

Map of the book

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2 Food, glorious food! <i>P19</i>	The first oyster <i>P21</i> Chocolate <i>P27</i>	Predicting Inferring Evaluating the text
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1 | Starting out

First impressions of a fresher

Read how one student settles down during her first few days at university

Memories of college in the 1950s

Then and now, and how it's all changed

Now you're here, but will you survive?

Find out how students cope with starting university in other countries



Active reading (1)

Predicting

Before we start reading a passage, we may look at the title, headings and photos to predict what the passage is about. We may prepare ourselves by thinking about:

- the likely contents
- the writer
- the type of writing: fact or fiction
- the style

Even if we don't guess correctly, we'll be able to understand the passage better.

- 1** Look at the title of the passage and predict what you're going to read.

Now read the passage and check your answer.



Diary of a fresher

Sunday

- 1 After a wearisome expedition by car from home, we arrive at my hall of residence, and I check in. The warden gives me a set of keys and a room number. My room is five floors up, and the lift has a sign on it, "Out of order". Finally, with my mother flushed and gasping for breath, we find Room 8, I unlock the door, and we all walk in.
- 2 After one minute, my father climbs out. The room is barely big enough for one, and certainly not big enough for the whole family. I can stretch out full-length on the bed and touch three walls without moving a muscle.
- 3 Lucky my brother and my dog didn't come too.
- 4 Later. My parents have just left. I'm here alone, hemmed in by my books and a suitcase. What do I do next?

Monday

- 5 There's a coffee morning for first-year students. I meet my tutor, a lofty man with sloping shoulders, who looks determined to be affable.
- 6 "Have you come far?" He peers down at me. As he speaks, his head jerks wildly from side to side, which makes his coffee spill into the saucer.
- 7 "I live not far from Edinburgh, about six hours away," I explain.
- 8 "Splendid!" he says, and moves on to the freshman standing beside me. "Have you come far?" he asks. "Splendid," he barks, without waiting for the answer, and moves on. He takes a sip of coffee, and looks thunderstruck to discover the cup is empty.
- 9 My mother calls. She enquires if I've met my tutor yet.

Tuesday

- 10 Am feeling a bit peckish, and it occurs to me that I haven't eaten for two days. I go downstairs and stumble across the dining hall, where I can have three meals a day. I go down and join a lengthy file of people winding its way out into the open.
- 11 "What's for breakfast?" I ask the guy in front of me.
- 12 "No idea. I was too late for breakfast. This is for lunch."
- 13 It's self-service and today's menu includes chicken, rice, potatoes, salad, vegetables, cheese, yoghurt and fruit. The boy in front piles it all onto his plate, pays for it, and goes to sit down. I seem to have lost my appetite.

Language and culture

A **coffee morning** is an informal

social event in the morning where people drink coffee or tea, talk and make new acquaintances.

A **gap year** is a year usually between finishing school and starting university or college when you travel or work. Young people take a gap year in order to become more independent and gain work experience before starting at college, or if they are not sure what they want to study.

A **Freshers' Fair** is an event when all the university clubs and societies try to attract new members.

Ballroom dancing is a type of dancing done by a man and a woman together, often in a room where formal balls, or dances, take place. Ballroom dances include the waltz, the foxtrot and the tango.

Bell-ringing is the activity of making a set of bells ring to produce a pleasant musical sound, especially church bells. Traditionally, church bells were rung to tell people nearby that a church service was about to begin.

Club Night is an evening event, usually in a bar, where there's music and dancing until late. It provides another opportunity to meet friends and make new ones.

14 My mother calls. She asks if I'm eating proper meals.

Wednesday

15 I have a lecture at 9 am. I wake up at 8.45. No one has woken me. Weird.

16 I pull on some clothes, and dash over to the lecture hall. I sit down beside a girl who looks half asleep. She inspects me. "Just got up?" she asks. How can she tell?

17 The lecture takes an hour, and at the end I look at my notes. I can't read my handwriting.

18 The girl's name is Sophie and she's an English literature major, like me. She looks frighteningly intelligent, and when we chat after the lecture, she tells me she read the whole of this term's reading list during her gap year. She's a bit impressive, and I feel so ignorant ... I don't even think I should breathe the same air as her.

19 Mum calls. She asks if I slept OK.

Thursday

20 It's the Freshers' Fair today, and Sophie and I go along to see how many clubs we can join. We concur that we want to make a lot of friends, so I sign up for ballroom dancing, the Artificial Intelligence Society, bell-ringing and the Extreme Sports Club. Sophie signs up for Amateur Dramatics and the Mozart choir. I wonder if Sophie and I are going to stay buddies.

21 Mum calls. My brother has tried to rent out my bedroom back home. Mum reassures me that it's mine for as long as I need it, that it's my home and that they miss me very much, especially the dog. I burst into tears.

Friday

22 In the morning, I go to the library. But it seems I need some form of identification and I don't have an ID card yet. For some reason, I also have to swear that I won't damage the books or break the library rules, and if I do, I'll be sent to prison. (What!?! For speaking too loudly?) It seems that it's a very old library, and the university is inordinately proud of it.

23 Tonight is Club Night at the Students' Union, but I've run out of clean clothes. I'm not sure what happens to my dirty clothes after putting them in the clothes basket and before finding them clean, ironed and folded in my wardrobe. Maybe Mum will call soon.

Reading and understanding

2 Check (✓) the true statements.

- 1 It's a description of the first few days at college.
- 2 It's a personal and private story.
- 3 The writer uses past tenses.
- 4 It's factual.
- 5 It's written in the third person.

3 Choose the best way to complete the sentences.

- 1 The writer is staying in _____.
(a) university accommodation
(b) a flat
(c) a small study
(d) a hotel
- 2 When meeting the new students, the tutor _____.
(a) finds it easy to relax with them
(b) seems very friendly
(c) welcomes them warmly to the university
(d) doesn't seem to find the students interesting
- 3 When the writer finally gets to the lecture hall, _____.
(a) she meets Sophie, whom she already knows
(b) Sophie is giving a lecture
(c) she's too late and isn't allowed in
(d) she attends the first lecture of her university course
- 4 At the Freshers' Fair students can choose to join _____.
(a) music and drama clubs
(b) sports clubs
(c) the same clubs as their friends
(d) all kinds of clubs for all interests
- 5 When the writer goes to the university library, she finds out that it _____.
(a) has very strict rules
(b) doesn't allow people to use the books
(c) is new
(d) contains only a few books
- 6 At the end of her first week, the writer _____.
(a) is missing her mother
(b) is enjoying herself enormously
(c) has done all her washing
(d) wants to finish her assignments

Dealing with unfamiliar words

When we come across a new word, we can try to work out its general meaning by thinking about:

- what part of speech it is
- if you already know one of its meanings
- if there are clues to its meaning in the immediate context or elsewhere in the passage

For some new words, we should not only learn about their meanings, but also how to use them. For some others, we may not need to know what they exactly mean, or how to use them.

4 Replace the underlined words with the correct form of the words below.

barely ignorant impressive intelligent
peer sip spill

- 1 There was only just enough room for two people.
- 2 Be careful or you'll accidentally pour your drink down your clothes.
- 3 He was completely unaware of what to do in the library.
- 4 She was very clever and got excellent grades.
- 5 The tea is very hot! Drink it in small amounts.
- 6 She was short-sighted, so she looked at you as if she didn't recognize you.
- 7 In my opinion, his academic work and his skill in sport are extremely good.

5 Complete the sentences with the correct form of the expressions below.

check in rent out run out of stretch out
stumble across

- 1 We were taking a walk in the countryside when we _____ a lovely pub which we didn't know about.
- 2 If you buy a large house, you can _____ some of the bedrooms to students.
- 3 It was a very large bed, so I lay down and _____.
- 4 I'd love something to drink, but we've _____ coffee, so I'll have to go and buy some.
- 5 We got to the airport, _____ and then went through passport control.

6 Answer the questions about the words.

- 1 Is a *wearisome* journey likely to be (a) enjoyable and interesting, or (b) tiring and dull?
- 2 Is a *warden* likely to be (a) a teacher at the college, or (b) someone who looks after the hall of residence?
- 3 Is someone who is *lofty* likely to be (a) tall, or (b) short?
- 4 Is an *affable* man likely to be (a) pleasant and friendly, or (b) rude and unkind?
- 5 If someone *jerks* their head, is it likely to be a (a) gentle, or (b) sudden movement?
- 6 Is someone who is *thunderstruck* likely to be (a) very surprised or shocked, or (b) cheerful and relaxed?
- 7 If you're *peckish*, are you likely to be (a) a little hungry, or (b) a little thirsty?
- 8 Is your *buddy* likely to be your (a) friend, or (b) enemy?

Reading and interpreting

7 Work in pairs. Look at the sentences from the passage and answer the questions.

- 1 As he speaks, his head jerks wildly from side to side, which makes his coffee spill into the saucer.
What impression do you have of the tutor?
- 2 "Splendid," he barks, without waiting for the answer, and moves on.
Is the tutor really interested in the students he's talking to?
- 3 ... today's menu includes chicken, rice, potatoes, salad, vegetables, cheese, yoghurt and fruit. The boy in front piles it all onto his plate, pays for it, and goes to sit down.
Is this a usual amount of food to eat at one meal?
- 4 ... and I feel so ignorant ... I don't even think I should breathe the same air as her.
What does the writer think of Sophie?

Humour through exaggeration

The passage is meant to be humorous, and the writer achieves this effect through exaggeration.

I can stretch out full-length on the bed and touch three walls without moving a muscle.

The writer doesn't really mean the room is too small to the extent that she can't move a muscle; she is exaggerating.



Developing critical thinking

8 Work in pairs and discuss the questions.

- 1 Which aspects of the writer's account of her first day at university do you find interesting?
- 2 Which aspects of the writer's university could be introduced successfully into Chinese universities?
- 3 What improvements would you like to make in the first days for freshers at Chinese universities?

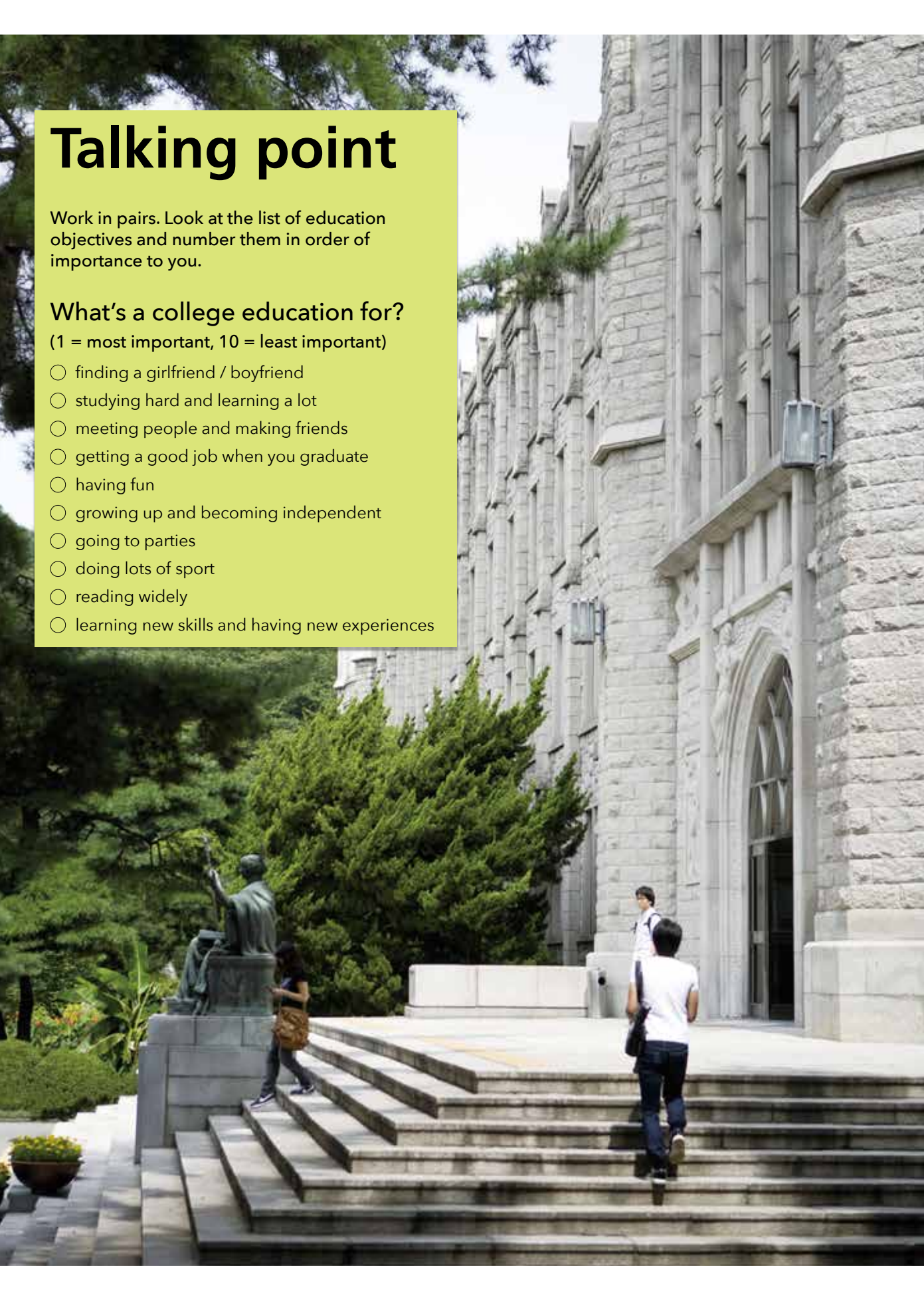
Talking point

Work in pairs. Look at the list of education objectives and number them in order of importance to you.

What's a college education for?

(1 = most important, 10 = least important)

- finding a girlfriend / boyfriend
- studying hard and learning a lot
- meeting people and making friends
- getting a good job when you graduate
- having fun
- growing up and becoming independent
- going to parties
- doing lots of sport
- reading widely
- learning new skills and having new experiences



Active reading (2)

Predicting

Another important way of helping us to understand a book is to read the blurb – the background information and summary of the book which is usually printed inside or on the back of the book jacket. Usually the blurb includes opinions by critics, other writers or well-known people in order to make it more interesting to people who might read the book.

- 1 Work in pairs. Read the book blurb about *'Tis: A Memoir* and discuss the questions.

'Tis: A Memoir

Coming after the worldwide best-seller *Angela's Ashes*, Frank McCourt's second book of memoirs tells the story of his American journey. It follows his progress from his arrival in New York in 1949 as an immigrant with no formal education to brilliant storyteller and schoolteacher. Frank McCourt continues his vivid story about survival.

- 1 What difficulties might Frank McCourt have faced as an immigrant when he arrived in New York?
 - 2 Why might a lack of formal education be a disadvantage?
 - 3 What do you think the blurb means when it refers to "survival"? Does it suggest Frank McCourt had an easy life?
 - 4 Which information describes facts, and which describes opinions about the book?
- 2 Read the extract from the novel *'Tis: A Memoir*. Decide where it comes in the novel, and what it describes.



- 1 Since I'm not a high school graduate and work full time, I'm allowed to take only two courses, Introduction to Literature and The History of Education in America. I don't know why I have to be introduced to literature but the woman in the admissions office says it's a requirement even though I've read Dostoyevsky and Melville and that's admirable for someone without a high school education. She says The History of Education in America course will provide me with the broad cultural background I need after my inadequate European education.
- 2 I'm in heaven and the first thing to do is buy the required textbooks, cover them with the purple and white NYU book jackets so that people in the subway will look at me admiringly.
- 3 All I know of university classes is what I saw a long time ago in the movies in Limerick and here I am sitting in one, The History of Education in America, with Professor Maxine Green up there on the platform telling us how the Pilgrims educated their children. All around me are students scribbling away in their notebooks and I wish I knew what to scribble myself. How am I supposed to know what's important out of all the things she's saying up there? Am I supposed to remember everything? Some students raise their hands to ask questions but I could never do that. The whole class would stare at me and wonder who's the one with the accent. I could try an American accent but that never works. When I try it people always smile and say, Do I detect an Irish brogue?
- 4 The professor is saying the Pilgrims left England to escape religious persecution and that puzzles me because the Pilgrims were English themselves and the English were always the ones who persecuted everyone else, especially the Irish. I'd like to raise my hand and tell the professor how the Irish suffered for centuries under English rule but I'm sure everyone in this class has a high school diploma and if I open my mouth they'll know I'm not one of them.
- 5 Other students are easy about raising their hands and they always say, Well, I think.
- 6 Some day I'll raise my hand and say, Well, I think, but I don't know what to think about Pilgrims and their

Language and culture

The Pilgrims were Protestant Christians who left England in the

early 17th century because their religious beliefs were not being respected. They went to live in Massachusetts on the east coast of America, and established the first English settlement of what is now the United States. Today, the term *Pilgrim Fathers* is often used to describe the founders of the American colonies.

The Reformation refers to a period of religious change in Europe in the 16th century. In those days, nearly everyone in Europe was a Christian and the most important type of Christianity was Roman Catholicism. But during the Reformation, the teachings of Roman Catholicism were challenged by reformers called Protestants. This finally led to the establishment of the Protestant churches. Catholics and Protestants are all Christians, but they have slightly different beliefs and forms of worship. In general, the Catholic Church is full of ceremony and is designed to impress its believers with the power of God through its priests, whereas the Protestant churches encourage a more direct and personal relationship.

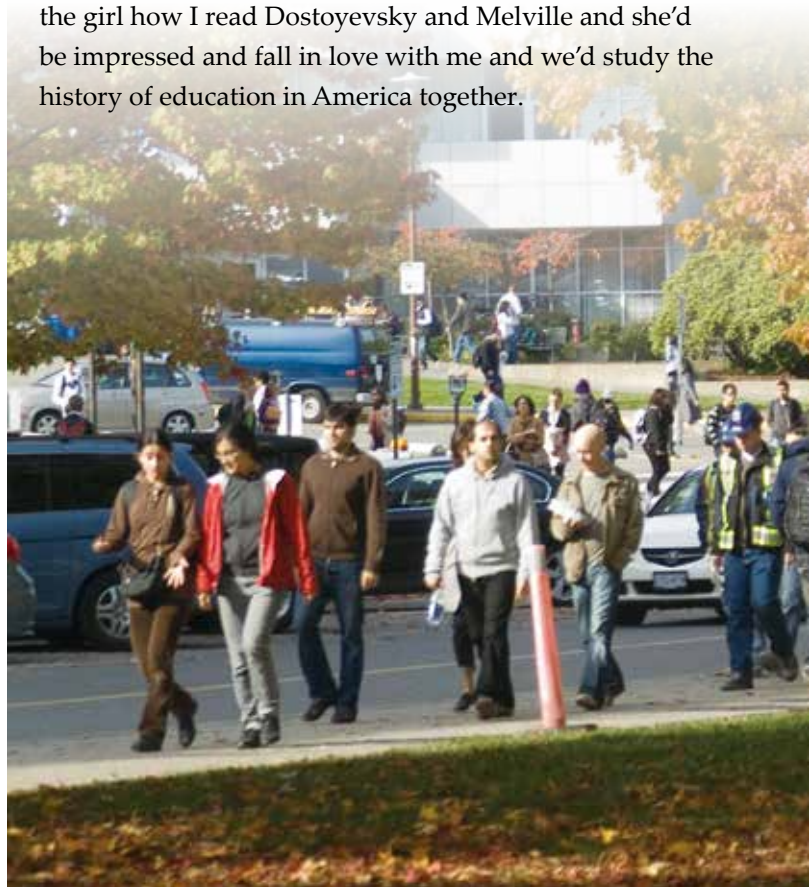
Language and culture

Greenwich Village is an area of New York City that was especially fashionable in the 1960s.

Puritan refers to the strict English religious group, which the Pilgrims belonged to, and who wanted religious worship to be as simple as possible. It also refers to people with strict moral or religious principles, who disapprove of others enjoying themselves.

education. Then the professor tells us ideas don't drop fully formed from the skies, that the Pilgrims were, in the long run, children of the Reformation with an accompanying world view and their attitudes to children were so informed.

- 7 There is more notebook scribbling around the room, the women busier than the men. The women scribble as if every word out of Professor Green's mouth were important.
- 8 Then I wonder why I have this fat textbook on American education which I carry in subways so that people can admire me for being a college student. I know there will be examinations, a mid-term and a final, but where will the questions come from? If the professor talks and talks and the textbook is 700 pages I'll surely be lost.
- 9 There are good-looking girls in the class and I'd like to ask one if she knows what I should know before the mid-term exam in seven weeks. I'd like to go to the university cafeteria or a Greenwich Village coffee shop and chat with the girl about the Pilgrims and their Puritan ways and how they frightened the life out of their children. I could tell the girl how I read Dostoyevsky and Melville and she'd be impressed and fall in love with me and we'd study the history of education in America together.



Reading and understanding

3 Answer the questions.

- 1 Why doesn't the writer think he needs to be introduced to literature?
- 2 How does the writer feel as he listens to Professor Green's lecture?
- 3 Why does the writer want to try an American accent?
- 4 Does the writer agree with the professor about the Pilgrims? Can you explain why or why not?
- 5 How does the writer feel about his chances of success as a student?

Dealing with unfamiliar words

4 Replace the underlined words with the correct form of the words below.

admirable detect inadequate persecution
scribble subway

- 1 When he speaks, people notice that he sounds Irish.
- 2 Frank McCourt had read a lot of books, which was deserving of respect considering he had no high school education.

- 3 You can tell the students on the underground trains by the books they carry.
- 4 The woman in the admissions office suggests that his European education is not good enough.
- 5 The professor was writing very quickly in his notebook.
- 6 Many immigrants came to America to escape extremely bad treatment because of their race, religion or political beliefs in their own countries.

5 Answer the questions about the expressions.

- 1 **I'm in heaven** Does this mean I'm (a) delighted, or (b) unhappy?
- 2 **ideas don't drop fully formed from the skies** Does this mean that ideas (a) need to be developed with careful thinking, or (b) are immediately created through good teaching?
- 3 **in the long run** Does this mean (a) at a time in the future, or (b) with a great deal of effort?
- 4 **frighten the life out of someone** Does this mean (a) to make someone very ill, or (b) to make someone extremely afraid and nervous?



Inferring

Frank McCourt is especially good at describing his feelings, by writing in a style which suggests what he might feel, instead of by stating it explicitly. Many writers show their skill not by what they say, but by the way they say it. Readers are encouraged to infer what they mean or feel by reading between the lines.

Reading and interpreting

6 Work in pairs. Look at the sentences from the extract and answer the questions.

- 1 She says The History of Education in America course will provide me with the broad cultural background I need after my inadequate European education.
How does the writer feel about his European education being described as inadequate?
- 2 All around me are students scribbling away in their notebooks and I wish I knew what to scribble myself. How am I supposed to know what's important out of all the things she's saying up there?
How does he feel about being in class at the moment?
- 3 Some students raise their hands to ask questions but I could never do that. The whole class would stare at me and wonder who's the one with the accent.
Does he feel part of the class yet?
- 4 I'd like to raise my hand and tell the professor how the Irish suffered for centuries under English rule but I'm sure everyone in this class has a high school diploma and if I open my mouth they'll know I'm not one of them.
What does this sentence reveal about the writer's self-confidence?
- 5 I could tell the girl how I read Dostoyevsky and Melville and she'd be impressed and fall in love with me and we'd study the history of education in America together.
Do you think he has made friends yet? How does he feel about this?



Developing critical thinking

7 Work in pairs and discuss the questions.

- 1 The writer is overwhelmed by his teachers and the other students, and fears he's not good enough. How common is this experience in a Chinese university?
- 2 Is it acceptable to question professors whose views you don't agree with?
- 3 Are there some other experiences that you think are equally important in university as learning from your professors?



Talking point

- 1 Work in pairs. Read the quotes and discuss the questions.

Starting out at college – how to survive student life

- I'm very shy. How will I find the courage to make new friends? Mary, Oxford
- I have to shop and cook for myself and I haven't a clue what to do. Where do I start? Tony, Manchester
- I get really worried by exams, but have always had my family to help me. How will I cope now? John, London
- I get homesick very easily, and I'm sure I'll miss my family. What should I do? Katy, Stirling
- I've never had to handle my own finances. How do I stop getting into debt? Jo, Exeter
- I've heard that work at university is different from senior high school. What can I expect? Callum, Belfast

- 2 Work in pairs. Choose the best advice about beating homesickness.

Beating the homesickness blues! Here are some tips.

- Call home once a day.
- Have familiar things around you, such as photos of your family and friends.
- Cook your favourite food.
- Take lots of exercise, especially in the first few weeks.
- Join clubs and societies.
- Check you know everyone in the rooms near yours. If you don't, knock on the door and introduce yourself.
- Go shopping.

Language in use

with ... + present participle

1 Look at the sentences from the two passages.

Finally, with my mother flushed and gasping for breath, we find Room 8 ...

... and here I am sitting in one ... with Professor Maxine Green up there on the platform telling us how ...

Now choose the correct description of the use of *with ... + present participle* in the above sentences.

- (a) used for describing something which is happening at the same time
- (b) used for saying what possessions, qualities, or features someone or something has

2 Complete the sentences using *with ... + present participle* and the clues in brackets.

- 1 _____,
my mother and I unpack. (my father is waiting in the corridor)
- 2 The boy in front piles food on his plate
_____.
(I was waiting in the queue)
- 3 _____,
I put up my umbrella until it stopped. (the rain was pouring down)
- 4 _____,
I couldn't concentrate. (the music was playing loudly)
- 5 _____,
I had to leave before the end. (the lecture was running late)
- 6 _____,
I decided to write them down as notes. (my head was spinning with ideas)

It occurs to ... that ...

3 Look at the sentence.

I realize that I haven't eaten for two days.

You can rewrite it like this:

It occurs to me that I haven't eaten for two days.

Now rewrite the sentences using *It occurs to ... that ...*

- 1 My father realizes the room is barely big enough for one person, so he leaves.
- 2 I had never realized that my handwriting is so bad that I can't read it.
- 3 I realize I've run out of clean clothes.
- 4 Has he realized that he doesn't know what to write for his term paper?
- 5 He realizes he could speak in an American accent so they wouldn't recognize him as a foreigner.

Collocations

Collocation refers to the way in which some words are often used together, or a particular combination of words used in this way. For example, we say a *tall man*, not a "high man". This is a collocation. Remember to note down any collocations you hear or see.

4 Read the explanations of the words and expressions. Answer the questions.

- 1 **climb** When you *climb out of / into / through something*, you do it with difficulty.
 - (a) Why does the writer's father *climb out of the room*?
 - (b) Why would you *climb into bed*?
 - (c) If you *climb through a hole*, what do you do with your body?
- 2 **spill** This word usually suggests several ideas: liquid, accidentally, movement and out of control.
 - (a) What has happened if you've *spilt coffee all over your desk*?
 - (b) What has happened if toys *spilt out all over the carpet*?
 - (c) What might be happening if *crowds were spilling out of the bars and restaurants*?
- 3 **sign up** When you *sign up for a club or a team*, you join it. The writer signs up for several clubs in *Diary of a fresher*.
 - (a) When might someone *sign up for the army*?
 - (b) What has happened if a football club *signs up a new football player*?
 - (c) What do you do when you *sign up to do voluntary work* in your local community?

- 4 **burst into** This expression suggests that something suddenly happens, or someone suddenly starts doing something.
- (a) What does the writer suddenly start doing when she *bursts into tears*?
- (b) What *bursts into bloom*?
- (c) What do you do when something *bursts into flames*?
- 5 **clean** This word usually suggests several ideas: not dirty, not illegal or wrong, without problems, inoffensive.
- (a) If you've got a *clean licence*, what have or haven't you done?
- (b) If you use *clean language*, what do you avoid saying?
- (c) If something has a *clean bill of health*, is it healthy or working correctly?
- 6 **easy** This word usually suggests that something is not difficult or doesn't need much work. It can also suggest that a person is confident, happy and not worried about anything.
- (a) If someone is *easy on the eye*, how do they look?
- (b) If something is *easier said than done*, is it more or less difficult to do?
- (c) If someone tells you to "*take it easy*", what are they telling you to do?

5 Complete the sentences using the collocations in Activity 4.

- 1 If ever I _____ my clothes, it's because I have put on a lot of weight and my clothes don't fit me any more.
- 2 The last time someone made me _____ was when I was a small child and they hurt me.
- 3 I always use _____ when I talk to my teachers or parents.
- 4 It was _____ when someone suggested that we should put the flag on the top of the high mountain.
- 5 I'll never forget the time when I had to _____ a window because I was locked out of the house.

- 6 Among the four or five university clubs I _____ was ballroom dancing.
- 7 When the cherry trees _____, I think of my visit to Japan two years ago.
- 8 I would only lose my _____ if ever I had a car accident in which I was driving under the influence of alcohol.
- 9 The people I think are _____ are attractive and pleasant to look at.

Translation

6 Translate the paragraph into Chinese.

Today, a gap year refers mostly to a year taken before starting university or college. During their gap year, American students either engage in advanced academic courses or do some volunteer work to improve their knowledge, maturity, decision-making, leadership, independence, self-sufficiency and more, thus improving their résumés before going to college. British and European students, however, take a much more holiday-style approach to the gap year by generally working for 3–6 months and then travelling around the world before college begins. This is intended to expand their minds, personal confidence, experiences and interests prior to college. It is a much less structured approach than taken in the United States, and is generally viewed by parents as a formative year for young adults to become independent and learn a great deal of responsibility prior to engaging in university life.

7 Translate the paragraph into English.

今天，很多中国的大学非常重视培养学生的创新意识和创业精神（entrepreneurship）。很多知名大学与多家公司建立长期的合作关系。这些公司会定期从大学中录用合格的毕业生。此外，有些校友还创建启动资金，支持学生创办自己的企业。一些大学的校长表示，创业与学习并不矛盾，鼓励学生创业可以帮助他们将专业知识应用于实践，提升自身的竞争力（competitiveness）。

Reading across cultures

Settling down at college around the world

Tanya Zarutskaya Moscow, Russia

This time last year I was nervous about my new life. I didn't have any friends, and it was my first time away from home. At first I worked all the time, going to lectures and studying late into the night.

But then I realized I was missing out on so many other things at university. One day a girl in my hall of residence invited everyone in the dorm to a dinner party. I've no idea where she managed to buy the food, or how she had enough money. And she dressed like a model. I don't know why she was bothering with university! I've got to know lots of interesting people and I now enjoy myself as well as study hard.

Miguel Fonseca Guadalajara, Mexico

When I first arrived at university, I tried to make notes about everything the professors said in their lectures. But I ended up being too busy writing to listen. I'm studying chemistry, and everything seemed more complicated than what we learnt at school. But then I realized that here, you have to listen and think more. I've now understood the difference between new information and things which I knew already.

Francine Bonnet Lyon, France

When I first arrived, the university seemed very large and unfriendly. I found the freedom and the lack of guidance difficult at first. At school, I was used to a timetable with homework in the evening. I also had a lot of trouble managing my allowance. You have to buy food, books, bus fares, clothes and everything, so it's not like the pocket money you had as a kid at home. The money arrives all in one go, so I felt pretty rich at the start of the term. Then I spent too much, and could only afford to eat a sandwich once a day! But now I've realized that it's no longer my parents' or teachers' responsibility to look after me. For the first time, it's me who's responsible for my life ... and I don't know what to do!



1 Read the passage and answer the questions.

- 1 What did Tanya, Miguel and Francine do when they were first at university?
- 2 What did they decide to do after settling down?
- 3 What made them change their minds?
- 4 Who do you think had the most problems?
- 5 Who settled in most easily?

2 Work in pairs and discuss the questions.

- 1 When you first came to college, how did you feel?
- 2 What are the main differences between your life at home and at college?
- 3 Is the way you study at college different from the way you studied at school?
- 4 Do you spend more time studying or enjoying yourself?
- 5 Have you had trouble managing your allowance?
- 6 What have you learnt about life at college?

Guided writing

Writing a narrative

A narrative often describes a past situation or experience and a sequence of events which sometimes lead to a change.

1 Look at the functions of the sentences from the first section of the passage in Reading across cultures.

- Describe your feelings or lifestyle in the past.
This time last year I was nervous about my new life.
- Give more information about your feelings or lifestyle when you first arrived at college.
At first I worked all the time ...
- Describe how something changed.
But then I realized I was missing out on so many other things at university.
- Describe why the change happened.
One day a girl in my hall of residence invited everyone in the dorm to a dinner party ...
- Describe how life is today.
I've got to know lots of interesting people and I now enjoy myself as well as study hard.

Now look at the other two sections and see how they show the same functions.

This time last year ... / When I first arrived at university A narrative of the past experience usually begins with these expressions of past time.

at first / at the time It then introduces some specific examples. We can sometimes introduce these examples with expressions or clauses which draw attention to the past situation and which also suggest that something is about to change.

but / however / suddenly When the change occurs, we usually draw attention to it with these words.

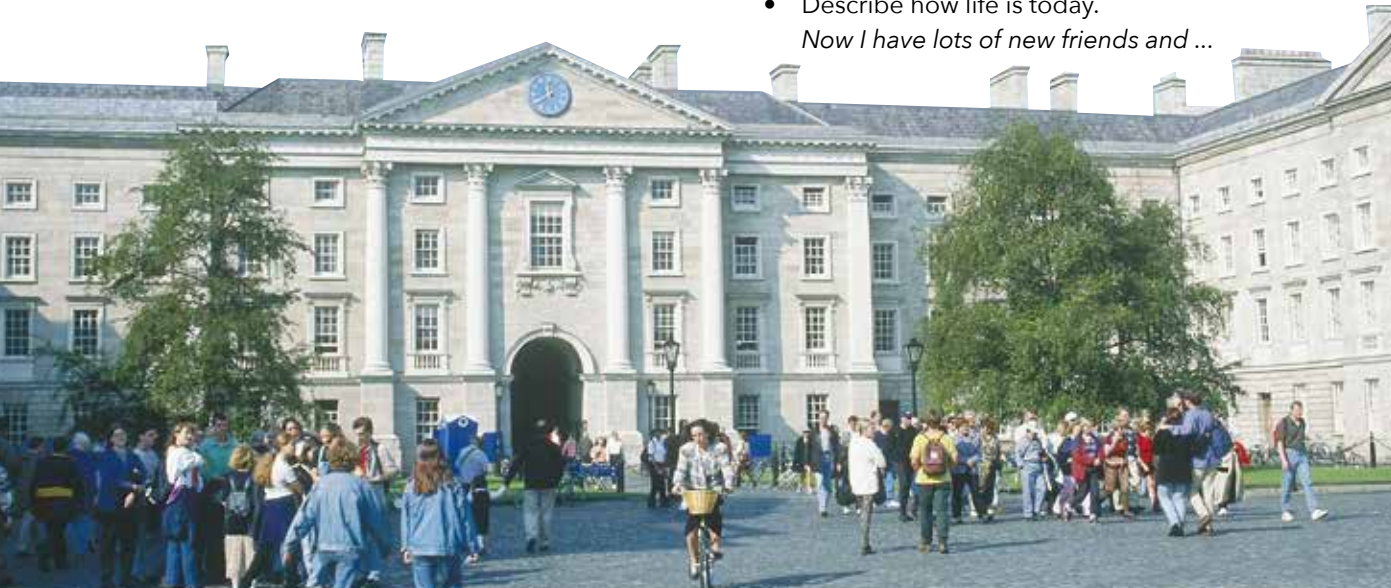
One day ... When we describe why the change happened, we can use some more specific expressions of past time.

now / today We often finish with a summary of the present situation or experience. We can use the present perfect tense or the present tense.

Notice that all of these expressions usually come at, or are close to, the beginning of the sentence.

2 Think about learning to live at college in China and write a short passage.

- Describe your feelings or lifestyle in the past.
Three months ago I was ...
- Give more information about your feelings or lifestyle when you first arrived at college.
I missed my family, and ...
- Describe how something changed.
But then I understood that ...
- Describe why the change happened.
One day a group of friends suggested we ...
- Describe how life is today.
Now I have lots of new friends and ...



Unit task

Preparing a welcome guide for next year's freshers



1 Work in pairs and make a list about the things you thought about when you first arrived at university. Think about:

- what to do if you're homesick
- how to make new friends
- how to begin studying

2 Discuss how you dealt with these challenges or problems. Write some friendly advice to freshers who might have the same problems as you did.

- Make a photo album of parents or school friends.

- Try not to call home more than once a week.
- Get involved in clubs or do some sport.

3 Prepare a welcome guide for next year's freshers.

- Describe the suggestions you've made.
- Show some photos of students enjoying themselves with different activities, if possible.

4 Present your welcome guide to the whole class.

5 Work with the whole class and choose the best welcome guide.

Unit file

Vocabulary

admirable barely check in
detect ignorant impressive
inadequate intelligent peer
persecution rent out run out of
scribble sip spill stretch out
stumble across subway

Reading skills

Predicting
Humour through exaggeration
Inferring

Guided writing

Writing a narrative

Unit task

Preparing a welcome guide for next year's freshers