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A Guide to Country Studies

Education in the UK and USA

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EDUCATION

Warm up

1. Work in a group to discuss the system of education in Russia. How is it structured? When do you start/finish your education? What are famous schools, universities? What subjects do pupils study at schools? Prepare a brief report.
2. Compare your reports and summarize your findings in a whole class discussion.
3. Work together on the mind map presenting subtopics of the major one.

EDUCATION in the UK/US

Choose the way you are going to make a presentation on one of the suggested subtopics at the end of the Unit. Fill in the table. Tick appropriate options.

MY TOPIC IS			
Individually		Presentation (Power Point, Prezi or other web 2.0 tools) Video Essay (written+recorded) Blogpost (text+images+videos) Survey Other (please specify) _____	Compare Investigate problematic issue Monitor and report modern trends Break stereotypes Other (please specify) _____
As a group			

Reading

Read the texts and answer the following questions:

- ❖ *What stages does the educational system in the UK/USA consist of?*
- ❖ *What are the similarities and differences in the two systems? Name the stages of both.*

UK Education System

The education system in the UK is divided into four main parts: primary education, secondary education, further education and higher education. Children in the UK have to legally attend primary and secondary education which runs from about 5 years old until the student is 16 years old.

Primary and Secondary Education

More than 90% of students in the UK attend publicly-funded state schools (1); still there are also financially self-supported independent, or “private”, schools (2). By law, all children in England and Wales between ages 5 and 16 must receive a full-time education, while in Northern Ireland, children must begin at age 4. For children under age 5, publicly-funded nurseries and pre-schools are available for a limited number of hours each week. Primary schooling starts at 5 and continues up to the age of 11 when children take their first exams to proceed to secondary schooling phase which is also compulsory in the country.

From the age of 11-14, students study a broad range of subjects. National Curriculum (3) core subjects at this stage are: English (Welsh is also a core subject in Welsh-speaking schools), mathematics, science, design and technology, information and communication technology, history, geography, modern foreign languages, music, art and design, physical education, and citizenship.

When students reach 14, they generally enter into the first year of a 2-year process known as GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education). GCSE's are a set of exams that test your knowledge and skill. Most schools offer to take such core subjects as English, Maths and Sciences (either combined or separate Biology, Chemistry and Physics). Students typically then select additional 4 or 5 subjects in which to take GCSE's, and these can be subjects like French, German, Business Studies, Design and Technology, Music, Sports Science, Geography, History and many other options.

GCSEs mark the end of compulsory education for students in the UK. Once they have completed their GCSEs students then have the choice to either move into further education (with a view to higher education) or can leave school and look for work.

Scotland has its own qualification framework that is separate from that in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (4). After seven years of primary education and four years of compulsory secondary education, students aged 15 to 16 may take the Scottish Certificate of Education (SCE). The Scottish Certificate of Education is recognized throughout the UK as the equivalent to GCE A-levels and is usually the entry qualification for university.

Further Education System

When students reach the age of 16 and have completed their GCSE's they have a few options to choose from:

- Find work

- *Academic Qualifications*

Most schools in the UK have what is called a "6th Form" for students to enter after they have taken their GCSE's. As an alternative, there are many "6th Form Colleges" that will offer the same courses from students at schools that do not have a 6th form. Here students typically

study A-levels (5), further academic qualifications required of students before they enter higher education and a degree program.

➤ *Vocational Qualifications*

For students who are not so academically minded, they still have the option to further their education by studying a vocational course (6) that will provide them with a more hands-on experience and education.

Higher Education System

The UK has a vast variety of higher education opportunities to offer students with over 100 universities offering various degree programs for students from the UK and around the world. In the UK about one-third of all students go on to some form of higher education. This makes competition for places very fierce and so it is advised to apply early for courses.

In the UK most undergraduate degree programs take three years to finish; however, the “sandwich course” (7) is increasing in popularity. In Scotland the courses are four years in length for undergraduate programs. Masters programs are generally shorter in length and undertaken after graduation of undergraduate programs. Some professional degrees like medicine, veterinary, law etc. have longer programs that can be as much as five years.

From 2007, universities in the UK are allowed to charge students from the UK up to £3,070 per year (depending on the school and location). Students from the EU also only have to pay the same fees as students from the UK, but international students from the rest of the world have to pay the full school fees which will vary depending on the school. These fees for international students can range anywhere from £4,000 per year right up to £18,000 per year or more.

From: <http://www.britishcouncil.org>

US Education System

The United States offers top-notch resources and qualitative education that enables students to pursue world-class education. The educational system comprises 12 years of primary and high school education, which is mandatory for getting admission in any graduate college, university, or for any professional and technical schools.

Primary/Elementary School

Usually the education for Americans starts at around 5 years of age. Primary schooling lasts for about five to six years. In this level students complete five grades of their education focusing on the broad range of knowledge, basic academic learning, reading and socialization skills. This also includes learning basics of mathematics, English proficiency, science, social studies, physical development and fine arts. Students have a choice to select their education held either in public schools, or private schools, or home school.

High/Secondary School

Upon completion of five grades of education in primary school, students enter high/secondary school. The duration of secondary school is about six to seven years, by which students complete their 12 grades.

Junior high school (or middle school) and *Senior high school* together provide secondary education to the children (8). The mandatory subjects which are taught in US high schools include Science (biology, chemistry and physics), Mathematics (statistics, algebra, geometry and calculus), English (humanities, literature and composition) and Social Sciences (history, geography and economics).

Most of the states have made health courses mandatory so that the students learn about first-aid, nutrition, sexuality and drug awareness. Art, foreign language and physical education are also made compulsory by some schools in the curriculum. After completion of their secondary education (9), successful students obtain a high school diploma.

Undergraduate School

Undergraduate Schools offer a two-year degree which is called Associate's degree or a four-year degree called Bachelor's degree in a particular field of study. This particular course of study is called a major. The most common bachelor's degrees are Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Bachelor of Science (B.S.), Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.), Bachelor of Engineering (B.Eng.).

➤ *Associate's Degree.*

This is a two-year program at the undergraduate level. Completion of this program enables the students to seek a transfer into the third year of the four-year Bachelor's degree either in 4-year colleges or universities. Taking this route to study the first two years is very inexpensive for both American and International students, since the tuition and fees are very low when compared to other types of colleges.

Most colleges require good score in TOEFL (for establishing English proficiency) (10) and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) Reasoning scores (11) for admission in their Associate Degree programs.

➤ *Bachelor's Degree:*

This is a four-year program at the undergraduate level. This is the first degree with which most students plan their career or profession. Hundreds of majors in all the fields are offered at the Bachelor's level, which makes education an attractive proposition for students all over the world.

In the U.S, the first year of Bachelor's degree is called the Freshman Year, the second one, the Sophomore Year, the third, Junior Year and the fourth, the Senior Year.

Professional School

For professional programs like Law, Medicine, Pharmacy etc., US universities offer professional programs leading to degrees such as MD (for Medicine), Pharm D (for Pharmacy) etc. These are known as the first professional degrees, completion of which entitles the students to practice as professionals in their respective fields (after meeting other requirements). Admissions into most of these professional programs are based on good performance in entrance tests after completion of a Bachelor's degree in related subjects.

Students are evaluated for their performance, based on the number of credits they obtain during their academic performance. These credits are calculated depending upon the performance in semester-end examinations, class room preparation, seminar participation, laboratory hours etc. For every course of study students will earn a particular number of credits per semester. Professors and advisers assist the students in organizing their course schedule for their academic year.

From: <http://www.usastudyguide.com> ; <http://www.nriol.com>

Notes

1. State-run schools are financed through national taxation, and take pupils free of charge between the ages of 3 and 18. The schools may charge for activities such as swimming, theatre visits and field trips, provided the charges are voluntary, thus ensuring that those who cannot afford to pay are allowed to participate in such events. Approximately 93% of English schoolchildren attend such schools.
2. An independent school (also referred to as a private school, or in England as a public school) is a school that is not financed through the taxation system by local or national government and is instead funded by private sources, predominantly in the form of tuition charges. Most of the larger independent schools are either full or partial boarding schools. Boarding-school traditions give a distinctive character to British independent education. Some private schools are particularly old, such as The King's School (founded 597), Westminster School (1179 if not before), Eton College (1440).

3. The National Curriculum was introduced into England, Wales and Northern Ireland as a nationwide curriculum for primary and secondary state schools following the Education Reform Act 1988. Notwithstanding its name, it does not apply to independent schools, which may set their own curricula, but it ensures that state schools of all Local Education Authorities have a common curriculum.
4. The Scottish education system is distinctly different from other parts of the United Kingdom. Traditionally, the Scottish system at secondary school level has emphasized breadth across a range of subjects, while the English, Welsh and Northern Irish systems have emphasized greater depth of education over a smaller range of subjects. Following this, Scottish universities generally have courses a year longer (typically 4 years) than their counterparts elsewhere in the UK.
5. The Advanced Level General Certificate of Education is commonly referred to as an A-level. A-levels are studied over a two year period and are widely recognized around the world, as well as being the standard entry qualification for assessing the suitability of applicants for academic courses in English, Welsh and Northern Irish universities. There are two components to them, full A-levels and half AS-levels. Generally A-levels comprise 6 modules, and an AS-level 3 modules. Students generally take between two to three A-levels, but depending on their academic ability and drive they may take more.
6. Vocational education prepares trainees for jobs that are based on manual or practical activities, traditionally non-academic, and is totally related to a specific trade, occupation, or vocation. As the labor market becomes more specialized and economies demand higher levels of skill, governments and businesses are increasingly investing in the future of vocational education. At the post-secondary level vocational education is typically provided by an institute of technology, or by a local community college. Vocational education has diversified over the 20th century and now exists in industries such as retail, tourism, information technology, cosmetics, as well as in the traditional crafts.
7. A sandwich degree is a four-year undergraduate course in which students undertake a placement year in industry, normally after the second year at university. They can also be referred as industrial placements or internships. Many UK Universities offer sandwich degrees. The students will in most cases be on a formal contract in which they are paid for their employment.
8. Middle schools are schools that span grades 6 through 8 or 9. Schools that overlap the 9th grade typically are referred to as "junior high schools". Both are between primary education/elementary education and high school. Upon arrival in middle and/or Junior High School, students begin to enroll in class schedules where they take classes from several teachers in a given day. The classes are usually a set of four or five core academic classes (English or "language arts," science, mathematics, history or "social studies," and, in some schools, foreign language) with two to four other classes, either electives or supplementary academic classes. Some students also start taking a foreign language or advanced math and science classes in middle school. High school usually runs either from grades 9 to 12 or from grades 10 to 12. In high school, students obtain much more control of their education, and may choose even their core classes.
9. A high school graduation examination is a test that students must pass to receive a diploma and graduate from high school. When any test is directly tied to significant consequences, such as determining whether the student may receive a high school diploma, it is called a high-stakes test. Many organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) oppose high-stakes tests in general, with the NCTM saying that "placing too much emphasis on a single test or on testing can undermine the quality of education and jeopardize equality of opportunity."
10. The Test of English as a Foreign Language, or TOEFL, evaluates the ability of an individual to use and understand English in an academic setting. It sometimes is an admission requirement for non-native English speakers at many English-speaking colleges and universities. Since its introduction in late 2005, the Internet-based Test (iBT) has progressively replaced both the computer-based tests (CBT) and paper-based tests (PBT), although paper-based testing is still used in select areas. The four-hour test consists of four sections, each measuring one of the basic language skills – Reading, Listening, speaking and Writing.
11. The SAT Reasoning Test (formerly the Scholastic Aptitude Test or Scholastic Assessment Test) is a standardized test for college admissions in the United States. The test is intended to assess a student's readiness for college. It was first introduced in 1926, and its name and scoring have changed several times. The current SAT Reasoning Test, introduced in 2005, takes three hours and forty-five minutes to finish, and costs \$49. Possible scores range from 600 to 2400,

combining test results from three 800-point sections (Mathematics, Critical Reading, and Writing).

Active Vocabulary

- attend (v)** – посещать, присутствовать, оказывать помощь; *attend school* – посещать занятия (в школе), *attend a course of lectures* – прослушать курс лекций, *attend to somebody* – оказать кому-то помощь;
attendance (n) – посещаемость; *attendance sheet* – список присутствующих, *classroom attendance* – посещаемость занятий, *attendance is compulsory* – явка обязательна.
- apply (v)** – обращаться с просьбой, подавать заявление, применять, употреблять; *apply for courses* – записаться на курсы, *apply a rule to* – применить правило к, *apply for a visa* – запросить визу;
application (n) – заявление; *application forms* – регистрационные анкеты, *application for admission to a university* – заявление с просьбой о зачислении в университет.
- admit (v)** – принимать, признавать; *admit to college* – принять в колледж, *admit mistakes* – признавать ошибки;
admission (n) – доступ, прием, признание; *get admission in* – быть принятым в, *admission by ticket* – вход по билетам, *Admission Committee* – приемная комиссия, *admission requirements* – требования к абитуриентам.
- enter (v)** – входить, вступать, поступать, записывать; *enter a university* – поступить в университет, *enter a name in the list* – внести фамилию в список, *enter into negotiations* – вступить в переговоры;
entry (n) – вступление, вход, запись; *entry qualification* – наличие квалификации (диплом, сертификат) для обучения, *entry fee* – вступительный взнос, *no entry* – вход запрещен, *vocabulary entry* – словарная статья, *entry list* – список участников;
entrance (n) – вход, поступление; *entrance test* – вступительный экзамен.
- pursue (v)** – следовать, придерживаться; *pursue postgraduate studies* – учиться в аспирантуре, *pursue education* – продолжить образование, *pursue science* – заниматься наукой, *pursue one's passion for...* – развивать своё увлечение чем-то.
require (v) – требовать, нуждаться, приказывать; *be required of smb* – от кого-то требуется, *require good score* – требовать высоких результатов (в тесте), *require further work* – требовать дальнейшей работы, *require modifications* – требовать изменений;
requirement (n) – требование, необходимое условие; *meet requirements* – соответствовать требованиям, удовлетворять условиям, *key requirement* – основное условие, *entrance requirements* – требования на вступительных экзаменах.

Exercises

- I. Use the words and word combinations from the Active Vocabulary above to make a logical story in a group. Then turn your story into Russian and address your opponent group for back translation.**
- II. Scan the text to find words or collocations which mean the same as the ones suggested below:**

1. elementary education
2. to choose
3. to continue

6. a sphere of academic activity
7. specific
8. to vary

4. to finish doing
5. to pay particular attention to

9. essential principles
10. way to study

III. Match English word combinations from A with their Russian equivalents from B. Find these phrases in the text and restore the context.

A. Publicly-funded state schools; financially self-supported private schools; nurseries; core subjects; mark the end; comprise; depend on academic ability and drive; academically minded; to further education; hands-on experience; charge students; top-notch resources; qualitative education; proficiency; obtain a diploma; a major; tuition; vocational education;

В. Ознаменовать окончание; качественное образование; получить диплом; профессиональное образование; основные предметы; первоклассные возможности; ясли; продолжить образование; школы, финансируемые государством; профилирующая дисциплина; включать, содержать; взимать со студентов плату; знание, умение; зависеть от академических способностей и стимула; практический опыт; финансово независимые частные школы; плата за обучение; склонный к получению образования.

IV. Match words with their definitions and give the context in which they were used in the text.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1. a major | a) money regularly paid to a school or similar institution for continuing services |
| 2. a graduate | |
| 3. a framework | b) something which is or can be chosen |
| 4. an option | |
| 5. compulsory | c) a person who successfully completed an academic degree |
| 6. fees | d) a student's principal subject or course |
| 7. secondary | e) relating to education for children from the age of 11 to 16 or 18 |
| | f) required by law or a rule; obligatory |
| | g) a basic structure underlying a system |

V. Complete the information about the structures of American and British pre-higher education systems. Note any differences in terms. Surf the Internet sources if necessary to give a full picture.

<u>The USA</u>	<u>The UK</u>
Duration of compulsory education:	
Age of entry:	Age of entry:
Age of exit:	Age of exit:
Pre-Primary	
Type of school providing this education: A) Kindergarten B) Nursery Schools C) Preschool programmes; D) Child/day Care Centres	Type of school providing this education:
Length of program in years:	Length of program in years:
Age level from to	Age level from to
Exams and certificates:	Exams and certificates:
Primary	
Type of school providing this education:	Type of school providing this education:
Length of program in years:	Length of program in years:
Age level from to	Age level from to
Exams and certificates:	Exams and certificates:
Secondary	
Type of school providing this education:	Type of school providing this education:
Length of program in years:	Length of program in years:
Age level from to	Age level from to
Exams and certificates:	Exams and certificates:

VI. Fill in the correct preposition.

- 1) ... completion ... the program, graduates will be awarded ... a British accredited degree, validated by the University ... Buckingham.
- 2) Unlike other parts ... the world, where self-funding is the only way to pay ... your education, the US education system offers ... students a range ... scholarships. Information on all this, and lots more, is available ... the site.
- 3) Once you have located a suitable group of institutions that offer your field ... study, compare ... them.
- 4) Post-secondary technical education is provided ... the students ... technical colleges, colleges ... further and higher education and accredited independent colleges which offer ... a large number of courses leading ... a vocational qualification.
- 5) The Open University offers ... instruction ... part-time study for degrees and other courses by correspondence, supplemented ... radio and television broadcasts, residential summer schools and an extensive counseling. Undergraduate students take a series ... courses. 350-400 hours ... study are required ... a student to pass a one-credit course.

VII. Translate the following sentences from Russian into English making use of the Active Vocabulary of the Unit.

- 1) Единой школьной структуры в США нет, поэтому в разных типах школ различное количество лет обучения, однако существуют обязательные ступени образования.
- 2) Кроме государственных школ, система обучения включает в себя сеть церковных и частных учебных заведений, в которых обучается около 14 % всех школьников.
- 3) Средняя школа в США делится обычно на две ступени - младшую и старшую, каждая по три года.
- 4) Для получения диплома об окончании средней школы выпускникам требуется получить зачеты по 16 академическим курсам в течение последних четырех лет обучения. Обычно лучшие учащиеся, цель которых продолжить образование в университете, выбирают наиболее сложные и продвинутые курсы в школе.
- 5) Обучение в средней школе в Великобритании считается обязательным и заканчивается сдачей экзамена, который называется "Общее свидетельство о среднем образовании". Курс обучения считается пройденным, если выпускник сдаст 6 экзаменов с минимальной оценкой C.
- 6) Хотя поступать в высшие учебные заведения Великобритании можно как после окончания профессионального колледжа, так и после шестой формы средней школы, последний путь является более предпочтительным, особенно когда речь идет о престижных вузах и наиболее популярных специальностях.

VIII. Choose some of the words and collocations from the Active Vocabulary of this Unit to use in your final presentation. Think of possible context they can be used in. Complete the table for future use.

<u>Word</u>	<u>Collocations</u>	<u>Context</u>
E.g. A degree	To award a degree/a degree in economics/ master's degree	The introduction of the Bologna system into the Russian system of education put it closer to the European one in a way of awarding degrees.

Reading comprehension

I. Scan the texts and notes to them and say:

- what the most famous independent schools in Britain are;
- what the SAT Reasoning Test is and how much it costs;
- what the names for students of each year of a Bachelor's degree in the USA are;
- what the mandatory courses in the US high schools are;
- what the SCE is the equivalent of;
- how an Associate's degree is different from a Bachelor's degree.

II. Answer the following questions. Use the information given in the texts and if necessary consult some extra sources.

- Is the structure of educational system in the whole of the UK the same? Comment on the differences if there are any.
- What are the options for British/American kids who complete their secondary education?

- What is required for the entry to a university in the UK? In the US?
- Comment on the structure of curricula in the two countries. Compare them with the Russian reality.
- What do American higher institutions focus on while evaluating students in the course of study?

III. Read what some international students are saying about the American education system. Think of the points contradicting with expressed opinions. Discuss these ideas with your partner and report your comments to the class.

"The American education system offers international students the widest choice of study options. Just think of all of the products, services, and processes invented in the USA! This innovation is the result of a system which allows a student to study so many different fields. I am so glad I chose to study in the USA and obtain American education."

Diann Manjulika

"I am from Hong Kong and I always wanted to enroll in an American school. I am so glad I finally managed to get my education in the US. In Hong Kong, it really does help if you graduated from a good school in the USA."

Susan Li

"Coming from Asia, I was shocked by the vast number of study options offered by the American school system."

Peter Lim

IV. Make up a mind map to help you retell the text. Use key phrases from vocabulary collocations to lead your talk.

Extensive reading

TEXT A

Accommodation for students in the UK

There are a number of international student accommodation options you can choose for UK study. We've put together some useful tips to help you make up your mind.

There are two main choices for international student accommodation – halls of residence or private flats and houses. Your options depend on your UK study choice and the institution you apply to, but here are some things to consider in choosing a great place to live:

- How close is the accommodation to your place of study?
- Are there good public transport links?
- Is it close to shops and facilities?
- How big is your room?
- Will you have enough quiet and privacy for study?

University/college owned international student accommodation.

Most UK institutions provide accommodation for international students. This will either be a room in halls of residence (either full-board or self-catering) or a self-catering shared house or flat. If you want to stay in university/college owned accommodation you should apply as soon as you are accepted on your course. Remember that it's always a good idea to arrange accommodation before you travel to the UK. If you can't, speak to the accommodation office at your place of study when you arrive.

Private accommodation for UK international students.

You can make the most of your independence as an international student by renting private accommodation. The most usual type is a room in a house or flat shared with other students. It's a good idea to agree how to split bills beforehand and you'll do your own cooking and cleaning. It's a good idea to ask for advice from your institution's accommodation or welfare officer before you sign any contracts for private accommodation. Lodging with a UK family in their own home is another option. You will usually need to abide by their house rules, but it's a great opportunity to experience UK culture first-hand.

UK accommodation for international English language students.

If you're studying English in the UK, your English language centre can help you arrange accommodation. The choices available will depend on where you study: it may be halls of residence or a hostel, or lodging with a UK family. Living with a UK family is the most common option and will give you the opportunity to practise English in a supportive environment.

Independent school accommodation in the UK.

If you are planning to study at a UK independent college or school, you will most likely be offered boarding at that institution. Independent boarding schools offer a relaxed, home-like atmosphere. Pupils stay in bedrooms or dormitories on the school site, living under the same roof as residential house staff and their families.

Useful link: UKCISA - http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/student/info_sheets/accommodation.php

From: <http://www.educationuk.org/UK>

Exercises

1. Work with a partner. Do you think these statements are True/False/No Information? Correct the false ones.

- There are not as many accommodation opportunities for home students as for international students in the UK.

- Staying with a family is a nice option to learn more about the culture of the country.
- It will be very difficult to practice the language living in a dormitory.
- Halls of residence are always full-board, which is especially valuable for students.
- Independent schools in the UK provide students with relaxed atmosphere and full board services on the site of the institution.

2. Match the phrases with types of accommodation (refer to the text or give your own view point and argument your choice). Make up your own sentences with them.

a residential house a hostel close to the place of study school site

sign a contract experience culture first-hand shops and facilities

make the most of your independence abide by house rules

dormitories a self-catering shared house split bills

home-like atmosphere lodge with a family full-board

practice English in a supportive environment privacy for study

University/college/school owned accommodation:

Private accommodation:

3. Work in a group to prepare a brief note on the types of accommodation for home/international students in Russia.

TEXT B

5 Questions to Ask When Considering a Gap Year

By Rebecca Kern

While it has been a longtime tradition for high school graduates in Europe to spend a "gap year" traveling the world and volunteering before college, this practice is becoming more popular and accepted in the United States. U.S. News spoke with students who took a gap year before college, as well as gap year counselors and college admissions officials, to answer common questions related to taking a gap year.

1. What exactly is a gap year?

The term "gap year" has taken on different meanings over the years. Holly Bull, president of the first and longest-running gap year counseling organization in the US, defines a gap year as a period of time that people use to explore areas of interest. Bull says a gap year doesn't have to last a full year and can be taken at any age, but the typical gap year is taken by students between high school and college.

Gail Reardon, who runs the gap year counseling firm Taking Off, says: "The name implies that students are taking a gap in their education, when really the gap is to fill in what

they haven't learned in school. A gap year is about what happens after school, how you make decisions, how you figure out who you are, where you want to go, and how you need to get there. It's about the skill set you need to live your life."

2. I want to go to college. Should I apply before or after I take a gap year?

Most counselors and college admissions officials encourage high school seniors to apply and get accepted to college before taking a gap year. Reardon says students should apply to college while in high school because their junior and senior years are set up to support the college application process. William Fitzsimmons, dean of admissions and financial aid at Harvard, says Harvard accepts students who apply after their gap year.

1. Are there affordable options for a gap year?

Many domestic and international programs charge little to no fees. Bull recommends students look for programs that offer free housing and food in turn for volunteer work. But be prepared to work. Zack Sills just completed his gap year, and he lived for free on a ranch in British Columbia. In return for food and housing, he cut firewood, took care of livestock, and worked in the kitchen.

Gap years can also save parents money in the long run. Steve Goodman, an educational consultant and college admissions strategist, says, "If a gap year clarifies what a student is going to do at college, it pays back in college because you're saving tuition money for the time a student may have spent clarifying their major."

2. What are the benefits of a gap year?

Gap year consultants, students, parents, and even college admissions officials all claim that gap year experiences make these students more mature, confident, and career driven. Goodman says, "Taking a gap year can clarify the intellectual, academic, and professional objectives of a student." The students emphasize that the experiential learning during their gap year was unlike any they could gain in the college classroom. Sills, 19, says, "I learned just as much in my nineteenth year then I probably learned in my last two years of high school. When I was in Canada, I was the only American at the ranch. There were Canadians, Germans, and Australians, so it really made me appreciate other cultures. I learned a lot in Canada; the type of work I did made me come outside of my comfort zone." He says this experience helped prepare him to pursue a film degree this fall at the School of Visual Arts in New York City.

Emily Carr, 19, spent September to December 2009 taking courses related to marine biology on a boat that toured the Eastern Caribbean. For the rest of her gap year, she spent this spring volunteering for a penguin and sea bird hospital in Cape Town, South Africa, and then in an animal rescue and refuge center outside of Bangkok, Thailand. "My gap year helped me build my people skills, gain more independence, and more maturity," Carr says.

3. What do college admissions officials think of gap years?

College admission officials have become more accepting of the gap year over the past several years. Some even encourage their admitted students to take one. Some encourage students to take a gap year so they don't burn out in college. Those who come to school after a gap year are "so fresh, anxious, and excited to be back in school," he says.

At Binghamton, Brown has also noticed an increase in the number of students taking a gap year. "I think the increased maturity, self confidence, sense of problem solving, and recognition that they can do these kinds of wonderful things only serves them well in their college experience," she says.

From: <http://www.usnews.com/education>

Hi everyone, I'm strongly considering gap year after I graduate from high school. No matter where I go, I know I want to teach English. After graduation I will have studied 5 years of Spanish. I can't decide if it would be better for me to go to a country where they speak Spanish or a different language (because I do want to learn Arabic in the future). If I

went to a country where I don't know the language, would I even be able to communicate with them enough to help them learn English? HELP!!

Susan

I know many HS grads who have taken a gap year for one or more of the reasons mentioned above. None has regretted the decision! One thing on the minds of many: "After sitting in a Spanish/French/Chinese class for the last 4 years, I still can't carry on a simple conversation in the language without sounding like a 5-year old!" Honing language skills, then, is a big reason for taking some time out before college. Just "travelling around" a Spanish-speaking country (for example) won't get you where you want to go, however. You need some further instruction, a homestay and, probably, a program with enough structure in order to make sure that you are immersed in the language 24/7.

John

I spent 4 months in Northern India teaching English to a community called the Lepchas. It was a huge challenge and definitely out of my comfort zone - no running water or electricity! But living with a host family gave me the chance to really immerse myself in their culture and traditions - it was actually life changing! I now look forward to starting college in the fall. I volunteered with a UK based company called Africa & Asia Venture (www.aventure.co.uk).

Lily

Exercises

1. Who said that?

"Living with a host family gave me the chance to really immerse myself in their culture and traditions..." -

"A gap year is about what happens after school, how you make decisions, how you figure out who you are, where you want to go, and how you need to get there." -

"Just "travelling around" a Spanish-speaking country (for example) won't get you where you want to go..." -

"My gap year helped me build my people skills, gain more independence, and more maturity..." -

"Taking a gap year can clarify the intellectual, academic, and professional objectives of a student." -

2. Finish the sentences to make them true for you:

- The term "a gap year" for me means...
- Taking a gap year can help...
- If I had a chance to take a gap year I would ...

3. Work in a group. Prepare your arguments both *in favour of* and *against* taking a "gap year". Present your arguments in a round table talk.

TEXT C
Harvard University

School Snapshot

Name: Harvard University
Location: Cambridge, Mass.
Year Founded: 1636
Tuition and Fees (Fall 2009): \$36,828
Total enrollment (Fall 2008): 26,496
Undergraduate enrollment: 10,156
Undergraduate applicants (Fall 2008): 27,380
Graduation rate: 98%
Sports Nickname: Crimson
Official Web site: Harvard.edu

Continuing Education at Harvard University

The majority of people dream about continuing their education at Harvard University, a famous education institution where numerous outstanding persons have made their first steps in career. You can choose one of the presented major programs for your academic benefit.

1. **The Harvard Summer School** is considered the oldest American academic summer session. Every summer lots of students of various ages visit the University from each state and about 80 countries to study for two months with faculty from Harvard and some American universities.

The Summer School has a program for well-qualified secondary school students, and courses in creative writing, premedical sciences, economics, and other foreign languages.

2. **The Harvard Extension School** is an academic evening program serving the educational needs and interests of the Greater Boston community. It provides open enrollment, coeducation for various ages, part-time evening study, modest tuition rates, and a chance to study for career advancement, personal enrichment, or certificates or degrees. About 550 courses are offered annually, including computer and health sciences, administration and management, arts, some foreign languages to about 13,000 students of various ages.

3. **The Harvard Institute for English Language Programs** offers part-time evening and day programs to non-native speakers. During the summer session, intense day, part-time evening, as well as numerous business programs are provided.

4. **The Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement** provides retirees a chance to follow intellectual interests plus explore some new fields of learning in different study groups.

Harvard University Degree Online

Harvard university degree programs online have made it very simple for a great number of people to be capable to get further education owing to its convenience. And so, as a result of this, those people who are very busy, even handicapped people and the persons who are at home all the time could choose it.

By means of the Internet, students and teachers are connected with Harvard University degree program online. Such arrangement will enhance learning and make it much more flexible. Also, students have right for using the school web site and acquire their study materials on the site for learning.

In addition, various innovative pedagogic techniques are employed in that students are often engaged in the serious web chat. The lecture time-table is fixed, and students receive lecture no matter when they have the time.

Lots of research works have justified it that students can learn well utilizing this way of learning. While an exam was conducted for online and regular students alike, they scored grades were similar. During the years people have grasp the concept of Internet courses. Employing of

online degree alumni is the choice of by agencies with good reputation. Actually, they see premium qualities in them, for example, discipline and diligence.

No matter when you wish to register, you must be sure to register with only an accredited school online like the one that is managed by Harvard University. In addition, you should be aware that certain online college web sites are posted by online fraudsters. Thus you need to be watchful whenever you want to enroll.

From: <http://harvard-university.biz/>

Exercises

1. What do these numbers refer to?

26,496	13,000	98	1636	80	550	36,828
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2. Make up dialogues in pairs making use of the following words and phrases from the text.

applicants	numerous	make first steps in...
for your academic benefit	a course in economics	serve the needs/interests
community	coeducation	part-time study
computer sciences	non-native speakers	retirees
handicapped people	enhance learning	flexible
engage in a web chat	enroll	fixed timetable
online fraudsters	premium qualities	conduct an exam

3. Browse the official website of Harvard University (<http://www.harvard.edu/>), choose and explore your own topic of interest. Present a mini-lecture/a mini-project.

TEXT D

University Guide: Want a place? Get the insider knowledge

If you're thinking about applying to university, you're probably confused about what to expect. With tuition fees of up to £9,000 a year, you're likely to be wondering what the final bill will actually be and whether it's worth it, as well as the usual questions about where to go, what to study ... and will you get in?

Student life is still an unparalleled educational and social experience. So if you want to go, you should be more determined than ever to get on to the best possible course at your ideal university.

But how to actually get a place? Read on. We've got exclusive tips from the very people who'll be reading your personal statements this autumn. They reveal what they really want to see on an UCAS form, and advise how to pick a course – and why following them on Twitter could put you on the path to a cap'n'gown.

What to study?

Gloomy admissions statistics might leave you wondering whether the best course is the one that's most likely to offer you a place. It's not. Imagine dragging yourself to lectures to study something you hate for three or more years. Pick a course you'll be motivated to study – either a subject that fascinates you or a vocational course that sets you on the path to your dream career.

- "Don't be afraid to contact a university to find out more – this shows interest and commitment," says admissions tutor John Wheeler at Staffordshire University. "Many universities make a record of personal contact, and may use it in their decision-making."
- "Don't apply for lots of different types of courses," says Sheila Byrne at Anglia Ruskin. "This shows lack of commitment and not knowing what you want to do."

Where to apply?

Don't place too much authority on universities' glossy photos – they're adverts. Ask yourself what you want from a university; how far away from home do you want to be, and do you want to be in a big or small institution? At open days, ask the grumpiest-looking students their views: they're more likely to be honest. Check out extra-curricular activities, library facilities and bursary offerings, which differ according to university.

- Nicola Rees, admissions tutor at Kingston University, says: "Never be afraid to ask questions, however intrusive you think they may be. Most unis have a live chat line for potential applicants staffed by current students or staff. Ask what are the rooms like, who will you share with, what facilities are there? An informed choice will be a better choice."
- "Apply early," advises Philip Davies, head of admissions at Bournemouth & Poole College. "Don't leave your application until the new year. The best places fill up quickly." Unsurprisingly, Davies also recommends looking beyond traditional universities. "Don't forget colleges, which can offer you the same quality degree as a university, but usually a lot cheaper."

Selling yourself.

The UCAS statement – containing just basic facts about you plus your personal statement – is your precious tool to tell universities: pick me, one day I'll make a great addition to your alumni list. But don't go too far – avoid jokes at all costs. You can make yourself stand out before your application lands on their desk: universities are making a big effort with social media.

- "Have a look at course blogs to get a feel for what's happening," says David McSherry, a lecturer at the University of Lincoln. "Comment on them. Find out who the academics who teach on the course are, follow them on Twitter, introduce yourself. That way you'll already have had a dialogue with them before you meet them in the flesh at an open day."
- "Humour is a risky strategy – your taste may not be shared by the person reading the application," says John Wright, admissions tutor at the University of Surrey. "Aim to devote the majority of the personal statement to academic achievement and motivations, but do include evidence of leadership skills, and situations where you have overcome problems to achieve goals. Admissions tutors tire of reading statements like, 'I am fascinated by science'. Give examples of situations where your interest has been aroused."

If the worst happens...

If you're not successful with your application to university, don't crawl under a rock. Since many university courses begin in January or other times throughout the year, don't assume you'll have to wait 12 months: shop around.

"Seek feedback from admissions tutors as soon as possible," says Warren Turner at London South Bank University. "Don't give up. Consider other routes into higher education – a foundation course, apprenticeship, work-based learning – before submitting another application."

From: www.guardian.co.uk/education

Exercises

1. Who said that?

"Many universities make a record of personal contact, and may use it in their decision-making." -

"Don't give up. Consider other routes into higher education before submitting another application." -

"Most unis have a live chat line for potential applicants staffed by current students or staff... An informed choice will be a better choice." -

"Aim to devote the majority of the personal statement to academic achievement and motivations..." -

"Have a look at course blogs to get a feel for what's happening... Find out who the academics who teach on the course are, follow them on Twitter, introduce yourself." -

- 2. Work in small groups with the following vocabulary cards. Do translation and back translation. Make sure you've remembered the words. Then exchange your cards and try to remember as many words and collocations as possible. Be ready for a group quiz on ALL of the vocabulary items.**

be confused about, be determined, cap'n'gown, show commitment, apprenticeship, be fascinated by..., grumpy-looking students

tuition fees, get a place, drag yourself to lectures, glossy photos, feedback, stand out, current staff

be worth it, pick a course, set on the path to..., crawl under a rock, leadership skills, arouse interest, bursary offerings

- 3. Role-play.**
- a) You are going to apply to an N. course in X. University. Prepare what you will say, also prepare a personal statement (search the web to find out more about it). Make notes.**
- b) Work in groups: applicants and admission tutors.**
Applicants: make a short speech presenting yourself as a future student, explain why you should be accepted.
Admission tutors: ask questions to find out more information and make sure that applicants meet the necessary requirements.

Listening

Listening 1

1. You are going to listen to impressions of students about their first week at a university in London (from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>). Listen to what they say and put the words and phrases into correct columns (sometimes more than one variant is possible).

exciting made a lot of friends feeling independent and free
look forward to a new life ahead a little bit scared
live sociably a great experience get acquainted with people

<u>Speaker 1</u>	<u>Speaker 2</u>	<u>Speaker 3</u>	<u>Speaker 4</u>

2. Listen again and check yourself.
3. Speak with your partner about what YOUR first week at university was like. Try to use the vocabulary from the exercise above. Share your stories in a whole-class discussion.

Listening 2

1. You are going to listen to a radio programme about poverty and education (from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>). Before you listen discuss these questions in small groups.

- Which countries have the best quality of education service? Make your guesses, compare with other students.
- Do you think that academic performance and poverty are connected? How?
- Do you know any examples which prove that poorer/richer children/students have better academic results?

2. Where are poorer pupils most likely to do well? Argument your choice.

A. Finland B. Canada C. South Korea

3. Now listen to the programme and check yourself.
4. Listen to the first part of the programme (up to 01:50) and complete the sentences. Listen again to check yourself.

- 1) The report, from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – or OECD – studies whether there is an inevitable link between and
- 2) If you're from a then 'the odds are stacked against you' – you're less likely to succeed because the situation is unfavourable.
- 3) So it's easier for poorer school students – or pupils – to high in some countries rather than others then, Dan?
- 4) If you're playing on a level playing field, it's a situation for everybody.
- 5) Which country do you think in the OECD list for pupils doing well?

5. Listen up to the end of the programme and match the words with their definitions. Translate and make a sample sentence with each.

1) the odds are stacked against you	a) money earned from working
2) a level playing field	b) moving about aimlessly, unable to relax or focus on tasks
3) income	c) here, richer or from a more privileged background
4) fidgety	d) person who is at the same level (e.g. at school) or does the same job as someone else
5) restless	e) not wanting to be separated from other people, often physically holding on to them or seeking their attention
6) clingy	f) making small, quick movements in a nervous way
7) better-off	g) a situation allowing an equal chance for all participants to be successful at something
8) counterpart	h) it is very unlikely you will succeed because in your current situation many things will work against you

Writing

Write an essay on the previously chosen subtopic for presentation. Remember to follow the structure of an essay and use language points.

Speaking

Give a presentation of the subtopic you have previously chosen (see Warm-Up). Remember to use visual aids and SPEAK, not READ!

Follow Up

Here are some links and resources you can browse to study the Unit more thoroughly. Some of the links can be useful for exercises in the Unit.

- 1) <http://www.ucas.com> Universities & Colleges Admissions Service;
- 2) <http://www.ox.ac.uk> The University of Oxford;
- 3) <http://www.cam.ac.uk> The University of Cambridge;
- 4) <http://www.harvard.edu> Harvard University;
- 5) <http://www.princeton.edu/main> Princeton University;
- 6) <http://www.educationuk.org> Education in UK;
- 7) <http://www.ukschoolvideos.com/index.php> UK School videos.

List of Web 2.0 tools for making a project.

- 1) <http://www.wikispaces.com> Create a public, online wiki for free. This is great for group and class collaborations.
- 2) <http://www.glogster.com> Create multimedia online posters or “glogs” which can then be shared on the internet.
- 3) <http://voki.com> Create wacky avatars, then record yourself speaking.
- 4) <http://www.pimpampum.net/bookr> Create your own photo book using this fun tool. Search for images, add text, and get it published.
- 5) <http://animoto.com> Upload pictures and sounds and create professional looking videos which can then be downloaded and shared online.
- 6) <http://goanimate.com> Tell a story using online cartoon strip makers, spark life into characters and create short animations.
- 7) <http://www.sliderocket.com> Create a stunning-looking PowerPoint-style multimedia presentation which can then be viewed and shared online.
- 8) <http://prezi.com/> Create a presentation exploring and sharing ideas upon a virtual canvas by zooming.
- 9) <http://audioboo.fm/> Record digital recordings of up to 5 minutes long, add photos and share online.
- 10) <http://www.wallwisher.com> Create a thematic “wall” using “stickies”, add photos, videos and links.