

## **LESSON 3: SKI/SNOWBOARDING INSTRUCTION**

### **Who Are Your Students?**

As a ski or snowboard instructor, you represent yourself and your snow sports school and/or resort. Every time you work with a student, you leave an impression – positive, neutral, or negative. To provide the best possible guest service and a safe, fun, learning environment, try to see every situation from the student's perspective. Think about how your interactions affect their impressions – of you, the school, the resort, and snow sports in general.

You'll be teaching students with a wide range of abilities – from beginners who have never been on snow to advanced students looking to get even better. Beginners are especially important to the ski and snowboard industry. If they have a great time and enjoy their experience, they're more likely to continue to improve their skills on snow, thus developing a passion for the sport and maybe even bringing others to join in the fun.

Your working day will largely depend on who you are coaching. There is a big difference between teaching beginners and coaching advanced skiers to become even better. Some instructors may be responsible for just children, others teach adult groups, but many teach all levels. In a lot of ski schools, in your first season after obtaining your qualifications you'll often be responsible for beginner and children's lessons almost exclusively. So, if you're an advanced skier and are expecting your working day to involve racing down black runs with a small group of skiers, stop right there. This will come if you prove that you're reliable and talented and when you gain experience. However, teaching beginners can be extremely fulfilling. Many instructors have commented on how great it feels when you see someone who has never skied before master their first turns thanks to your instruction. Teaching children to ski can also be a lot of fun because their ski lessons are more practical and involve lots of skiing, demonstrations, and games.

When you have a group to teach for a week or longer, you really get to know your students and you see them improve as the week progresses. Of course, if it's an adult group you're working with, then there will often be a social side to enjoy with them in the evening too, when après-ski gets going!

### **Teaching Tips**

**Don't teach the lesson, teach the student.** A good instructor will watch the student and adjust the teaching accordingly to help the student improve. Individual feedback will be given, even in groups, and the instructor should

be versatile in their teaching. Sometimes, the most sought-after ski instructors are the ones who make the learners' lessons fun and their holiday memorable. So, if one of your students wants to spend an hour chatting and drinking hot chocolate with you at the end of the day, go with it. The little extra attention is what many people remember, and that will make them ask for you as their instructor next time.

Good ski instructors will **check to ensure a student understands what is being taught**. This requires excellent communication skills. Ski and snowboard courses can train you to achieve certain levels of ability, but they cannot teach you how to have a great personality. To do this job well you need to have great social skills and the ability to communicate with people of all ages and backgrounds.

## **Is Ski/Snowboard Instructor a Well-paid Job?**

Rates of pay for ski and snowboard instructors will vary from one ski resort or school to another. How much you are paid will depend on your qualifications and experience. In Canada, tipping instructors is a common thing and many ski instructors can almost double their wages with the tips they receive on the slopes, especially in private lessons, although if you plan on being super rich, this probably isn't the career for you. However, there are many other benefits of the lifestyle a career in the ski industry affords, for example:

- Free lift pass for the season
- Skiing every day in some the most beautiful places in the world
- Free or cheap accommodation (some resorts provide this free)
- Discounts at the resort you are working in
- Getting paid for doing something you love

For those who really want to make a career in ski or snowboard instruction, you should aim to get the top-level qualifications. To do this you should choose a training course that comes highly recommended with a good track record, at a resort with reliable conditions and a social environment that you enjoy.

You will need to be prepared to train hard and regard yourself as an athlete. Although instructors are generally sociable, fun-loving people, you won't find the top professional ski and snowboard instructors in the bar partying every

night; you're more likely to see them in the gym working on their flexibility, core strength, and general skiing fitness.

High-level ski instructors are expected to be role models for others that are working their way up, and will also be seen as ambassadors for the resort they are working in.

**Adapted from:**

**Guide for New Instructors. Official Publication of Professional Ski Instructors of America / American Association of Snowboard Instructors**

**[https://www.thesnowpros.org/download/PSIAAASI\\_GuideForNewInstructors.pdf](https://www.thesnowpros.org/download/PSIAAASI_GuideForNewInstructors.pdf)**

**<https://alltracksacademy.com/blog/career-slippery-slope-become-ski-instructor/>**