 cycles AC, the current used in Austria and most European countries. Also, keep in mind that the Austrian plugs are different. Buy your converter and/or conversion plugs in the U.S. where they are more readily available and less expensive and make sure the devices you bring were really manufactured for use with European current.

7.8 Tipping

Tips to waiters, taxi drivers, porters, hairdressers, etc., are usually 5-10 %. Instead of paying the tip extra (leaving it on the table), it is customary to round off the bill. Thus, if the bill were around €12.50, you would say, "*Bitte auf 13 Euro.*" Some Austrians may also leave a few coins on the table for the waiter who served them, if the money was collected by another

waiter - *Ober (Zahlkellner)*. At any rate, you should tip moderately compared to American standards.

Musicians at *Heurigen* and the like expect tips, too. They usually set up a plate or basket in a strategic place near the door into which you can drop money on your way out. It is usually hard to miss.

7.9 Telephone / Public Transportation

Landline telephone (*Festnetz*) bills are difficult to estimate since numerous providers now offer their telephone services. This is the result of the opening of the Austrian telecommunication market that only occurred in 1997. Generally, fees within Austria depend on both the “zone” you are calling and on the hour of the day. Contrary to the U.S., in Austria, local calls can be quite expensive and like long distance calls are charged by the minute. Rates for long-distance calls from Austria also vary according to carrier. For a comprehensive listing of providers and respective rates see this website: <http://www.infospot.at/>

Long distance calls (*Ferngespräche*) can be made from private telephones to all countries with area codes (*Vorwahlnummer*). Rates for long-distance calls from Austria vary significantly, depending on the carrier you opt for. Grantees are also advised to investigate AT&T calling cards (U.S. rates) or call back or international collect services before coming to Austria. International telephone codes are listed on the first pages of the telephone directory, can be found through an Internet search, or can be obtained by calling the *Selbstwählfernverkehr*. European countries as well as the U.S. are connected to the code system. Past TAs have also found the rates of the international calling cards sold at most post offices to be reasonable, to call from an Austrian landline to a U.S. landline. (Keep in mind that the rates go up if either party is using a cell phone). If you do not have a telephone, you can obtain one for a fee from the post office. Please remember that charges for such expenses are higher in Austria than in the U.S.

Important numbers such as fire brigade (122), police (133), ambulance (144), long-distance codes, and various service numbers are listed on the cover or on the first pages of the telephone directory.

The use of cell phones (called “*Handys*” here) has been much more widespread than landline phones amongst past TAs. Keep in mind that your U.S. cell phone most likely will not work in Europe. Former TAs have recommended going to a local cell phone provider shop, buying a new phone and SIM card, and using the pay-as-you-go option. The cell phone providers in Austria include: A1, Drei, Teling, T-Mobile, Orange, Bob and Yes. You may wish to “shop around” to find the network with the rates that best suit your communication needs.

Instructions in telephone booths are also given in English. In most booths the coin will be returned if you do not get a connection. Several calls can be made within the time limit. Some phones only take pre-paid phone cards, which can be purchased at any post office.

Austria has one of the best public transportation systems in the world. In fact, you should have little problem using this system for travel around Austria. However, keep in mind that there are steep fines for those who dodge fare (*Schwarzfahren*) on public transportation.

A useful tip provided by former Teaching Assistants is the purchase of the discount train card (*Vorteilskarte*) which is issued by the Austrian Railway Company (ÖBB) and can be applied for at Austrian train stations. **Please remember to take an ID and a passport photo with**

you. This card is valid for one year and reduces the costs of train rides by up to 50%. If you are under 26, the card will cost you € 19.90; otherwise, it will cost € 99.90. There is also the possibility of getting a 25 % reduction for traveling in most European countries with your *Vorteilscard*. There are also an increasing number of discount fares offered by the ÖBB to neighboring EU countries (sometimes as low as 29 Euros for a seat on a night train). More information on the *Vorteilscard* and the Austrian Railway System can be found online at: <http://www.oebb.at>

Inquire at the local transportation services about available monthly/annual tickets that might save you some money.

7.10 Store Hours

Business opening hours in Austria are generally shorter than in the U.S. Shops and restaurants are often closed on Sundays and national holidays. In smaller towns and villages, shops close at noon on Saturdays.

8. What about the U.S.A.?

Whether you like it or not, you will be representing the United States of America in the classroom on a day-to-day basis. Teachers and students alike may expect you to know more about the U.S. than you actually do. You also will inevitably be asked about current affairs. In recent years, topics of great interest have included how the Electoral College functions (due to the 2008 presidential elections); President Obama, 9/11; gun control, popular culture, the death penalty, and the economic crisis.

On occasion, you may be confronted with a certain amount of anti-Americanism (which is perfectly normal outside of the United States, just as a certain amount of “anti-Europeanism” is common inside the United States). However, anti-American sentiment has recently decreased in Europe due to president Obama’s election. It is important for you to recognize that you are not personally responsible for American foreign policy since World War I, Hiroshima, the Vietnam War, or poverty, crime, drugs, and racism in the United States. **Your job is not to defend the United States, but to try and explain it to your students.** This is not always an easy job, but keeping the difference in mind always helps.

The United States from the inside looking out (your perspective) is much different from the outside looking in (the perspective of Austrian students and teachers). Transatlantic relations and cross-cultural perceptions are topics that will repeatedly come up. If you are interested in doing a bit of background reading in order to prepare for teaching (and living) in Europe, you may wish to consult a book called *American Ways*, edited by Gary Althen, et.al. (Intercultural Press: 2nd edition, 2002). This paperback is divided up into 22 chapters and attempts to introduce people coming to the United States to the peculiarities of the “American way of life.” This book has been praised as insightful and criticized for reproducing stereotypes. It is up to you to decide! In a more scholarly and historical vein, Richard Pells has written an interesting and multi-faceted book on European-American perceptions and relations that is a must for any serious student of transatlantic relations: *Not Like Us: How Europeans have loved, hated, and transformed American Culture since World War II* (Basic Books: 1997). This book is a treasure chest of information that reaches from the historical analysis of the concept of “Americanization” or the impact of the Marshall Plan to reasons for the popularity of U.S. sitcoms in Europe.

As former teaching assistants have observed:

- "Most of my students' knowledge of America comes directly from television."
- "The questions that the students have are usually based on what they've seen on TV."
- "I have been able to dispel certain myths about the U.S. just by talking to the students and answering their questions. My being there has given them a better understanding of America and the American way of life."
- "I've made a difference by providing students with a real example."

These comments and many similar ones came from teaching assistants who have experienced what you also might experience: a very unrealistic perception of Americans and American life. This is somewhat understandable when the TV series on Austrian television are: *OC California*, *Sex and the City*, *Desperate Housewives*, *The Simpsons*, *Malcolm in the Middle*, etc.

It is important to realize that Michael Moore's documentary film *Bowling for Columbine* has been widely distributed and viewed in Europe. His film *Fahrenheit 9/11* won the Cannes Film Prize in 2004, and the German translation of his book *Stupid White Men* sold over 1 million copies in the German-speaking world. Your students and your peers may very well assume that you have seen these films and use them as a point of reference. If you have not seen *Bowling for Columbine* or *Fahrenheit 9/11* yet, you may wish to consider doing so. *Wag the Dog* (a Robert De Niro-Dustin Hoffman film from 1997 about media, politics, public opinion, and war) has a similar status. Add a bit of CNN and MTV to this concoction and you have a composite picture of the United States in European media.

This is American life? It would be just as unfair to judge Austrians based on *The Sound of Music*. Not all Austrians run and sing in the mountains wearing their *Dirndl* and *Lederhosen*. Therefore it is important to have an opportunity like this, as one assistant said, "to open up the minds of students to things they never knew about the U.S. by telling them how it really is at home." You will be able to do this by covering certain topics, which are of interest to the students.

There are some very useful Internet resources that deal with the culture shock many people experience when studying or living in another country:

<http://www3.uop.edu/sis/culture/index.htm>

<http://www.studentsabroad.com/>

<http://www.uwec.edu/counsel/pubs/shock.htm>

8.1 Frequently Used Topics

The following list of the commonly covered topics is based on a survey of U.S. teaching assistants. You may wish to bring materials from home relating to these topics. However, before doing so, you may also wish to contact your schools and check that the classes you will work with will be covering these topics.

- AIDS
- Child abuse
- Current events in the U.S. & U.S. foreign policy
- Death penalty
- Drugs – alcohol abuse

- Feminism
- Food
- Genetic engineering
- Grammar - differences between American English and British English
- Holidays - traditions
- Jobs - job applications - résumés
- Literature
- Media - television - advertising
- Music
- Native Americans
- Political system - government – elections - voting
- Pollution - environment
- Racism - prejudice
- Regionalism - life in different parts of the U.S. - geography
- Religions
- School system - school life
- Teen issues - smoking, driving, lifestyle, fashion, teenage pregnancy
- Tourism
- Terrorism
- U.S. history - melting pot - immigrants - civil rights – foreign policy
- Violence - crime - gangs - gun control

How in-depth you get with these topics of course depends on which levels you are teaching. If you spend time with the *Unterstufe* (ages 10-14), you might discuss a few of these topics at a very basic level of English. If you spend more time in the *Oberstufe* (ages 14-18), students will be able to understand and discuss these topics at a fairly high level.

In the appendix of this handbook, you will find a list of on-line resources related to the above-mentioned topics and the tables of contents from the textbooks used at the different kinds of schools. Keep in mind, however, that not every Gymnasium or every HTL uses the same textbook. Use the list as a guide and ask your school to provide you with copies of the textbooks, if they expect you to use them on a regular basis.

Most of your teaching time will be spent generating discussions, answering questions about America, and presenting material. **Your job is to engage the students, to lower their apprehension about using a foreign language and to get them to talk.**

It is important for you to recognize that **British English** – in terms of pronunciation as well as spelling – is the generally recognized model in Europe. Therefore, some teachers may feel that you (as an American) do not pronounce English “correctly,” because they were trained to use a different (“correct”) model. You may be confronted with this pro-British (or anti-American) bias. There is nothing you can do about it, so don’t worry about it.

Although teaching grammar is something you should not do on a regular or extensive basis (according to the guidelines), you may also be asked to help explain certain **grammar** points or help with grammatical exercises. This may be a challenge if you have never had to do this before, because there is a difference between speaking intuitively and having to explain why things are grammatically right or wrong: knowing the prescriptive rules of why something ought to be said in a certain way. Having some kind of a grammar book with you as a reference will help. Do not hesitate to ask your teacher to make sure you understand English grammar before you are expected to teach it. Although you are not expected to know everything about the English language, do your best to be prepared for those situations where an explanation is needed.

8.2 What to Bring: Supplementary Materials

Now that you have the most common topics, you might wonder what materials are appropriate and/or effective to help you teach these topics. The most consistent advice from former teaching assistants is, "Bring lots of materials from home!" Here are their suggestions on which materials from home have been most effective. Keep in mind that many schools have subscriptions to English-language publications and that many resources can be downloaded from the Internet at school. Consider asking your school for advice about which materials you should bring.

- Pictures or slides of home and town/city
- Tourist brochures/pamphlets
- Yearbook, report card, student handbook, pictures of graduation, high school (or university)
- U.S. history book
- Grammar book
- Any "reference" CD-ROMs you may have
- A "bag of tricks" - spur of the moment lessons and games
- Teen magazines
- *Newsweek, Economist, Time, Rolling Stone, Spotlight, World and Press*
- Newspaper articles from home - current events topics / topics from the textbooks
- Short stories
- Advertisements - housing, jobs
- Menus from restaurants
- Songs (tapes or CDs with texts included, if possible)
- Films, videos of talk shows, news clips, baseball game, commercials, etc. (Note: European videos don't operate on the NTSC, but the PAL format. Due to different regional encoding, you may also encounter problems with American DVDs.)
- Maps or atlas of the U.S.
- TV guides
- Comic books

You may be asking yourself, "Am I supposed to drag all that stuff along to Austria? Are they serious?" The answers are: yes and yes. The more authentic materials you have with you, the better prepared you will be and the more interesting your lessons will be. Start collecting now! Many teaching assistants who did not have what they wanted or needed in Austria asked friends and family at home to send materials to them. This gets expensive and also involves a time issue. A list of Internet resources is included in the appendix.

9. Sample Lesson Plans

Below are suggestions for integrating the topics with the materials mentioned in the previous sections. Below you will find a list of sample lesson plans and “fillers” you can use and adapt for your students/classes.

The following sample lesson plans are just that - samples. You can adjust and adapt them to your needs (time schedule, age level, level of English proficiency, etc). They are meant to help guide you and give you ideas. Your teachers, the student textbooks, and fellow language assistants will also be great resources as you plan your lessons in the upcoming year.

Media:

- 1) Introduction: what are the different forms of media
- 2) Compare/contrast: list most common newspapers and magazines from each country
- 3) Compare/contrast: radio and television, print and electronic or “new media”

Materials: magazines, newspaper articles, advertisements, TV guides, video clips of shows or commercials

Racism:

1) Introduction: Tell a story of how you or someone you know experienced an act of racism; ask students for a story (may be personal) about an act of racism; relate the topic of racism to a song or elicit song titles from students; write the word "racism" on the board and ask students to brainstorm and define the term (either in groups or as a large group)

2) Ask them to tell you about the situation in Austria. Are there acts or incidents of racism? Which groups are affected? Ask them what their first reaction is when they hear a person speaking a foreign language. Which languages do they hear?

3) Music: Play a song and use as a fill-the-gaps exercise. For this topic, Peter Gabriel's "Biko" is suitable (deals with Apartheid in South Africa), or use any other song dealing with the issue of racism. You can also try <http://www.songtext.net/> web site to search for appropriate songs.

4) Role play - come up with a situation: Put the students in groups and give each group member a specific opinion or role to play. The specific roles should create some kind of controversy/conflict/discussion. Students need to come up with arguments for their opinion and discuss in their small group.

U.S. School System:

1) Introduction: Compare the Austrian school system with the U.S. school system

2) On an overhead transparency/handout/on the board: Outline the structure of the U.S. school system, including a chart of which ages are in which grades, kinds of schools, daily life, school day, schedule, classes, lockers, textbooks, rules, school bus, after school activities, homework, grading system and report cards, extracurricular activities, graduation, prom, dances, etc.

3) Ask students to outline the Austrian school system: compare/contrast the two systems

4) Handout with questions: discussion about positives and negatives in each system

Materials: yearbook, report card, student handbook, pictures of graduation, school (or university) newspaper

Fillers

Fillers are used to fill in those last few minutes of class when you (or the teacher) have covered all the material for that lesson, but you still have some class time left. It is helpful to have a bag of tricks with you, so that you can pull them out at any time. Use your own discretion as to which fillers are appropriate for your students and how long each filler should last.

Hangman: You can use words from the day or from the current topic in class. You can choose the words or ask volunteers to choose words (have them write them out to avoid spelling mistakes).

Twenty questions: Have the names of well-known people (singers, actors, authors, athletes, etc) written out on cards. One volunteer will pick a card and the class will ask yes or no questions, for example, "Is it a woman?" or "Is this person still alive?" Whoever guesses the name of the person gets to pick the next card. You can limit the questions to twenty, thus the name of the game.

Bingo: Have a five by five grid ready (photocopied for each student) or ask students to quickly draw this out. This is their Bingo card. You can ask them to label the top of each column with current topics, for example: the first column is names of animals, the second column is colors, the third column is articles of clothing, the fourth column is rooms in a house and the fifth column is furniture. Each student should fill in their own card according to the topics. When they finish, you can then call out, "Colors - blue" or "Rooms - dining room". They should mark their cards by putting a star in the right top corner of the square. When someone has "Bingo", you can start a new game and have them mark their cards by putting an X in the bottom left corner of the square. You can reuse the cards as long as they use a different marking system each time.

Telephone: Think of a sentence (somewhat challenging for the age group), and whisper it to the first student. The sentence is whispered around the room from student to student. When it reaches the last student, ask them to tell the class what the sentence is. Tell them the original sentence and see how close they were.

Charades / Pictionary: Have cards prepared with current vocabulary or split the class into two teams and each team can come up with vocabulary for the opposite team. Each team takes turns acting out or drawing for their team to guess. Give points for each correct guess. You may want to set time limits for guessing.

Find someone who... Prepare a grid sheet with specific tasks in each box, for example: can play an instrument, can speak a language other than German, has been to England, etc. Label the top of the grid "Find someone who...". Students walk around the classroom to find a student who answers yes to the task. That student then writes their name in that box. Students try to fill all their boxes with different names of students from their class.

You can also use grammar or vocabulary tasks, for example: who can name all the months of the year in English, can name five animals, can count to 100 by 5's, etc.

10. Teaching Assistantship Extensions for a Second Year

Some teaching assistants have such a good experience that they wish to continue their stay in Austria. Provided that their performance merits an extension for a second year, teaching assistants may apply to have their teaching assistantships extended for a second year, either at their current locations or at another location in Austria.

Applicants for extensions are required to pay a processing fee of €50 to the Fulbright Commission at the time of the application to help defray administrative costs.

Under no circumstances are teaching assistants entitled to an extension of their assignments. The number of extensions granted is contingent upon the number of applications for extension, their relative quality and merits, the size of the “first time” applicant pool, and the number of teaching assistant positions available for the next school year.

The **deadline** for the submission of extension applications is **February 1, 2010 (meaning that the documents must have reached the Ministry of Education and the Commission by that date)**. Applying for an extension involves the completion of:

An *Antrag auf Verlängerung*: –This form can be found on page 37 in the *Leitfaden*, including short statements written:

- a) by yourself on why you want to stay for a second year
- b) and by your school(s).

(You may attach extra pages if you find the space on the form limited).

At the beginning of January 2010 the *Direktion* of your *Stammschule* **must forward**

- a) **one copy** of the *Antrag auf Verlängerung* mentioned above via “official channels” (the famous *Dienstweg*) to the **Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture**.
- b) a **second copy** of the *Antrag* mentioned above to the **Fulbright Commission**.

Note: It is your responsibility to make sure that the school officials forward these materials.

All of the above-mentioned conditions and deadlines must be met or your request will not be reviewed. It is particularly important for your application to be submitted via the *Dienstweg* to the Ministry of Education. Sending in your application via the *Dienstweg* means that your school will forward your application through the city or provincial school board and it is then sent on to the Ministry of Education. **Late applications will not be considered.**

Applicants are usually notified about the status of their applications at the beginning of April.

11. Appendix: Resources

11.1 Internet Resources

The following list of on-line resources includes several general information and lesson plan websites, as well as links to articles related to topics which past teaching assistants have been asked to address in class.

There is also a teaching assistant website where past teaching assistants have uploaded and shared lesson plan ideas. Please see: <http://content.tibs.at/fla/>.

General Information and Lesson Plan Websites:

Encyclopedia

Microsoft Encarta

<http://encarta.msn.com/>

Lesson Plans

Teaching International English from current Reuters News Stories

<http://www.english-to-go.com/>

PBS

<http://www.pbs.org/teachers/>

Smithsonian Institution

<http://educate.si.edu/>

The CNN San Francisco Bureau Learning Resources includes news stories with accompanying quizzes and activities

<http://literacynet.org/cnnsf/>

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/> has a DAILY lesson using a newspaper article and lots of activities to go with that article.

TESL

Dave's ESL Cafe (everything you need!)

<http://www.eslcafe.com/>

English Language Program Division of USIA

<http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/usia/E-USIA/education/engteaching/default.html>

P I Z Z A Z ! People Interested in Zippy and Zany Zcribbling. An Online Resource since 1995 for Scribblers and Teachers of English as a Second Language by Leslie Opp-Beckman

<http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~leslieob/pizzaz.html> (includes a bag of tricks)

Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab (needs RealAudio)

<http://www.esl-lab.com/index.htm>

Tongue Twisters

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/8136/tonguetwisters.html>

The Tower of English (informative ESL site organized around the concept of a high-rise building)

<http://towerofenglish.com/>

Topic-Specific Websites:

AIDS

It's Up to Us. An AIDS Education Curriculum for ESL Students and Other English Language Learners

<http://www.hostos.cuny.edu/homepages/lesnick/aids/page03.htm>

American Studies

USIA Study of the United States

<http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/usia/E-USIA/education/amstudy/default.html>

Death Penalty

Angel on Death Row. The Real Life Cases in "Dead Man Walking"

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/angel/>

Death Penalty Information Center

<http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/>

PBS Frontline Report "The Execution"

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/execution/>

Drugs

Mark's Realm - Drug Abuse Resistance Education

<http://www.edrugrehab.com/>

The Drug Reform Coordination Network (critical views on the war on drugs, calling for a different drug policy)

<http://stopthedrugwar.org/home>

Environment

Environmental Protection Agency

Kids Page: <http://www.epa.gov/kids/>

Students Page: <http://www.epa.gov/students/>

Teacher Page: <http://www.epa.gov/teachers/>

Feminism

Feminist Theory Website

<http://www.cddc.vt.edu/feminism/enin.html>

Gifts of Speech. Women's Speeches Around the World.

<http://gos.sbc.edu/>

Film/Movies

Internet Movie Database

<http://www.imdb.com/>

Holidays

The Holiday Zone: Activities for English Language Learners

<http://www.theholidayzone.com/>

International Relations

The link collection of the H-Net discussion group H-Diplo is a good place to start

<http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/>

Native Americans

Bureau of Indian Affairs

<http://www.doi.gov/bia/>

Index of Native American Resources on the Internet

<http://www.hanksville.org/NAresources/>

NativeWeb (information on indigenous cultures, lots of links to Native Americans)

<http://www.nativeweb.org/>

Racism

Speakout.com

<http://speakout.com/activism/race/>

Race and Racism and the Law

<http://academic.udayton.edu/race/index.htm>

Religion

The American Religious Experience

<http://are.as.wvu.edu/>

U.S. Education

U.S. Network for Education Information

<http://www.ed.gov/about/contacts/gen/othersites/index.html>

U.S. Foreign Policy

A good place to start is the U.S. Department of State website:

<http://www.state.gov/>

U.S. Government

Government Information Exchange: <http://www.info.gov/>

Government Information Exchange for Kids: <http://www.kids.gov/>

White House for Kids: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/kids/>

FBI for Kids: <http://www.fbi.gov/kids/6th12th/6th12th.htm>

CIA for Kids: <https://www.cia.gov/kids-page/index.html>

U.S. History

Naturalization Self Test (basic U.S. history and government)

<http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.eb1d4c2a3e5b9ac89243c6a7543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=d1fc9f9934741110VgnVCM1000000ecd190aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=d1fc9f9934741110VgnVCM1000000ecd190aRCRD>

There are also study guides on U.S. history and government structure (includes the text of the Constitution) available in PDF format (save to disk and bring to Austria)

<http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis/menuitem.eb1d4c2a3e5b9ac89243c6a7543f6d1a/?vgnextoid=bb93667706f7d010VgnVCM10000048f3d6a1RCRD&vgnnextchannel=bb93667706f7d010VgnVCM10000048f3d6a1RCRD>

11.2 Tables of Contents from frequently used textbooks

The following representative selection of the tables of contents from frequently used textbooks is designed to give you a feeling for the material students cover at specific age levels as well as the learning sequence in terms of vocabulary and conceptualization.

Different schools choose different textbooks contingent upon teacher preferences and their respective branches of specialization in the higher grades.

The New You And Me

used by: BG, BRG

Unterstufe = grades 1-4 (ages 10-14)

1. Klasse: colors, sweets and snacks, classroom objects, clothes (money), circus animals, body, time, hobbies, food, collections, rooms in a house, family and friends, TV, magic, short stories, holidays (vacation), Christmas, Easter

2. Klasse: holidays (vacation), giving directions, friends, festivals (Halloween), mascots (good luck charms), money, feelings, ghosts, science fiction, sports, magic, school subjects, buildings, pets and animals, lost and found, dreams, Christmas

3. Klasse: adventures, rules (chores/household jobs), mystery story, London, vampires, teen problems, King Arthur, San Francisco, real life dramas, famous writers, natural disasters, cheating in school

4. Klasse: Australia, sports, Native Americans, food, save the earth/environmental issues, big cities, New York, book (bookworms), growing up, Ireland, dilemmas, history of..., jobs, poetry

Meanings Into Words

used by: BG, BRG, BORG, HBLA, HLW

Oberstufe = grades 5-8 (ages 14-18)

5. Klasse: housing, holiday Britain, daily routine, schools, rules, jobs, family relations, youth organizations, sports, health (food, calories, activity)

6. Klasse: TV (viewing habits, soaps), Canada, city life and country life, endangered earth, inventions and discovery, arts, violence, charities, shopping, advertising

7. Klasse: culture vulture (art, cinema, poems), drugs, racism, politics, books and reading, growing up, travel and tourism, disasters (Titanic, Lindberg flight), environment, media

8. Klasse: family issues (gender roles, single parents, divorce, adoption), attitudes towards work and leisure, industrial change, developing country issues, literature, human rights

Make Your Way With English

used by: BG, BRG, BORG, BAKIP

Oberstufe = grades 5-8 (ages 14-18)

5. Klasse: pop music, school system, Victorian times, unsolved mysteries, India, environment, poetry, cartoons and jokes, train/railway system, computers, housing, shopping, food, friends-family-fifteen, youth hostels

6. Klasse: fashion, books and reading, violence, relationships, cars and transportation, drugs, Texas, dictionaries, horror films and stories, smoking, tourism in Austria, Amnesty International, dangers of sunbathing

7. Klasse: generations, TV, Canada, art, death and dying, dreams, short stories, senior high school, coping with stress, politics in the U.K., beauty, science and technology, careers

8. Klasse: novels, racial problems in the U.S.A., leisure time, Northern Ireland, language (British and American English, who speaks what, men and women, feminism), newspapers, The American Dream, school and education

Make Your Way In Business

used by: BHAK, HBLA

ages 14-19

1. Klasse: family, school, hobbies, pen pals, agony columns, shopping, diary, home - what does that mean, free time, sports, American football, bungee jumping, bodybuilding, extreme sports, health and sickness, food, restaurants, menus, invitations, preparation, games and tricks, school, post office, jobs, working situation, traffic signs, reading instructions on equipment, hotels, banks, holidays (vacation)

2. Klasse: being a teenager, clothing and fashion, school life, goals, music and books, TV habits, video games, alcohol and smoking, school or work, tourist industry, flying, going by train, holidays (vacation), Australia, New Zealand

3. Klasse: peers and parents, youth exchanges, American and British English, politics, elections, human rights and discrimination, Earth Day, eating habits, coping with stress, drugs, tourism, tourist brochures, food and restaurants, shopping, banking, history of money, business industry, working in industry, products

4. Klasse: driving, renting a car, stereotypes, European Union, stock market, newspapers, tabloids, death, AIDS, violence, civil war and famine, United Nations, Internet and computers, art, jobs for males and females, business ethics, travel industry, management styles, advertisements

5. Klasse: economic aspects, organizing an event, hurricanes, energy conservation, tourist industry problems, standards of living, child labor in the Third World, fashion, jobs, job applications

Work It Out In English

used by: HTL, die Graphische

ages 14-19

Book 1: getting to know one another, sports, shopping, adventures, families, young people abroad, free time, post office, computers, reading instructions, a dream job, gender issues, advertisements, hotels, environment, at the bank, working with tools, working with numbers, working with shapes, safety

Book 2: schools, food, fashion, travel by train, houses, youth hostels, cars and transportation, dictionaries, smoking, Amnesty International (torture), dangers of sunbathing

Technical English: wiring for electricity, in the workshop (light engineering), generating electricity, understanding electricity

11.3 Meldezettel Form

The *Meldezettel* form can be downloaded at:

<http://www.help.gv.at/Content.Node/documents/meldez.pdf> or
<http://www.help.gv.at/documents/meldez.pdf>

11.4 U.S. Citizen Registration with U.S. Consular Section

<http://www.usembassy.at/en/embassy/cons/ibrs.htm>

11.5 Useful Addresses

11.5.1 Addresses In the United States of America:

Austrian **Consular Offices** and the Austrian **Embassy** in Washington, D.C: (Consult <http://www.austria.org/> for details)

Embassy of Austria

Ambassador Dr. Christian PROSL (<http://www.austria.org>)

3524 International Court, NW
Washington, D.C. 20008-3027

Consular District: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, US-Virgin-Islands, Commonwealth of the Bahamas

Tel: (202) 895-6700

Fax: (202) 895-6750

E-mail: washington-ob@bmeia.gv.at

Consular Section

Tel: (202) 895-6711, 895-6743

Fax: (202) 895-6773

E-mail: consularsection@austria.org

Austrian Press and Information Service

3524 International Court, NW
Washington, D.C. 20008-3027

Tel: (202) 895-6775

Fax: (202) 895-6772

E-mail: austroinfo@austria.org

Austrian Cultural Forums

NEW YORK

11 East 52nd Street
New York, NY 10022

Tel: (212) 319-5300

Fax: (212) 644-8660

E-mail: desk@acfny.org

Website: <http://www.acfny.org>

WASHINGTON

3524 International Court, NW
Washington, D.C. 20008-3027
Tel: (202) 895-6700
Fax: (202) 895-6750
E-mail: culture@austria.org

Office of Science & Technology at the Embassy of Austria

3524 International Court, NW
Washington, DC 20008-3027
Tel: (202) 895-6754
Fax: (202) 895-6750
E-mail: office@ostina.org
Website: <http://www.ostina.org/>

Austrian Consulates General

CHICAGO

Consul General Dr. Robert Zischg
Wrigley Building, Suite 707
400 N. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611
Consular District: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin
Tel: (312) 222-1515
Fax: (312) 222-4113
E-mail: chicago-gk@bmeia.gv.at

LOS ANGELES

Consul General Mag. Martin Weiss
11859 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 501
Los Angeles, CA 90025
Consular District: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, Pacific Islands (under US Administration)
Tel: (310) 444-9310
Fax: (310) 477-9897
E-mail: los-angeles-gk@bmeia.gv.at

NEW YORK

Consul General Dr. Brigitta Blaha
31 East 69th Street
New York, NY 10021
Consular District: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont; Bermudas
Tel: (212) 737-6400
Fax: (212) 772-585-1992
E-mail: info@austria-ny.org
Website: <http://www.austria-ny.org>

11.5.2 Addresses In Austria:

Fulbright Commission (Austrian-American Educational Commission)
quartier 21/MQ, Museumsplatz 1, A-1070 Wien,
Tel: (01) 236 7878-0, international access code plus country code 43 and city
code 1 (Europe/Austria/Vienna)
Website: <http://www.fulbright.at>

American Embassy
Boltzmanngasse 16, A-1091 Wien,
Tel. (01) 313 39
Website: <http://www.usembassy.at/>

American Consulate
Gartenbaupromenade 2
A-1010 Wien, (Hotel Marriott)
Tel: (01) 313 39 – 0

Austrian Student Union (Österreichische Hochschülerschaft)
Taubstummengasse 7-9,
A-1040 Wien, 4. Stock
Tel.: (01) 310 88 80 - 0
Fax: (01) 310 88 80 - 36
E-Mail: oe@oe.ac.at
Website: www.oe.ac.at

Branch office University of Vienna
Uni Campus
Spitalgasse 2, Hof 1
1090 Vienna (Universitätsvertretung)
Tel. (01) 277 / 19553
Website: <http://www.oe.univie.ac.at/>

E-Mail: sozialreferat@oe.univie.ac.at
(social issues, jobs, housing)

E-Mail: kultur@oe.univie.ac.at
Tel.: (01) 40103-2630
(cultural affairs)

Branch offices in all university cities and at institutions of higher education

Austrian Exchange Service
Website: <http://www.oead.ac.at/> with information on all branch offices

Austro-American Institute of Education (Amerika-Institut)
Operngasse 4
A-1010 Wien
Tel: (01) 512 7720

11.6 Sample Housing Ad Terminology

1/2/3 Zi. Whg/ 1/2/3 Zimmer Wohnung	1/2/3 room apartment	Maklerfrei	not brokered by realtor
2er/3er etc. WG/ Wohngemeinschaft	2/ 3 etc. people sharing an apartment and rent	Mitbenutzung	facilities to be shared with others
2./3. Liftstock	3/ 4. floor with elevator	möb./ möbliert	furnished
AB/ Altbau	old; usually built before 1945; high ceilings	nach Vereinbarung	to be agreed upon
Ablöse	non refundable deposit	Nachmieter gesucht	party being sought to take over lease
Ausst./ Ausstattung	interior, furnishings	NK/ Nebenkosten	utility costs (does not include heating and electricity!)
Betriebskosten	utility costs	NB/ Neubau	relatively new building (built after 1945)
Durchgangszimmer	rooms not separated	OG/ Mezzanin	2 nd floor
Duschgelegenheit	shower facility	von privat/ privat zu vermieten	rented through owner
EG/ Erdgeschoß	ground floor	Provision	commission
Garconniere	1 room apartment with shower and cooking facility	Provisionsfrei	no commission
Gepflegt/ gepflegt.	well-kept	teilmöbliert	partially furnished
getrennt begehbar	rooms are separated	Untermiete	sublease
großzügig	here: spacious	Warm/ Warmmiete	rent includes heating
inkl. Heizung	rent includes heating costs	WaMa/ Waschmaschine	washing machine
Kalt/Kaltmiete	rent does not include heating	ZH/ Zentralheizung	central heating
Kaution	deposit	Zzgl./ zuzüglich Heizung u. Nebenkosten	plus heating and utilities

11.7 CONVERSION TABLES

When using Austrian recipes, it would be wisest to invest in some measuring scale to handle liters and grams. However, if you do not have access to a scale, here are conversions to metric units that you will need:

Dry Volume Conversions			
1/2 cup	0.136 liters	50 milliliters	3 tbs.
1 cup	0.272 liters	100 milliliters	6 tbs.
1 pint	0.551 liters	125 milliliters	1/2 cup-2 tsp.
1 quart	1.101 liters	200 milliliters	2/3 cup + 1 T.
		1 liter	1 quart— 6 T.

Most dry goods are measured by weight rather than volume (a handy cup— MESSBECHER — on the market gives markings for various weights of different dry goods). Here is a chart for three commonly used ingredients.

	Shortening	Sifted Flour	Sugar
1 tablespoon	14 grams	8 grams	12 grams
1/4 cup	56 grams	30 grams	50 grams
1/3 cup	75 grams	40 grams	67 grams
1/2 cup	113 grams	60 grams	100 grams
1 cup (16 T.)	225 grams	120 grams	200 grams

Weight Equivalents		Liquid Volume Conversions	
1 ounce	28.35 grams	1 teaspoon	4.9 ml.
1 pound	453.60 grams	1 tablespoon	14.8 ml.
1 gram	0.035 ounces	1 cup	0.236 liters (or 1/4 liter minus 2 tbs.)
5 grams	0.18 ounces		
20 grams	0.7 ounces	1 quart	0.9463 liters (or 1 liter minus 1/4 cup)
30 grams	1.04 ounces		
50 grams	1.75 ounces		
100 grams	3.5 ounces	1/4 liter	1 cup plus 1 T
125 grams	4.4 ounces	1/2 liter	2 cups plus 2 T
150 grams	5.3 ounces	1 liter	1.06 quarts (or 4 1/4 cups)
200 grams	7.0 ounces		
400 grams	14.0 ounces		
500 grams	1.1 pounds		
1 kilo	2.2 pounds		

Metric Conversion Factors (Approximates)

To covert to metric measurements:

To convert from metric measurements

When you Know	Multiply by	To find	When you Know	Multiply By	To Find
Length					
Inches	2.5	centimeters	millimeters	0.04	inches
Feet	30.0	centimeters	centimeters	0.4	inches
Yards	0.9	meters	meters	1.1	yards
Miles	1.6	kilometers	kilometers	0.6	miles
Area					
sq. inches	6.5	sq. cm.	sq. cm.	0.16	sq. inches
sq. feet	0.0929	sq. meters	sq. meters	10.8	sq. feet
sq. miles	2.6	sq. km.	sq. km.	0.4	sq. miles
acres	0.4	hectares	hectares	2.5	acres
Weight					
Ounces	28	grams	grams	0.035	ounces
Pounds	0.45	kilograms	kilograms	2.2	pounds
short tons (2000 lbs.)	0.9	tons	tons (1000 kgs)	1.1	short tons
Volume					
Teaspoons	5	milliliters	milliliters	0.2	teaspoons
Tablespoons	15	milliliters	milliliters	0.6	tablespoons
fluid ounces	30	milliliters	milliliters	0.03	fl. ounces
cups	0.24	liters	liters	4.2	cups
quarts	0.95	liters	liters	1.06	quarts
gallons	3.8	liters	liters	0.26	gallons

Temperature Conversions

Air		Body		Oven	
C°	F°	C°	F°	C°	F°
-20	4	36.5	97.7	121	250
-15	5	37	98.6	149	300
-10	14	37.5	99.5	163	325
-5	23	38	100.4	177	350
0	32	38.5	101.3	191	375
5	41	39	102.2	204	400
10	50	39.5	103.1	218	425
15	59	40	104.0	232	450
20	68			260	500
25	77			288	550
30	86				
35	95				

To get F°, multiply C° by nine, divide by 5, and add 32.

To get C°, subtract 32 from F, multiply by 5 and divide by 9.