

Sophie BA French and History

I'm not going to lie. I really applied to be an Erasmus Language Assistant, instead of studying in a French uni or finding a work placement, because you work 12 hours a week, make money, have plenty of time to travel around, and because I hadn't done anything like this before. I had worked with children but I was never one of those 'I absolutely love kids, they're the future' type of people. And I had never, ever thought of becoming a teacher. I thought it would be a great break from uni, and an amazing chance to live in France, meet people, and just have a good time. I was delighted when I was told I'd be a Language Assistant in primary schools around Toulouse, because in primary, you sing songs, play games, the kids are pretty cute... and I'd be in the south west of France for nearly a year. Parfait!

Nearly six months on from arriving in Toulouse, all I can say is that this has been one of the best experiences of my life so far. The beginning was tricky, finding an apartment, getting settled into the schools, getting used to the job... but once I'd found a place and found my feet, everything was brilliant. I would never have pictured myself loving teaching as much as I do now; I'm not sure if it would be my choice of a permanent career, but I'd definitely apply to be a language assistant again. It's such a fantastic way to experience a variety of cultures and do something totally different. And, of course, you're doing something useful, which the kids enjoy and the teachers appreciate. Six months ago I wouldn't have been able to walk into a classroom of 20-something, excitable kids and lead a lesson; now, I look forward to it and come out feeling great. I give private lessons too, have taken part in workshops for French teachers learning how to teach English, I've met people from around the world, travelled... there is literally not one bad thing I would say about my experience so far. I've learnt so much in such a short amount of time, my French has improved and my confidence has grown almost exponentially. It's been a real eye-opener, and I honestly couldn't recommend it highly enough. It's a wonderful opportunity, and if you're considering it, you would be daft not to go for it.