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# Aston Introduction Pack

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Aston Educational Group

## What is Aston Educational Group?



Aston Educational Group (Aston) is an international educational group which began in the United States in 1991, and made its way to China in 1996. Aston Educational Group provides language training, K-12 education, and educational and cultural exchanges for millions of students around the world. Aston's primary businesses include:

**Aston English Schools** - Language training for children aged 3 to 18, this is Aston's most well-known and widespread brand with 130+ locations across China

**Balboa International School** – Private K-12 school Located in San Diego, California, serving kindergarten through 12th grade students with a strong focus on college preparation

**Balboa International School Sino-US Dual Diploma Program** – Provides accredited American educational programs and resources to public and private elementary, middle and high schools in China and Vietnam

**Aston New Horizons** – SAT and ACT Test preparation and language arts study

centers located in Shanghai, China

**Aston Vietnam** – Provides English-as-a-Second-Language programs for students in Vietnam

**Aston USA** - Provides intensive English language services to international students in the U.S. and overseas, focusing on university preparation

**Aston Abroad** - Aston Educational Group's professional overseas education services provider, offering students worldwide high quality educational opportunities to study in the US and beyond

The integration of these businesses makes Aston the only complete provider of American educational services operating in Asia and a leader in its field.

## Aston English

Aston English is the flagship division of The Aston Educational Group. Aston English came into being in the city of Dalian in 1996.



From the humble beginning of a single school it has flourished into one of China's largest ESL operators in China with over 130 schools spread across 22 provinces.

Our main concentration of schools are in Sha'anxi and Shandong province, though we are spread across the whole of China, from Inner Mongolia to Guizhou, Xinjiang

to Jiangsu. We have no schools in Beijing or Shanghai as our main focus has been to bring English to people in central China, in the smaller 2nd and 3rd tier cities.

## Students & Schedules

We have two level sets, Kindergarten and Pre-school levels; and Primary school through to High school levels. Students



attend once a week, with classes being held over the weekend or on weekday evenings after normal school hours.

Kindergarten and Pre-school levels are divided into two groups, and the student ages range from 3 to 5 years old. The youngest level is called “Jungle Gym” which has 2 levels numbered JG 1 and JG 2. These students are aged between 3 and 4.

After “Jungle Gym” we have “PC” classes for students aged between 5 and 6. “PC” stands for Parent Child, as parents or guardians may attend the class (but not participate). There are 4 PC class levels: PC 1 and 2 have 10 students per class plus parents, while in PC 3 and 4 there are 12 students without parents.

For Kindergarten and Pre-school classes

the western teachers teach for 30 minutes, assisted by a Chinese teacher.

The Primary school to High school classes (ages 7 to 18) are called “C” levels. “C” levels are divided into 4 levels of proficiency: Beginner, Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced. Students are placed according to their ability rather than their age, so there may be a range of ages in one class (within reason).

Western teacher/Chinese teacher time depends on the class level. Beginner and lower Elementary class time is divided 50/50 between the teachers: the western teacher teaches for 1 hour assisted by a Chinese teacher, and the Chinese teacher teaches a further hour alone.

Upper Elementary/Lower Intermediate classes are split 75/25 with the western teacher teaching one and a half hours assisted by a Chinese teacher and the Chinese teacher teaching the final 30 minutes alone.

Upper Intermediate classes are taught by the western teacher for 2 hours, assisted by a Chinese teacher for 2 hours. Finally,



advanced levels are taught by the western teacher alone for 2 hours.

We teach all ages and levels exclusively through English so Western teachers are

not required to speak Chinese - translation is provided by Chinese teachers only when necessary.

## Classrooms

The Aston English classroom is very simple; each class has 18 desk chairs plus a whiteboard or glass board.

The Aston 3.0 and Aston A+ classroom are similar, with the addition of interactive whiteboards installed with audio and video capabilities.



## Contract options

Regardless of how long you're planning to spend in China or what kind of work load you are interested in taking on, Aston probably has a contract to suit you.

We offer 6 month and 12 month contracts starting on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March or September, as well as 7.5 month and 13.5 month contracts beginning mid-January or mid-July. However, we usually have a limited number of positions available year-round.



Occasionally a teacher may wish to arrive at a certain time, but finds all of our positions are filled. In these cases we may be able to offer an “open city” contract.

With these contracts we don't assign you a city until after (or just prior) to the contract start date. Teachers then arrive in one of our larger locations for training, and will then be placed in an Aston school with an available position. The contract is exactly the same as a normal contract except no city is indicated initially.

Teachers can choose between two contract hour options.

### **28 hours per week**

- 25hrs teaching + 3hrs Office

### **23 hours per week**

- 20hrs teaching + 3hrs Office

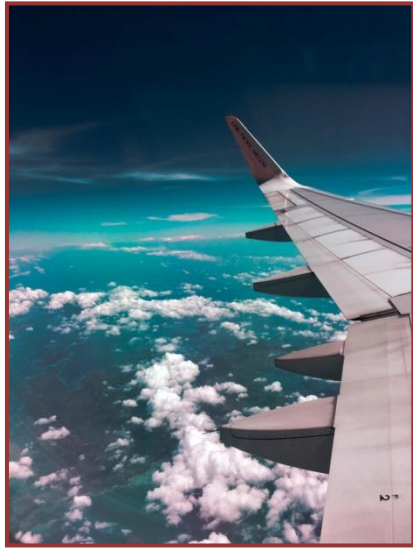
Teaching hours include regular scheduled classes, promotional events, demonstration classes and English proficiency interviews, while office hours are used for trainings and meetings.

28-hour teachers work five days per week while 23-hour teachers work three to four days per week. Days off may or may not be consecutive, depending on the local school's schedule.

## Personal Leave

The amount of leave varies according to the type and length of contract. Please contact your recruiter or check our website [here](#) for more information.

In addition to personal leave there are



three major holiday periods in China: Labor Day (May 1); National Day (October 1); and Spring Festival (Chinese New Year, which takes place in late January and/or early February). Exact dates vary according to the schedule of the school you are assigned to. There are a few other minor Chinese holidays and festivals throughout the year which may also result in time off.

Personal leave should be taken in full blocks rather than a few days at a time. Approval must be obtained from school



manager at least one month in advance.

Personal leave covers both vacation time and sick leave. Teachers can choose to have sick leave counted against vacation time or deducted from salary at an hourly rate.

## Working with Aston

### Training

Aston believes in the ongoing professional development of its team - and teachers are a core component of that team.

Before starting, teachers are required to attend a free two-day training course called TCERT. This is an induction and orientation course where the newly employed teachers are introduced to our materials, classrooms and teaching methods. It also provides an opportunity to share ideas in workshops and deliver practice classes to get warmed up and gain some classroom experience.

For teachers with less experience, or teachers aiming to build on previous skills,

we also offer a free [Introduction to TEFL](#) course. This course blends theory with practical components and covers many aspects of teaching, including teaching English to children, classroom management, teaching techniques, grammar, pronunciation, listening, speaking, reading, preparing lessons, teaching English to adults, and more.

During their time with us, teachers will attend weekly teaching workshops and receive occasional observation and feedback from trainers. Teachers may also observe peer's classes or request coaching if they feel it necessary.

### Teaching

We have spent many years developing our

own curriculum and syllabus. Our primary focus is on spoken and listening skills, with reading and writing secondary. Teachers are provided with a teacher's guide, text book and workbook for each level they teach.

Aston requires teachers plan for each lesson and keep records of classes. Teachers are also responsible for the assessment of students, through ongoing assessment and formal examinations (provided by our education department).

While a professional presentation is expected, we do not require teachers to dress formally or wear a uniform – 'smart casual' is acceptable.



Please note: Aston does not get involved in the affairs of China, therefore lesson plans should not include political or religious content and teachers should avoid commenting on the policies of the Chinese government.

If you cannot teach at certain times due to religious or personal reasons please inform your recruiter beforehand as Friday, Saturday, and Sunday are our busiest days.

### **Housing**

A shared apartment (two or three occupants) is provided, with each teacher



having a private bedroom. All apartments are fully furnished and include a kitchen, a living room, and a bathroom with a western toilet. In some cases single housing can be arranged but this may involve an added cost to the teacher.

Teachers are responsible for utility costs (electricity, gas, water, etc.), though Aston can help administer payment if required. In this case the costs will be deducted from the teacher's salary.

### **Pay Days**

Salaries are paid monthly for the period from the first to the last day of the month - on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the following month. The final month's salary, as well as the flight allowance, are paid on the final day of the contract, if the teacher is not staying on.

Teachers are subject to personal income tax. Income tax will be deducted directly from the teacher's salary and a record made on the pay-sheet. Income tax rates are determined by the Chinese tax authorities and may be subject to change. Government receipts noting salary earned and tax paid can be provided if required.

## Transportation to & from China

We offer a flight allowance which is designed to cover some of the cost of traveling to China. Please note that different contracts offer different flight allowances so please choose your contract length and hours per week carefully.

## The Application Process

To apply please send all relevant documents to your recruiter. When your documents have been received and your application has been approved we will schedule a time for a phone interview.

After a successful phone interview your recruiter will let you know which locations are available to you. We will do our best place you in your preferred location if possible.



The following is a list of the required documents:

- 1. Cover letter explaining why you would like to teach in China, and containing the type and length of contract, as well as the location you would prefer to work at.**

Select three locations and note them in your cover letter. Our [website](#) has in-depth information on each location. If you are unsure, please let us know

your preferences, and the type of experience you are hoping for. For example: big city with lots of amenities; smaller location with a more traditional Chinese feel; North/South; climate, etc. We can then recommend suitable locations.

- 2. Your CV/Resume**

This should state your date of birth, country of birth, and native language. Detail your academic qualifications, and teaching experience, as well as any other experience you have had working with children.

- 3. Scanned information page of your passport**

Make sure that the relevant information (full name, passport number, dates) is clearly legible.

- 4. Scanned copy of your college degree(s), and other relevant qualifications (TEFL cert, etc.)**

Please note an original copy of your degree may be required when applying for a work visa.

- 5. Written employment references**

Employment references must be on official headed paper, signed by a manager or HR representative. Academic or personal references are not accepted. Please do not provide contact information only – full letters are required for a work visa application. Two references are preferred, otherwise a single reference covering a period of at least two years will be acceptable. Please note original copies may be required for work visa applications.

If you have not yet completed your bachelor's degree you may be eligible for one of our **intern programs**. Please check our [website](#) or contact your recruiter for further information.

If you have any questions or concerns during the application process, feel free to contact your recruiter.

### **The Visa Process**

Getting a work (Z) visa for China can be a complicated process. Each province in China has its own requirements on what needs to be submitted by the teacher in order to obtain a Z-visa.

Your school will provide you with a list of documents which are required by the Chinese Public Security Bureau (PSB). When your documents have been received, your school will bring them to the local PSB office to apply for your work permit and invitation letter.

Getting the work permit and invitation letter can be longest part of the whole process. This can take anywhere from 2 weeks to 2 months, every PSB is different.

When the school receives your work permit and invitation letter from the PSB they will post them to you. This just takes a few days. You can then take these documents to your nearest Chinese embassy/consulate and get your Z-visa. This generally takes 4-5 days, though

Express services are available if time is an issue.

If you are far from an embassy or unable to attend, there may be agencies which can assist. They can be found through an internet search.

**Note:** In most cases you must be in your home country when applying for a Z visa. If you are a resident (permanent residency or valid work visa) in a third country, it may be possible for you to obtain your Z-visa in that country. However, this cannot be guaranteed and it is best to check with your recruiter and local Chinese embassy/consulate.

If you are in a third country on a tourist visa, you will not be able to obtain a Z-visa in that country. You must either return to your home country or do everything by post. It is occasionally possible to apply for a Z visa in Hong Kong, again depending on the PSB in the location you are applying to.

Work with your school manager on your visa but also contact the consulate where you will be obtaining your work visa and find out if they have any special requirements. Here are some useful links, but it is always worth calling the Embassy/Consulate for current information.

[USA](#)

[UK](#)

[Australia](#)

[Canada](#)





[New Zealand](#)

[South Africa](#)

[Ireland](#)

### **AEG Career Path**

Over the past 20 years, Aston Educational Group has grown into one of the largest and most successful companies in the Chinese educational market. As a result we have many employment opportunities for applicants interested in building a career in China.



#### **Education**

- Western Teacher (Aston English)
- Junior Western Teacher (Aston A+)
- Senior Western Teacher (Aston A+)

#### **Management & Training**

- Regional Support Officer
- Teacher Trainer
- Master Teacher Trainer
- Assistant Manager
- Location Manager
- Deputy City Director
- City Director

#### **Senior Management**

- Deputy Regional Director
- Regional Director

#### **Samuel Li**

International Business Development Officer  
Recruitment Department  
(China)

**Email:** samuelli@astonschool.com

**Skype:** 15904963059

**Phone:** +86 (0)411 8376 9995 **ext:**8432

**Address:** Jun'An Building, 8 ChengYi Street,  
Dalian, Liaoning Province, P.R.China 116000

### **And finally ...**

Since 1996 we have employed thousands of teachers and we are very proud of our record. Maintaining our brand name and good reputation with teachers is something we work on continuously.

We are here to make the application process and your transition to China as smooth and comfortable as possible. If you require any assistance, or if you would like to chat about what to expect, please feel free to contact me.

#### **Phone:**

(IRL) +353 (0)85 284 7562

+353 (0)1 442 9808

(UK) +44 (0)20 8144 9808

(CN) +86 (0)411 8376 9995



## **TEACH TRAVEL AND INSPIRE**

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Join Aston English with educators, innovators and travelers like you.  
Find more information on our website.

Send your application to [recruiting@astonschool.com](mailto:recruiting@astonschool.com)





## **GO PLACES WITH ASTON**

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Indulge your passion for teaching and explore the Middle Kingdom.  
Send your application to [recruiting@astonschool.com](mailto:recruiting@astonschool.com)