

My name is Erin O'Brien and I'm currently spending the year as a teaching assistant in Deauville, France. My job entails teaching English to kids in the elementary school here, called Fracasse Primary. I am responsible for the CE1 and CE2 levels, which correspond to 2nd and 3rd grades in the U.S. I also teach a class with kids that have learning disabilities, autism and/or ADHD. The grade levels in this class, called CLIS, range from 2nd to 5th grade.

My day begins with a five minute walk to school and an hour and half teaching one class. Then shortly after, the other assistants and myself lead "lunchtime activities" which basically entails any kind of fun games, arts and crafts, theater, or songs, all in English. We then eat lunch with the kids in the cafeteria and after that, it's back for round 2; I have another class for an hour and half. At this point I go home and, some days, return later to the school to help kids with their homework at after school care. At six o'clock, that is finished and I return home.

As far as the way I teach, I tend to use very interactive activities. For me, the material won't really resonate with the kids if they aren't engaged, so we don't do much seat work or solitary activities. We do lots of question and answer games, where I throw a ball to kids around the room and they answer the question I pose. They love this and Simon Says is another favorite. It is a fantastic activity for teaching English, not just with commands; I use it frequently with colors, e.g. "touch something yellow". They learn to listen carefully and retain vocabulary at the same time. We do presentations in class as well, where the kids take information they've learned in class and put it together in the form of a quick speech to present to the other kids. We also read a story in English almost every class period which they really seem to enjoy, *The Curious George* and *Meg and Mog* series' being favorites.

As far as the city of Deauville goes, I can't complain. We have been extremely well received and are very well taken care of by the city. Our house is right near the center of town, so we are close to everything and can walk everywhere. Everyone complains about the Normandy weather, but I like the briskness in the air and, being near the water, I comment to Luisa all the time on how much better I can breathe here because the air is so fresh. Because of this, I don't mind having to put up with a little rain. I particularly like having the beach nearby; it is a great place to run and offers a nice change from the city-like atmosphere of the rest of the town. All in all, I have really enjoyed my time here so far. I'm so glad to have this opportunity and am just trying to make the most of every day, because I know it will fly by and be over before I know it.

Erin O'Brien
Deauville Intern, 2009-2010