МИНИСТЕРСТВО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ

Нижегородский государственный лингвистический университет

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СИСТЕМА ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ

В ВЕЛИКОБРИТАНИИ И США

Учебно-методические материалы

для студентов переводческого факультета

Нижний Новгород 2001

Печатается по решению редакционно-издательского совета
НГЛУ им. Н.А. Добролюбова

УДК 802. 0 (075. 83)

СИСТЕМА ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ В ВЕЛИКОБРИТАНИИ И США: Учебно-методические материалы для студентов переводческого факультета. – Н. Новгород: НГЛУ им. Н.А. Добролюбова, 2001. – 90 с.

Настоящие учебно-методические материалы предназначены для студентов IV курса отделения английского языка и студентов V курса отделения французского языка (РФУ) по специальности 022900 – Перевод и переводоведение.

Их целью является дальнейшее развитие и совершенствование у студентов речевых навыков и умений.

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От авторов

Учебно-методические материалы «Система образования в Великобритании и США» представляют собой комплекс аутентичных текстов, нацеленных на дальнейшее развитие и совершенствование навыков чтения и говорения у студентов переводческого факультета старшей ступени обучения.

Учебные материалы построены с учетом современного коммуникативно ориентированного обучения, которое позволяет студентам использовать язык (лексические единицы по теме "Образование") в речи при обсуждении структуры и ценностей образования, и также проблем, существующих в сфере образования в двух странах – Великобритании и США.

Материалы включают в себя две части. Первая часть, посвященная Великобритании, составлена к.ф.н., и.о. зав. кафедрой английского языка переводческого факультета **Виноградовой Т.В.**

Вторая часть, посвященная США, составлена к.ф.н., старшим преподавателем кафедры теории и практики английского языка и перевода **Павлиной С.Ю.**

Первая часть работы содержит 12 текстов учебного характера, отражающих ступени образования (начальную, среднюю и высшую) в Великобритании, специфику обучения студентов в Оксфорде и Кембридже, обучение студентов в Открытом университете.

Вторая часть работы содержит 11 текстов, отражающих цели и задачи обучения учащихся в начальных, средних и высших учебных заведениях США.

В обеих частях приводятся статистические данные. Сопровождающие тексты задания, построенные на принципах современной коммуникативной концепции обучения иностранному языку, способствуют развитию и совершенствованию практических навыков студентов в основных видах речевой деятельности.

Материалы могут использоваться как на занятиях по практике английского языка, так и при самостоятельной подготовке студентов.

EDUCATION IN BRITAIN AND THE US

In Britain all children have to go to school between the ages of 5 and 16. In the US children must go to school from the age of 6 to between the ages of 14 and 16, depending on the state they live in.

Subjects

In England and Wales the subjects taught in schools are laid down by the NATIONAL CURRICULUM, which was introduced in 1988 and sets out in detail the subjects that children should study and the levels of achievement they should reach by the ages of 7, 11 and 16, when they are tested.

The National Curriculum does not apply in Scotland, where each school decides what subjects it will teach.

In the US the subjects taught are decided by state and local governments.

Whereas British schools usually have prayers and religious instruction, American schools are not allowed to include prayers or to teach particular religious beliefs.

Examinations

At 16 students in England and Wales take GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) examinations. These examinations are taken by students of all levels of ability in any of a range of subjects, and may involve a final examination, an assessment of work done during the two year course, or both of these things. At 18 some students take A-LEVEL examinations, usually in not more than three subjects. It is necessary to have A-levels in order to go to a university or polytechnic.

In Scotland students take SCE (Scottish Certificate of Education) examinations. A year later, they can take examinations called highers, after which they can either go straight to a university or spend a further year at school and take the Certificate of Sixth Year Studies. In Scotland the university system is different to that in England and Wales. Courses usually last four years rather than three, and students study a larger number of subjects as part of their degree.

In the US school examinations are not as important as they are in Britain. Students in high schools do have exams at the end of their last two years, but these final exams are considered along with the work that the students have done during the school years.

As well as exams at school, American high school students who wish to go to college also take SATs, national examinations. A student's SAT results are presented to colleges when students apply for entry, along with a record of the student's achievements at high school.

Social Events and Ceremonies

In American high schools there is a formal ceremony for graduation (=completion of high school). Students wear a special cap and gown and

receive a diploma from the head of the school. Students often buy a class ring to wear, and a yearbook, containing pictures of their friends and teachers.

There are also special social events at American schools. Sports events are popular, and cheerleaders lead the school in supporting the school team and singing the school song. At the end of their junior year, at age 17 or 18, students attend the junior-senior prom, a very formal dance which is held in the evening. The girls wear long evening dresses and the boys wear tuxedos.

In Britain, there are no formal dances or social occasions associated with school life. Some schools have a speech day at the end of the school year when prizes are given to the best students and speeches are made by the head teacher and sometimes an invited guest. However, in many British schools students and teachers organize informal dances for the older students.

UK			**US**	
Class	**school**	**age**	**school**	**class**
NURSERY SCHOOL, PLAYGROUP		3	**NURSERY SCHOOL** (OPTIONAL)	
Or KINDERGARTEN (optional)		4		
Reception class		5	**KINDERGARTEN**	
Year 1	**INFANT SCHOOL**	6		first grade
Year 2		7		second grade
Year 3	**JUNIOR**	8	**ELEMENTARY**	third grade
Year 4	**SCHOOL**	9	**SCHOOL**	fourth grade
Year 5	**PRIMARY SCHOOL**	10		fifth grade
Year 6		11		sixth grade
Year 7		12	**JUNIOR HIGH**	seventh grade
Year 8		13	**SCHOOL**	eighth grade
Year 9	**SECONDARY**	14		ninth grade (freshman)
Year 10	**SCHOOL**	15	**HIGH SCHOOL**	tenth grade (sophomore)
Year 11		16		eleventh grade (junior)
Year 12	SIXTH FORM	17		twelfth grade (senior)
Year 13	COLLEGE	18		freshman
first year (fresher)	**UNIVERSITY**	19		sophomore
second year	or **POLYTECHNIC**	20	**COLLEGE**	junior
third/final year		21		senior
postgraduate	**UNIVERSITY**	22-23	**GRADUATE SCHOOL**	

/Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture, 1992: 408./

Check Yourself

I. Choose the best alternative for each item:

1 There are ___ years of compulsory education in Great Britain:

A. ten**. B.** twelve**. C.** nine**. D.** eleven**.**

2. "I would like to ____ to one or two universities, probably Oxford or Edinburgh":

A. refer. **B.** apply. **C.** fulfil. **D.** start**.**

3. The English equivalent for the Russian аспирант is:

A. undergraduate. **B**. graduate. **C.** postgraduate. **D.** bachelor.

4. The false statement is:

A. There is no preschool education in the USA. **B**. Education in the US comprises three basic levels: elementary, secondary and higher education. **C.** The school year in the US usually runs nine months. **D**. Second-year students in the US are usually called sophomores.

5. **'If you want to progress more quickly, you need an __ program'. :**

A. international. **B**. accelerated training. **C**. independent. **D**. optional.

6. The synonym to *to do a course* is:

A. to design a course. **B**. to give up a ~. **C.** to take up a ~. **D**. to follow a ~.

7. The correct interpretation for the sentence *The change from primary to secondary school was quite traumatic for him* is:

A. He liked his secondary school very much. **B.** He didn't go to secondary school. **C**. He became a primary school teacher. **D.** He found it difficult to change schools.

8. Money paid to a student by his or her Local Educational Authority is called:

A. membership. **B**. fee. **C**. grant. **D.** grade.

9. The correct preposition for the sentence *A tutorial usually runs*

___ *about two hours* is:

A. of. **B.** for. **C.** along. **D**. by.

10. The word that matches the definition 'Education that must be obtained by all British children aged 5 – 16' is:

A. higher education. **B**. further. **C.** compulsory. **D.** preschool.

11. The word which doesn't go with the topic "University" is:

A. lecturer. **B.** a lecture theatre. **C.** undergraduate. **D**. playgroup.

12. Schoolchildren in Britain are tested at the ages of:

A. seven, eight, eleven, sixteen. **B.** seven, eleven, fourteen, sixteen.

C. six, seven, twelve, sixteen. **D.** six, twelve, sixteen, eighteen.

13. The National curriculum in Britain was introduced in ___ and applies ____ : **A.** 1987; everywhere. **B.** 1989; in England and Wales; **C**. 1988; in Scotland only. **D.** 1988; in England and Wales.

14. In the US the subjects taught at school are determined by:

A. The National curriculum**. B.** state and local governments**.**

C. the state government**. D.** the local government**.**

15. It is necessary to take A levels in order to:

A. start work. **B.** take up some more courses at school.

C. go to a University or Polytechnic. **D**. stay at the school.

16. The abbreviation *GCSE* stands for:

A. General Course of Scientific Education. **B.** Generic Course of Secondary Education. **C.** General Certificate of Social Education.

D. General Certificate of Secondary Education.

17. A first-year student in a College in the US is called:

A. a junior. **B.** a sophomore. **C.** a freshman. **D**. a senior.

18. School examinations are:

A. more important in the US**. B.** equally important in the UK and the US**. C.** more important in the UK. **D.** completely unimportant in the

UK as well as in the US**.**

19. Schoolchildren go to University at the age of:

A. 17 in the US and 18 in the UK. **B.** 18 in the US and 17 in the UK.

C. 16 in the UK and 17 in the US. **D.** 17 in the UK and 18 in the US.

20. A-level exams in Britain are taken at the age of:

A. 17. **B.** 19. **C**. 18. **D**. 16.

21. To be accepted to a University in Britain one should:

A. have good exam passes at school. **B**. get good A-level results in some subjects and pass an interview at the University. **C.** only pass the interview. **D.** only send his records of his achievements at the school.

22. To be accepted to a University in the US an applicant should:

A. present SAT results. **B.** only pass the interview. **C.** present SAT results as well as records of his/her achievements at the school.

D. only send his records of his achievements at the school.

23. The English equivalent for the Russian успеваемость is:

A. attendance**. B.** performance**. C.** grade**. D.** mark**.**

24. The English equivalent for the Russian посещаемость is:

A. attendance**. B.** attendency**. C.** presence**. D.** register**.**

25. In Scotland students take ___ examinations, and a year later ____:

A. PSATs, SATs**. B.** SCE, GCSE**. C.** SCE, highers. **D.** GCSE, highers**.**

26. The oldest universities in Britain are:

A. St. Andrews and Cambridge. **B**. Oxford and Cambridge. **C.** Aberdeen and Oxford. **D.** Edinburgh and Sussex.

27. Oxford and Cambridge universities date from the:

A. 15th and 14th centuries. **B.** 12th and 13th c. **C**. 13th and 14th c.

D. 15th and 16th centuries.

28. The abbreviation *SAT* stands for:

A. Special Ability Test. **B.** Scholastic Aptitude Test. **C.** Scholastic

Ability Test. **D.** Special Aptitude Test.

29. The major differences between the university system in Scotland and the one in England and Wales are the following:

A. In England and Wales courses last a year longer and therefore, students are offered a wider choice of disciplines. **B.** In England and Wales courses last a year shorter and therefore, students are offered a smaller choice of disciplines. **C.** In Scotland courses last a year longer and therefore, students are offered a wider choice of disciplines. **D.** Students graduate from a university in five years without taking any national examinations.

30. The abbreviation *SCE* stands for:

A. Certificate of Secondary Education. **B.** Scottish Certificate of Education. **C.** Secondary Certificate of English. **D.** Scottish Certificate of English.

31. The word *prom* in the text above means:

A. 'promenade concert'**. B.** 'an unhurried walk, ride or drive for pleasure or exercise'. **C.** 'a formal dance party for students in a high school'. **D.** 'a wide path beside a road along the coast in a holiday town'.

32. A *Graduate School* is:

A. a college or university in Britain where one can study for a Master's or Doctorate Degree. **B.** a college or university in the US where one can study for a Master's or Doctorate Degree. **C**. a college or university in the US where one can study for a Bachelor's Degree. **D.** a college or university in Britain where one can study for a Bachelor's Degree.

II. Study the table and pick out the similarities and differences between the systems of education in Britain and the US. Which system is closer to the one in Russia? Give your grounds.

III.What differences in lexical items can you notice?Try to make up a complete list of such items by exploring dictionaries and other sources.

PART I

EDUCATION IN GREAT BRITAIN

Education is the top priority for the Government, which believes that there is no more important task than raising educational standards to levels that compare favourably with the UK's international competitors. New measures have been introduced to reduce infant class sizes, raise standards in schools and local educational authorities, enhance the status and quality of the teaching profession, establish a new school framework, promote training for young employees, and reform student support arrangements. The Government has also announced proposals to encourage lifelong learning.

I. Skim through the texts to get the information about:

- administrative education bodies;
- public and private funds for education;
- the types of secondary state schools;
- the Government expenditure on education;
- the years of compulsory schooling;
- the percentage of pupils attending state schools;
- the National Curriculum;
- religious and sex education;
- pupils' testing;
- qualifications;
- pre-school education;
- primary schools;
- secondary schools.

Administration

Central government responsibility for education in the UK rests with the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) in England, The Scottish Office Education and Industry Department (SOEID), the Welsh Office Education Department (WOED) and the Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI).

At present, most state school education in England, Wales and Scotland is provided by local government education authorities (LEAs) and the rest by self-governing and grant-maintained schools (although there are only two self-governing state schools in Scotland). In Northern Ireland five education and library boards own, manage and run all controlled schools; they also fund most voluntary schools and provide finance for advisory and support services for all schools in their areas.

The education service in Great Britain is financed in the same way as other local government services, with education authorities providing funds to schools on the basis of pupil numbers. In Northern Ireland the costs of the education and library boards are met by DENI. There are also resources allocated to education authorities in England, Wales and Scotland for specific purposes, such as training to improve school performance in literacy and numeracy or support for information technology. Additional government grants are made for capital expenditure at voluntary aided schools.

At present, grant-maintained schools are financed by the Funding Agency for Schools, which distributes central government grants. Similar schools in Wales are financed by the Welsh Office.

Spending on education in the UK as a proportion of gross domestic production 1996-97 was 4.9 %. In July 1998 the Government announced in its *Comprehensive Spending Review* that it is proposing to provide an additional L 19,000 million in funding for education over the three years from 1999-

2000 to 2001-2002 (L 16,000 million for England and L 3,000 million for Wales and Scotland and Northern Ireland).

Schools

Parents are required by law to see to it that their children receive full-time education, at school or elsewhere, between the ages of 5 and 16 in England, Scotland and Wales and 4 and 16 in Northern Ireland. About 93% of pupils receive free education from public funds, while the others attend independent schools financed by fees paid by parents.

At present there are four main types of state school: 1) county schools owned and funded by LEAs; 2) voluntary schools established by church and other foundations and funded mainly by LEAs; 3) grant-maintained schools funded by central government; 4) special schools (LEA and grant-maintained) for pupils with special educational needs.

School Curriculum

The National Curriculum consists of statutory subjects for 5 to 16 year olds. For 5 to 11 year olds in state schools in England the core subjects are English, mathematics, science and from September 1998 information technology and religious education; other statutory subjects are design and technology, geography, history, physical education, art and music. From the age of 11 all pupils must also study a modern foreign language.

Religious education - All state schools in England and Wales must provide religious education, each LEA being responsible for producing a locally agreed syllabus. Syllabuses must reflect Christianity while taking account of the other main religions practised in the UK. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from religious education classes.

Sex education - state secondary schools are required to provide sex education for all pupils, including education about HIV/AIDS and other

sexually transmitted diseases. Parents are entitled to withdraw their children from sex education classes. All state schools must provide information to parents about the content of their sex education courses.

Assessment and testing – Pupils' performance is assessed at the ages of 7, 11 and 14 by their teachers in the core curriculum subjects; 14 year olds are also assessed in statutory non-core subjects. In addition, 7 year olds take National Curriculum tests in English and maths, and most 11 and 14 year olds are tested in the core subjects. In Welsh-speaking schools the three age groups are tested in Welsh. The Government introduced statutory assessment of children on entry to primary school from September 1998; this is intended to help teachers to match their work to children's needs and abilities.

Qualifications

The General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) is the main examination taken by pupils at the end of compulsory schooling at the age of 16. GCSE (Short Courses) are also available in a limited range of subjects; they occupy half the time of full GCSEs. In addition, the Part 1 General Vocational Qualification – a shortened version of the full GNVQ is being piloted extensively for 14-16 year olds. It covers seven vocational areas: art and design, business, engineering, health and social care, information technology, leisure and tourism, and manufacturing.

All GCSE and other qualifications offered to pupils in state schools must be approved by the Government. Associated syllabuses and assessment procedures must comply with national guidelines and be approved by the relevant qualifications authority. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), and its Welsh counterpart, are independent government agencies responsible for ensuring that the curriculum and qualifications available to young people and adults are of high quality, coherent and flexible.

Pre-School Education

Many 3- and 4-year-old children attend nursery schools and classes (or in England, reception classes in primary schools). Preschool education may also be provided in some private day nurseries and pre-school playgroups (which are largely organised by parents).

The Government has stated its commitment to a major expansion of preschool education and wants all children to begin school with a basic foundation in literacy and numeracy. From September 1998 it is providing free nursery education in England and Wales for all 4 year olds whose parents want it, and is committed to staged targets for provision for 3 year olds thereafter. Local education authorities (LEAs), in partnership with private and voluntary providers, have drawn up 'early years development plans' for securing these objectives. The plans are designed to show how co-operation between private nurseries, playgroups and schools can best serve the interests of children and their parents. In July 1998 the Government announced that there would be an extra 190,000 nursery places for 3 year olds in England by 2002. The same year the Government announced the establishment of a new UK-wide programme to co-ordinate nursery education, childcare, family learning and primary healthcare initiatives for children from birth to the age of three. The 'Sure Start' programme had funding of L 540 million over three years.

Primary Schools

Compulsory education in infant primary schools or departments; at the age of 7 many pupils transfer to separate junior primary schools or departments. The usual age for transfer from primary to secondary school is 11 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and 12 in Scotland. Some LEAs in England have first schools for pupils aged 5 to 8, 9 or 10, and middle schools for age-ranges between 8 and 14.

It is Government policy to reduce the size of primary school classes for 5, 6 and 7 year olds to 30 or below by September 2001 at the latest. LEAs must draw up plans, in partnership with headteachers, school governors and parents, showing how smaller classes can be secured in their areas.

Secondary Schools

The majority of state secondary school pupils in England and Wales attend comprehensive schools. These largely take pupils without reference to ability or aptitude, providing a wide range of secondary education for all or most of the children in a district. Schools include those taking the 11 to 18 age-range, middle schools (8 to 14), and schools with an age-range of 11 or 12 to 16. Most other state-educated children in England attend grammar or secondary modern schools, to which they are allocated after selection procedures at the age of 11.

Scottish secondary education is non-selective, consisting of comprehensive schools covering the age-range 12 to 18.

In Northern Ireland secondary education is organised largely along selective lines, with grammar schools admitting pupils on the basis of tests in English, maths and science. Most pupils attend non-grammar secondary schools.

Specialist Schools

The specialist schools programme in England was launched in 1993. Specialist schools are state secondary schools specialising in technology, science and mathematics; modern foreign languages, sport, or the arts – in addition to providing the full National Curriculum. A specialist school must have the backing of private sector sponsors if it wishes to become specialised. Capital and annual grants are available from public funds to complement business sponsorship.

The Government has stated its commitment to extending the specialist schools programme, which it believes will promote diversity and excellence in secondary education. In June 1998 it announced that an additional 51 schools would be joining the programme and that 10 specialist schools would form a pilot group of masterclass providers for the most able pupils in their communities. From September 1998 there will be 330 designated specialist schools in England, including 227 technology colleges, 58 language colleges, and 26 sports and 19 arts colleges.

II. Read the texts again and decide whether the following statements are *True* or *False*, according to the texts.

1. Compulsory schooling comprises 10 years of study (5-15 year-olds).
2. The Department for Education and Employment is in charge of providing education in all state schools in Britain.
3. Funds are allocated to schools on the basis of pupil numbers.
4. The majority of state secondary school pupils attend fee-paying schools.
5. At present there are four main types of state school: 1) county schools; 2) voluntary schools; 3) aided and 4) controlled schools.
6. 5 to 11 year-old pupils are to study such subjects as English, mathematics, science, information technology and religious education, as well as design and technology, geography, history, physical education, art, music and a modern foreign language.
7. Parents are entitled to withdraw their children from religious and sex education classes.
8. Pupils are tested at 7, 11 and 16 in the core curriculum subjects.
9. At 16, after completing a course of study at a state secondary school all pupils are to take GCSE examinations.

10. There is no state control of the curriculum and qualifications available to learners.
11. The Government is concerned about the expansion of pre-school education.
12. The co-operation between headteachers, school governors and parents is of considerable importance.
13. The education in Britain is mostly selective.
14. Specialist schools provide pupils with education only in some particular areas.
15. Extending the specialist schools programme will definitely promote diversity and excellence in secondary education.

III. In pairs, discuss the following points:

a) Why are parents entitled to withdraw their children from sex and religious education classes?

b) Why is such a lot of attention paid to pupils' testing and assessment?

b) Who meets the costs of education in Britain?

c) What aims are pursued in education policy?

d) What are the provisions of the Comprehensive Spending Review?

e) What are the core subjects according to the National Curriculum?

f) Do the subjects taught in British secondary schools differ from those taught in Russia?

g) What are 'early years development plans' designed for?

h) Why does the Government aim at reducing the size of primary school classes?

i) Why do you think such a wide range of schools is available to pupils in Britain? Is the choice wider in Russia?

IV. Write 5 false statements about the text. Ask another student to correct them.

V. Compare the systems of secondary education in Britain and Russia in the form of a report.

VI. Look at the title of the next text. Before reading it try to predict the following:

- What kind of schools do you think city technology colleges are?
- How are they funded?
- What subjects are given priority to?

VII. Now read the text to check your predictions.

City Technology Colleges

There are 15 city technology colleges in England; these are non-fee-paying independent secondary schools created by a partnership of government and business sponsors. The promoters own or lease the schools, employ teachers and other staff, and have made substantial contributions to the costs of building and equipment. Funding for running costs is provided by the Government. The National Curriculum is taught with an emphasis on maths, technology and science.

VIII. Can you think of any equivalents to *city technology colleges* in Russia?

Independent Schools

Fee-paying independent schools providing full-time education for five or more pupils of compulsory school age must register by law with the appropriate government department and are subject to inspection. There are approximately 2,500 independent schools in the UK educating roughly

600,000 pupils of all ages. Many offer academic, music, art and other scholarships, and bursaries to help pupils from poorer families.

Following legislation in 1997, no new entry places are available under the Assisted Places Scheme. The scheme, providing financial assistance from public funds according to parental income, is being phased out in order to channel the money saved into cutting class sizes for all 5, 6 and 7 year olds in state schools.

The Government gives income-related help with fees to pupils at eight music and ballet schools; there are a limited number of scholarships at cathedral choir schools.

Independent schools range from small kindergartens to large day and boarding schools, and from new, and, in some cases, experimental schools to ancient foundations. A number have been established by religious orders and ethnic minorities. Independent schools for older pupils from 11, 12 or 13 to 18 or 19 include about 500 which are often referred to as ‘public schools’.

The Government is encouraging the development of independent/state sector school partnerships in England. In particular it is suggesting that independent schools, as an expression of their charitable status, could offer opportunities for more children by sharing their facilities with the local community and maintained schools.

IX. Based on what you have read, say in what ways independent schools are different to city technology colleges?

X. Retell the text.

Higher Education

A large proportion of young people – about a third in England and Wales and almost half in Scotland – continue in education at a more advanced level

beyond the age of 18. The higher education sector provides a variety of courses up to degree and postgraduate degree level, and carries out research. The main higher education institutions in the UK are[1]:

- 89 universities and 19 colleges and institutes of higher education which have the power to award their own degrees;
- 34 other colleges of higher education, which do not have degree-awarding powers but provide courses leading to degrees validated by universities, and
- the Open University, which provides part-time higher education opportunities through open and distance learning.

Universities

Universities enjoy academic freedom, appoint their own staff, decide which students to admit and award their own degrees. Applications for first degree courses are usually made through the Universities and College Admission Service (UCAS), in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

First degree courses are mainly full-time and usually last three years in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. However, there are some four-year courses, and medical and veterinary courses normally require five years. All traditional first degree courses in Scotland require a minimum of three years' study (or four years to honours level).

Many universities have close links with commerce and industry; some students have a job and attend on a part-time basis. The Government is encouraging universities to co-operate closely with industry on research.

[1] The source of information is "Britain. The Official Year Handbook", 1999.

Life at College and University in the UK

Read the text to add more information to the one in the text above.

The academic year in Britain's universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education is divided into three terms, which usually run from the beginning of October to the middle of December, from the middle of January to the end of March, and from the middle of April to the end of June or the beginning of July.

There are about 90 universities in Britain. The oldest and best-known universities are located in Oxford, Cambridge, London, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Bristol and Birmingham.

Good A-level results in at least two subjects are necessary to get a place at a university. However, good exam passes alone are not enough. Universities choose their students after interviews. For all British citizens a place at a university brings with it a grant from their local education authority. English universities differ greatly from one another. They differ in date of foundation, size, history, tradition, general organization, methods of instruction, way of student life.

After three years of study a university graduate will leave with the Degree of Bachelor of Arts, Science /BA, BSc/**,** Medicine, Law, etc. Later he may continue to take the Master's Degree and then the Doctor's Degree /PhD/. Research is an important feature of university work.

The two intellectual eyes of Britain – Oxford and Cambridge Universities date from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The Scottish universities of St. Andrews, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh date from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

In the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth centuries the so-called Redbrick universities were founded. They include London, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield, and Birmingham.

During the late sixties and early seventies some 20 ‘new’ universities were set up. Sometimes they are called ‘concrete and glass’ universities. Among them are the universities of Sussex, York, East Anglia and some others.

During these years the Government set up thirty Polytechnics. The Polytechnics, like the universities, offer first and higher degrees. Some of them offer full time and sandwich courses. Colleges of Education provide two-year courses in teaching education or sometimes three years if the graduate specialises in some particular subject.

Some of those who decide to leave school at the age of 16 may go to a further education college where they can follow a course in typing, engineering, town planning, cooking or hairdressing, full-time or part-time. Further education colleges have strong ties with commerce and industry.

There is an interesting form of studies which is called the Open University. It is intended for people who study in their own free time and who ‘attend’ lectures by watching television and listening to the radio. They keep in touch by phone and letter with their tutors and attend summer schools. The Open University students have no formal qualifications and would be unable to enter ordinary universities.

Some 80, 000 overseas students study at British universities or further education colleges or train in nursing, law, banking or in industry.

ASSIGNMENTS

I. Give the English equivalents to the following Russian ones:

студент университета; учебный год; семестр; научно-исследовательская работа; собеседование; результаты заключительных экзаменов (для сдавших студентов); результаты экзаменов продвинутого уровня; степень бакалавра искусств, наук; степень магистра искусств, наук; тесные связи с промышленностью; руководитель группы

студентов, направляющий их работу; дневная, вечерне-заочная форма обучения; обучение с правом прохождения производственной практики; посещать лекции; интересная форма обучения; методы обучения; технический ВУЗ; педагогический институт; основывать; учреждать, открывать ун-т; предоставлять двухгодичные курсы; пройти курс обучения по какому-либо предмету; углубленно изучать к-л дисциплину.

II. Ask wh-questions to the text and have your fellow students answer them.

III. In pairs, discuss the following points:

1. the division of the academic year in British Universities;
2. the degrees awarded at Universities;
3. the oldest and best-known universities in Britain;
4. the requirements for the applicants;
5. the expansion of universities;
6. further education colleges;
7. new forms of study besides universities.

The Open University

Read the text in order to find out the following information:

- What kind of institution is the Open University?
- How different is the Open University to a University? Would you like to study at such university or you'd still prefer a traditional university?
- What degrees are awarded to the students? On what basis?

The Open University, financed by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, is a non-residential university offering degree and other courses for adult students of all ages. Teaching is through a combination of

specially produced printed texts, correspondence tuition, television and radio broadcasts, audio/video cassettes and, for some courses, computing and short residential schools. There is a network of study centres for contact with part-time tutors and counsellors, and with fellow students.

Students do not need formal academic qualifications to register for most courses. Its first degrees are the BA (Open) or the BSc (Open), which are general degrees awarded on a system of credits for each course completed. About 200,000 first degrees have been awarded since the University opened in 1970. The University had a programme of higher degree courses in 1998. There are also programmes for professionals in a variety of fields.

I. Skim the advertisement to get a general idea of what it is about

You may be one of the millions who missed out on a university education. You may wish you could have a second chance, either for better career prospects or for the self-satisfaction of achievement. Well, the Open University is just for you.

It's your University – use it

It's an appropriately named institution. It's open to everyone and you don't even need 'O' or 'A' levels. Nor does it make a difference what you do. Housewives, bank managers, bus drivers, pensioners, nurses or shop workers. All are welcome at the OU. The only qualifications needed are that you are 18 and over, live in the UK, have a determination to succeed.

Better qualified – better respected

In the sixteen years since we started some 70,000 people have gained BA degrees from the Open University. More than half of them claim to have achieved a significant career benefit. Practically everyone agrees that the OU

The majority of your course will come through post – specially written, high quality teaching material to help you study at home radio and television are also extensively used and you'll have personal contact with one of more than 5,000 part-time tutors at local study centres. Some courses even have one-week residential summer schools. At the OU we've gained a world-wide reputation for our advanced 'distance teaching' methods.

Secure your place soon

We've already started an important point: anyone may apply to take a degree course at the Open Univer- - sity. But admissions are

experience was rewarding in terms of added confidence, self-discovery and intellectual stimulation.

Choose your subject

The choice of courses is first-class, with over 125 subjects, from science and technology to arts; each lasts from February until November and you commit yourself for only a year at a time.

In order to gain your degree you must obtain six passes or 'full credits', as we call them, in your chosen subject. It is possible to take your degree in three years, but most people choose to spread their studies over five or six years.

The Open University
PO Box 48
MILTON KEYNES, MK7 6AB

based on a first come, first served principle, so the sooner you send your coupon , the more sure you can be of your place.

Return the reply-paid coupon and we will send you our free Guide for applicants. It contains all you need to know about choosing your course, including information on fees. Easy payment methods are available to help with the fees and if you are unemployed or on a low income, grants may be available.

II. Read the advertisement for detail and choose the best alternative for each item:

1. <u>To qualify for enrolment of the Open University you must have</u>

   A) been educated up to the age of eighteen.

   B) been born in the United Kingdom.

   C) an aptitude for study.

   D) a successful career.

2. <u>To gain a degree from the Open University you have to</u>

   A) study for ten months from February to November.

   B) select six subjects from a choice of 125.

   C) obtain six full credits within three years.

   D) choose one subject and gain six passes.

3. <u>If you decide to study at home</u>

   A) you must study an arts course.

B) some of your materials will be audiovisual.

C) you will have to see your tutor once a week.

D) a part-time tutor will write materials for you.

4. Many people have found that an Open University degree gives them

A) an increase in intelligence.

B) a better understanding of people.

C) the possibility of a better job.

D) a greater respect for learning.

5. What should you do if you want to study a single course?

A) send for the Associate Student Programme Guide.

B) return the reply-paid coupon.

C) ask for free Guide for Applicants.

D) write to the Open University, PO Box 48.

III. In pairs, give your opinions in answer to the questions set before the text "The Open University" and in regard to the statements after the advertisement.

Oxbridge

Read the text for general understanding, define the topic and identify the main idea.

Oxford and Cambridge are the oldest and most prestigious universities in Great Britain. They are often called collectively Oxbridge to denote an elitarian education. Both universities are independent. Only very rich and aristocratic families can afford to send their sons and daughters to these universities. Mostly they are public school leavers.

The tutorial is the basic mode of instruction at Oxford and Cambridge, with lectures as optional extras.

The normal length of the degree course is three years, after which the students take the Degree of Bachelor of Arts (B.A.). Some courses, such as languages or medicine, may be one or two years longer. The students may work for other degrees as well. The degrees are awarded at public degree ceremonies. Oxford and Cambridge cling to their traditions, such as the use of Latin at degree ceremonies. Full academic dress is worn at examinations.

Oxford and Cambridge universities consist of a number of colleges. Each college has its name, its coat of arms. Each college is governed by a Master. The larger ones have more than 400 members, the smallest colleges have less than 30. Each college offers teaching in a wide range of subjects. Within the college one will normally find a chapel, a dining hall, a library, rooms for undergraduates, fellows and the Master, and also rooms for teaching purposes.

Oxford is one of the oldest universities in Europe. It is the second largest in Britain, after London. The town of Oxford is first mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in 911 A.D. and it was popular with the early English Kings. The university's earliest charter is dated back to 1213.

There's a great deal of bicycle traffic both in Oxford and Cambridge.

The Cambridge University started during the 13th century and grew until today. Now there are more than thirty colleges.

On the river bank of the Cam willow trees weep their branches into the water. The colleges line the right bank. There are beautiful college gardens with green lawns and lines of tall trees. The oldest college is Peterhouse, which was founded in 1284, and the most recent is Robinson College, which was opened in 1977. The most famous is probably King's College because of its magnificent chapel, the largest and the most beautiful building in Cambridge and the most perfect example left of English fifteenth-century architecture. Its choir of boys and undergraduates is also very well known.

The University was only for men until 1871, when the first women's college was opened. In the 1970s, most colleges opened their doors to both men and women. Almost all colleges are now mixed.

Many great men studied at Cambridge, among them Desiderius Erasmus, the great Dutch scholar, Roger Bacon, the philosopher, Milton, the poet, Oliver Cromwell, the soldier, Newton, the scientist, and Kapitza, the famous Russian physicist.

The universities have over a hundred societies and clubs, enough for every interest one could imagine. Sport is part of students' life at Oxbridge. The most popular sports are rowing and punting.

ASSIGNMENTS

I. Find in the text the English equivalents for the Russian ones:

Консультации, практические занятия с наставником; герб; младший научный работник колледжа или университета (занимается исследованием в какой-либо области); студент университета (обыкн. Оксфордского или Кембриджского); мастер (титул главы некоторых колледжей в Оксфордском или Кембриджском университетах); церемония вручения ученых званий, степеней; парадная форма одежды; устав; обучение; необязательные дисциплины; степень бакалавра; хор мальчиков; смешанное обучение.

II. Find a suitable definition for each word of the left column:

1. Tutorial
2. public school
3. undergraduate
4. fellow
5. master
6. admission

A. a title given by a university or certain colleges to a student who has completed a course of study successfully

B. moving a boat by pushing a long pole against the bottom of a

7. punting
8. society
9. mixed education
10. degree

river.

C. co-educational

D. allowing to enter a college or university.

E. a member of a society connected with some branch of learning in a university or college.

F. the head of a college (usu. Oxford and Cambridge).

G. a student who is doing a university course for a bachelor's degree.

H. a club of people with similar aims, interests.

I. a period of instruction given by a tutor.

J. a private fee-paying English secondary school where children usu. live as well as study.

III. Comment on the statements referring to the text. The statements may be completely or partly *true* or *false*.

1. Oxbridge is a collective name of the two most prestigious universities in Great Britain.
2. The basic mode of instruction at Oxford and Cambridge is a lecture.
3. A course usually lasts 4 to 5 years.
4. Oxford and Cambridge universities follow their traditions to the letter.

5. Oxford and Cambridge universities comprise a number of colleges, all of which are similar in the inside and the range of subjects taught.
6. Cambridge is older than Oxford university.
7. The oldest colleges in Oxford university are All Souls, Christ Church and Magdalen College.
8. The most famous college of Cambridge university is Peterhouse, which was founded in 1284.
9. The colleges in Cambridge have always been co-educational.
10. The two universities do not put great emphasis on any other activities but educational ones.

IV. Discuss the text in pairs or small groups.

OXFORD AND OXFORD UNIVERSITY

I. Study the information about Oxford and Oxford University. Comment on it.

Old Ashmolean

Now the Museum of the History of Science, this resplendent building was designed to show Ellas Ashmoles collection of curiosities.

Radcliffe Camera

This classical rotunda is Oxford's most distinctive building and is now a reading room of the Bodleian.

Martyrs' Memorial

This commemorates the three Protestant martyrs Latimer, Ridley and Cranmer, who were burned at the stake for heresy.

Sheldonian Theatre

The first building Wren designed is the scene of Oxford University's traditional degree giving ceremonies.

Christ Church

Students still eat at long tables in all the college halls. Fellows (professors) sit at the high table and grace is always said in Latin.

Exploring Oxford University

Many of the 36 Colleges which go to make up the university were founded between the 13th and 16th centuries and cluster around the city centre. As scholarship was then the exclusive preserve of the church, the colleges were designed along the lines of monastic buildings but were often surrounded by beautiful gardens. Although most colleges have been altered over the years, many still incorporate a lot of their original features.

All Souls College

Founded in 1438 on the High Street by Henry VI, the chapel on the college's north side has a classic hammerbeam roof, unusual misericords on the choir stalls and 15th-century stained glass.

Christ Church College

The largest of the Oxford colleges, it dates from 1525 when Cardinal Wolsey founded it as an ecclesiastical college to train cardinals. The upper part of the tower in Tom Quad – a rectangular courtyard – was built by Wren in 1682 and is the largest in the city. When its bell, Great Tom, was hung in 1648, the college had 101 students, which is why the bell is rung 101 times at 9:05 p.m., to mark the curfew for students. The old timing is because night falls here five minutes later than at Greenwich. Christ Church has produced 16 British prime ministers in the last 200 years.

Merton College

This is the oldest college (1264) in Oxford. Much of its hall dates from then, including a sturdy decorated door. The chapel choir contains allegorical reliefs representing music, arithmetic, rhetoric and grammar.

Magdalen College

This is the most typical and beautiful Oxford college. Its 15th-century quads in contrasting styles are set in a park by the Cherwell, crossed by Magdalen Bridge. Every May Day, the college choir sings from the top of Magdalen's bell tower (1508) – it is a 16th-century custom to mark the start of summer.

New College

One of the grandest colleges, it was founded by William of Wykeham in 1379 to educate clergy to replace those killed by the Black Death of 1348. Its magnificent chapel on New College Lane, restored in the 19th century, has vigorous 14th- century misericords and El Greco's (1541-1614) famous painting of St. James.

Queen's College

Most of the college buildings date from the 18th century and represent some of the finest work from that period in Oxford. Its superb library was built in 1695 by Henry Aldrich (1647-1710). The front screen with its bell-topped gatehouse is a feature of the High Street.

Trinity College

The oldest part of the college on Broad Street, Durham Quad, is named after the earlier college of 1296 which was incorporated into Trinity in 1555. The late 17th-century chapel has a magnificent reredos and wooden screen.

Corpus Christi College

The college was founded in 1517. The quad's sundial, topped by a pelican – the college symbol – bears an early 17th-century calendar. The chapel has a rare 16th-century lectern.

II. Complete each sentence by filling in each blank.

1. Oxford University comprises ….. colleges.
2. The main sights of Oxford are …… .
3. The largest of the Oxford colleges is …… . .
4. The oldest college in Oxford is …… ; it …….. 1264 .
5. All Souls College was founded in … and is famous for its ……..
6. The symbol of Corpus Christi College is ……..
7. Its magnificent chapel on New College Lane ……
8. Every May Day the college choir at …… College tower marks the start of summer.
9. Christ Church has produced …… in the last 200 years.
10. The chapel of the ….. college has a rare 16th-century …… .

The Letter From Oxford

Read the text and do the assignments after it. Retell the letter.

James writes a letter from Oxford

Part A

Sept. 3rd 1997

I want to tell you about the pleasantest time I have had since I came to England. John, Mr. Priestley's son, invited me to Oxford for a week-end. He's an undergraduate there. He loves Oxford and seems to know all about it. He met me at the station and took me to the 'guest room' at his college where I was to stay during my visit. Then we went up a little narrow stairway to his rooms. The door read, "47 J. Priestley". He has a big study, with a desk,

bookcase, armchair, cupboards, reading lamp, and some pleasant drawings of Oxford on the walls. It looked very comfortable, I must say. He has also a bedroom and a tiny kitchen where he can make tea or coffee if he has friends round. Nearly all the students are on vacation now but we saw a few of them about.

They were wearing black gowns and queer-looking caps. Some of the gowns looked very old and even rather ragged, and I asked John if these students were very poor and couldn't afford new gowns. He laughed and said that undergraduates tried to get old, torn-looking gowns so that people would think they had been in Oxford for years. One student passed us, looking rather worried and wearing a black suit under his gown, a white collar and a white bow-tie. John said they had to wear that dress when they were taking an examination, and that unhappy-looking student was either going to or coming from the examination room.

We went into some of the colleges, through the quadrangle and gardens and into the dining-halls and chapels. The colleges are where the students live and all have dinner together in the big dining-hall.

Most of the halls are wonderful, especially the hall of Christ Church. This is the biggest, at least as far as buildings are concerned, and, perhaps, the most magnificent of the colleges. Its chapel is the Cathedral of Oxford; this is a much older building than the college and had originally been an abbey, the Abbey of St. Frideswide. St. Frideswide is a Saxon saint who died in A.D. 750 and is buried under the floor of the Cathedral.

The college was founded by Cardinal Wolsey in the 16th-century. His hat and his chair are there in the college, but before Wolsey could finish the college he fell from power and died in disgrace and the building was completed by King Henry VIII. All round the hall are portraits of great men who have been members of the college: William Penn (who founded

Pennsylvania), John Wesley (whose writings and teachings became the principles of the Methodist Church), John Locke (an English philosopher), Sir Christopher Wren (an English architect who built many churches in London and the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford) and a great many other famous people.

One of the portraits in Christ Church that interested me much was that of Charles Dodgson, better known as 'Lewis Carroll', the writer of the most delightful of all children's books, *Alice in Wonderland. Alice* belongs to Oxford, for it was told to the little daughter of Liddell, Dean of Christ Church.

ASSIGNMENTS

I. The following dictionary definitions are for words used in the text you've just read. Write the words, phrases from the text next to the appropriate definition.

1. a square yard surrounded by buildings ……
2. a period when universities are closed ……...
3. strange ……
4. a small church used for Christian worship …….
5. a special academic dress worn at examinations and degree-awarding ceremonies ……..
6. to bring together people at your place ……..

II. Finish the sentences, according to the facts in the text.

1. James came to Oxford because ……..
2. The undergraduates tried to get old, torn-looking gowns because ….
4. James liked John's room because ……
5. James saw very few students because ……
6. James was mostly impressed by Christ Church College because …….
7. The portrait of Charles Dodgson interested him much because ……

III. Finish the sentences, according to your interpretation.

1. James found his stay in Oxford the pleasantest time ever since he came to England because ……
2. James liked John's room because ……
3. James found black gowns and caps the students were wearing queer-looking because ……
4. The portrait of Charles Dodgson belongs to Oxford because ……
5. The student that passed James and John was looking unhappy because …….

IV. Discuss your answers with someone else.

Part B

Read the conversation between James and John. What do you think its theme is? You may want to choose more than one answer. Give reasons for your choice(s).

While we were talking, a scholarly-looking man in a cap and gown walked past and smiled at John. As he walked away I said: "Surely he's not an undergraduate."

JOHN: No, that's my tutor.

JAMES: What is a tutor?

JOHN: The tutorial system is one of the ways in which Oxford and Cambridge differ from all the other English universities. Every student has a tutor and as soon as you come to Oxford one of the first things you do is to go and see your tutor. He, more or less, plans your work, suggests the books you should read and sets work for you to do, for example an essay to write. Each week you go to him in his room, perhaps with two or three other students, and he discusses with you the work that you have done, criticises in detail your essay and sets you the next week's work.

JAMES: Does the tutor also give lectures?

JOHN: Yes, he may.

JAMES: But aren't lectures given by professors?

JOHN: Yes, though professors don't give a great many lectures. They are often appointed not so much to do teaching work as to carry on research in their particular subjects.

JAMES: Can you go to any lecture you like, no matter whether it is by a tutor or professor of your college or not?

JOHN: Yes. Lectures are organised not by the colleges but by the university, and so any member of the university may attend, for all students are members of a college and of the university.

JAMES: You said that lectures were "organised by the university". Where is the university?

JOHN: It must seem rather strange to you but there isn't really any university at Oxford as there is, for example, at Manchester or Bristol or Edinburgh. Oxford (like Cambridge) is a collection of colleges, each self-governing and independent. "The University" is merely an administrative body that organises lectures, arranges examinations, gives degrees, etc. The colleges are the real living Oxford and each has its own character and individuality. For example, most of the men at Queen's College come from the North of England, those at Jesus College from Wales. Brasenose has a high reputation for its rugger, Magdalen for its rowing men. But remember that there are students of all kinds in each college: I mean you don't get all science students at one college, all law students at another. Every college has its arts men and its science men, its medical students and its engineers. Every student, of course, follows his own course of study, but he gains a lot from living among those who represent all other branches.

JAMES: I saw in the porch of one college some notices about "Societies"; there seemed to be quite a lot of societies.

JOHN: Yes, there are dozens of them: drama societies, language clubs, philosophy societies, rowing, boxing, cinema clubs – clubs, in fact for almost every activity under the sun. Each society arranges for a leading expert in his subject to come and talk to its members. So in term time you get a regular stream of politicians, musicians, poets, painters, film-producers and so on. In a way I think we probably get more out of talking and listening at these clubs and societies than from any side of university life. The best-known society, I suppose, is the Union, a debating club – a sort of training ground for our future statesmen. The next time you come to Oxford you must come in term time and I'll take you to one of the debates. You'll hear some first-class debating; and if you look round the walls of the Union at the photographs there, you'll see what a number of our greatest statesmen were once "President of the Oxford Union".

JAMES: There's another tutor, I suppose, that man in the gap and gown with those two men in bowler hats behind him.

JOHN: No, he's a proctor. And the two men behind him are "bull-dogs". The proctor's job is to keep discipline, to see to it that students aren't out after midnight, or aren't driving a car without having first received permission from the proctor.

JAMES: What punishment can the proctor give?

JOHN: Students can be fined a sum of money, or, for a very serious offence, they can be expelled.

JAMES: And the 'bull-dogs', what are they for?

JOHN: They are to catch the student if he tries to run away before his name can be taken down.

JAMES: By the way, what are you studying? It's medicine, isn't it? You're going to be a doctor.

JOHN: As a matter of fact, I'm not. That was the idea when I came here, but my interest has always been in language learning and language teaching and so I changed from medicine to modern languages. I'm in my last year now.

JAMES: What do you want to do when you leave Oxford?

JOHN: What should I like more than anything else would be to start a school in Oxford for teaching English to foreign students. And if I could get some Olafs and Friedas there, I should be very happy.

JAMES: I think they'd be very happy too, to study English in Oxford. Well, I wish you luck.

JOHN: Thanks, James.

ASSIGNMENTS

I. Reproduce the situations in which these words and phrases are used in the text:

1) Undergraduate; 2) tutorial system; 3) self-governing; 4) in term time; 5) to be expelled; 6) in due course; 7) research; 8) societies; 9) an offence; 10) 'bull-dogs'; 11) proctor; 12) language learning; 13) to give lectures; 14) to award degrees; 15) cap and gown; 16) to be in one's last year.

II. Answer these questions:

1. What Oxford lecturer wrote a famous book for children?
2. What was the name of the book?
3. What do undergraduates wear for examinations?
4. Why do some undergraduates prefer to buy a ragged gown?
5. What does a tutor do?

6. How many colleges are there at Oxford? How do they differ from one another?
7. Which is the best-known student society?
8. What is the job of a proctor?
9. Why does he have two ‘bull-dogs’ with him?
10. What does John wish to do when he goes down from Oxford?

III. What is the difference between the words or phrases in each of the following pairs? Use each in sentences of your own.

1. an Oxford college; Oxford University.
2. a guest; a host.
3. a quadrangle; a triangle.
4. statesmen; statement.
5. a chapel; a church;

IV. The following is half the conversation between two undergraduates. Gordon has just entered his friend’s room. Can you put in what John’s replies might have been?

Gordon: Hello, John. I just came round to see if you were making coffee.

John: … .

Gordon: Oh, thanks.

John: … .

Gordon: Yes, two lumps. Oh, I see you’re in the middle of an essay.

John: … .

Gordon: You won’t get much sleep tonight then. Nine o’clock is early for a tutorial.

John: … .

Gordon: Mine’s at twelve o’clock on Thursdays.

John: … .

Gordon: Yes, though my tutor does talk rather a lot. It makes me late for lunch.

John: … .

Gordon: You're right. I'm not often late when there's anything to eat or drink.

V. The undergraduate that James passed looked 'rather worried'. He was about to take an examination. Can you describe in three or four sentences your feelings before an examination?

The Continuation of the Letter

Oxford is full of curious old customs. For example, Queen's College was founded in 1341 by Robert de Eglesfield. He must have been a man with a lively imagination as he ordered the college to be governed by a head of the college and twelve Fellows (in memory of Christ and the Twelve Disciples), and he said that on New Year's Day each year, the bursar should present each Fellow with a needle and thread of coloured silk saying, "Take this and be thrifty". The needle and thread was a pun on his name, Eglesfield. (The French aiguille = needle; fil = thread). That was 600 years ago. And still, though Eglesfield's buildings were replaced in the 17th century by the present college, every New Year's Day the bursar presents each Fellow with a needle and thread and says, "Take this and be thrifty".

In that same college, too, every Christmas Day a roast boar's head is carried, with great ceremony, to the high table where the dons sit. The story of this custom goes back to the early years of the 16th century and celebrates the fight between a student of the college and a wild boar on the hills near the college. The student killed the boar by thrusting down its throat a copy of Aristotle that he happened to be reading at the time.

In Pembroke College you can see Dr. Johnson's blue and white tea-pot (it holds about two quarts, for Johnson was a great tea-drinker and on one of his visits to Oxford his host poured out for him eighteen cups of tea!)

Here, Roger Bacon laid the foundations of experimental science in the 13th century; here every night you can hear the sound of 'Great Tom', the big bell in Tom Tower, the tower that Wren designed for Christ Church. Every night at five past nine the bell is rung 101 times in memory of the 101 students in Christ Church in Henry VIII's time.

In the medieval library of Merton College you can see all the chained books and the old benches just as they were in the 13th century. The reminders of the past are everywhere.

In St. Giles there is the Martyrs' Memorial. Bishop Latimer and Ridley and Cranmer were condemned to death at Oxford in 1555 for their religious beliefs and were burned at the stake in this place. As the fire was being lighted Latimer said, "We shall this day light such a candle, by God's Grace, in England as I trust shall never be put out."

John pointed out two church towers. "That is the tower of St. Martin's and that of St. Mary's. In the 14th century there were constant quarrels between the men of Oxford and the students of the University, as they said, between the 'town' and the 'gown', and on St. Scholastica's Day (February 10th), 1354 a quarrel broke out in an inn between some students and some townsmen. Others joined in, and soon the bells of St. Martin's Church (the church of the townsmen) were ringing to gather the townsmen together. The Chancellor (that is the head of the University) tried to stop the fighting but he was shot at and had to retreat. So the bells of St. Mary's Church (the church of the students) were rung to collect the students together, and they shot at the townsmen with bows and arrows. Two thousand people from the countryside round Oxford came into the city to help the townsmen; colleges were attacked

and the battle went on for three days. The King, Edward III, was at Woodstock, about eight miles from Oxford, and he ordered the Chancellor of the University and the Mayor of Oxford to appear before him. He decided that the townspeople had been in the wrong and ordered the Mayor and the chief citizens of Oxford to attend the Church of St. Mary's every St. Scholastica's Day for a service in memory of the students who had been killed in the fighting, and to pay an offering of forty pence. And for nearly 500 years, every St. Scholastica's Day, the Mayor and the chief citizens of Oxford went to St. Mary's Church and paid the forty pence."

Another important custom and event in Oxford is St. Giles' Fair. This has taken place at the beginning of September ever since the 12th century. It's great fun while it lasts.

But Oxford doesn't live only in the past; you feel there is a sense of continuity all through its history. To go from Magdalen Bridge, where the lovely Tower stands like a guardian of the city, through Radcliffe Square, the heart of the University, past the great Bodleian Library (to which a copy of every book published in Great Britain has to be sent) and on to the fine new science buildings of the Clarendon Laboratories. I felt very strongly this mingling of old and new when we visited New College, which, in spite of its name, is one of the oldest colleges. Here, against a background of Gothic stonework, is the gigantic statue of Lazarus, carved by Epstein only a few years ago.

The beauty of the buildings and the peace of the colleges and the loveliness of the gardens like St. John's and Worcester, these are the things I shall never forget. There's a lot more I'd like to tell you about Oxford, but that must wait until I see you again.

Love to you all, James.

ASSIGNMENTS

I. The following dictionary definitions are for words used in the text you've just read. Write the words, phrases from the text next to the appropriate definition.

1. using money or goods carefully and wisely……
2. the man who is in charge of the money matters of the college…….
3. a university teacher, esp. at Oxford and Cambridge ……
4. the ability to form a picture or idea in the mind ……
5. an important or interesting happening……
6. of the period in history between about AD 1100 and 1500……
7. something that makes you remember the past ……
8. a place of outdoor entertainment, with large machines to ride on and other amusements……
9. an amusing use of a word or phrase that has two meanings…….
10. to push forcefully and suddenly ……
11. to cause the fire to stop burning …….
12. to state the punishment of death ……

II. Discuss the answers to these questions:

1. Why does James say that Robert de Eglesfield must have had a lively imagination?
2. What work does a bursar of a college do?
3. Do you believe the story of the boar and Aristotle? Give a reason for your answer.
4. What famous man (he made the first great English dictionary) came from Pembroke College?
5. Why does Great Tom sound 101 times every night?
6. What does a quarrel between "town" and "gown" mean?
7. Which road is closed to traffic early in September? Why?

III. Tell the story of Oxford's curious old customs. Which of them is the most curious one, in your opinion?

Role Play

Act out the following scenes:

'Primary school'

Situation: In a small village of Hindworth there's a primary school. There are only 20 pupils and one teacher, so the County Council wants to close the school. The villagers are protesting.

The class should be divided into several groups:

1st group (5-6 people) – villagers; the teacher; parents of schoolboys and girls; reporter from 'Sunday Express'.

2nd group (4-5 people) – authorities: Chairman of the County Council; County Education officer; the headmaster of the primary school; vicar of Hindworth;

Task: it should be encouraged to reach a compromise so that a decision can be made as to the future of the school.

1. "Secondary education"

Situation: A group of schoolteachers from Russia arrive in England. They meet with their English colleagues, ask them questions about the system of secondary education and answer the questions about the system of secondary education in Russia.

Task: Arrange a well-grounded discussion about the types of secondary schools, the subjects taught, the percentage of schoolchildren attending private schools, the problems on this stage of education, pros and cons of the existence of grammar schools, eleven plus exam.

2. “Higher education in Britain and Russia”

Situation: A group of English university teachers and professors come to Russia to take part in the seminar on *the Student Life and modes of instruction at universities in Britain and Russia.*

Task: Arrange a well-grounded discussion about the system of higher education in Britain and compare it with the one in Russia.

3. “Oxbridge”

Situation: You are not satisfied with the education you’re getting in Russia and would like to study either at Oxford or Cambridge. But you can’t make up your mind. Besides, you don’t know that much about either of the two universities to make the final decision. All you know about them is that they are the oldest and most prestigious universities in Britain. So you discuss the matter with your teachers, friends and acquaintances. They give you the necessary information which enables you to choose Cambridge.

Task: Arrange a well-grounded discussion about the system of higher education in Britain and compare it with the one in Russia.

4. “The Open University”

Situation: You take part in the international conference devoted to different forms of study. Some of you are education authorities, others are adult learners who gained their degrees in a chosen subject after completing a number of courses at the Open University. Among the participants of the discussion there are advocates as well as opponents of such form of getting higher education.

Task: Arrange a well-grounded discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of distance learning.

5. "Oxford"

Situation: you'd like to study at Oxford University. At first you want to visit this University city and try to find out more information about the colleges and the life in the city.

You talk the matter over with your friends, relatives, teachers and education authorities at your university.

You also get in touch with the education authorities at Oxford.

Eventually you arrive at a certain decision.

Task: Discuss with different people your opinion about Oxford.

PART II

EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

As might be expected, educational institutions in the United States reflect the nation's basic values, especially the ideal of equality of opportunity. From the beginning, when Americans established their basic system of public schools in 1825, they reaffirmed the principle of equality of opportunity by making schools open to all classes of Americans and financing these by taxes collected from all citizens. By 1860, free public elementary schools (grades 1-8) were firmly established in the United States.

American public education had a strong practical content which included the teaching of vocational skills and the duties of citizenship. Thus, public education not only gave Americans the desire to better themselves, but it also gave them the practical tools to do so. During the next century and a half, public schools in the United States were expanded to include secondary or high schools (grades 9-12) and colleges and universities with both undergraduate and graduate studies.

Control of Education

There are two significant influences on American education which give it its present character, its size, and its great variety at all levels. The first influence is legal, or governmental. The second is cultural.

The United States does not have a national system of education. Education is considered to be a matter for the people of each state. Although there is a federal Department of Education, its function is merely to gather information, to advise, and to help finance certain educational programs. Education, Americans say, is "a national concern, a state responsibility, and a local function." Since the Constitution does not state that education is a responsibility of the federal government, all educational matters are left to the individual states. As a result, each of the 50 state legislatures is free to determine its own system for its own public schools. Each sets whatever basic, minimal requirements for teaching and teachers it judges to be appropriate.

In turn, however, state constitutions give the actual administrative control of the public schools to the local communities. There are some 15,300 school districts within the 50 states. School boards made up of individual citizens elected from each community oversee the schools in each district. They, not the state, set school policy and actually decide what is to be taught.

There is, then, a very large amount of local control. In 1990, about 47 percent of the funds for elementary and secondary education came from state sources, about 46 percent from local funds, and only about 6 percent from the federal government. Here, too, there are great differences among the states. In New Hampshire, more than 85 percent of the costs were paid from local funds, while in Hawaii the state paid more than 85 of the costs. Yet overall,

the public schools are very much community schools. They must have local public support, because citizens vote directly on how much they want to pay for school taxes. They must represent local wishes and educational interests, as those who administer the schools are elected by the community. The question whether private schools, church-supported or not, should receive public money is still hotly debated in the U.S. Two 1985 Supreme Court decisions prohibited public school teachers from going into private religious schools to teach courses with funds supplied by public sources.

There are a great many city or county-owned colleges and universities, and many others are supported by the states. In general, colleges and universities, whether state or private, are quite free to determine their own individual standards, admissions, and graduation requirements. Both schools and universities have self-governing groups, associations or boards which "accredit," that is, certify schools and universities as meeting certain minimum standards. Yet membership in such groups is voluntary and they have no official, governmental status.

The major result of this unusual situation is that there is an enormous amount of variety and flexibility in elementary, secondary, and higher (university) education throughout the nation. For example, although all states today require that children attend school until a certain age, this age varies from 14 to 18 years. Or, as another example, in about two-thirds of the states, local schools are free to choose any teaching materials or textbooks which they think are appropriate. In the remaining states, only such teaching materials may be used in public schools which have been approved by the state boards of education. Some universities are virtually free to residents of the state, with only token fees. Others are expensive, especially for out-of-state students, with tuition fees in the thousands of dollars each year. Some

school systems are, like their communities, extremely conservative, some very progressive and liberal. These and other substantial differences must always be considered when describing American schools: the key word is diversity.

Because local and state taxes support the public schools, there are also significant differences in the quality of education. Communities and states that are able or willing to pay more for schools, buildings, materials, and teachers almost always have better educational systems than those that cannot or will not. Thus, for example, the average expenditure per pupil for elementary and secondary education in the U.S. was $5,208 in 1991. But ten states including New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Alaska, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Maryland, and Delaware spent over $6,000 per pupil, and the first three over $8.400. On the other hand, ten states spent less than $4,000 per student. The average salary of a secondary school teacher in 1991 was $33,800. But teachers in South Dakota made an average of only $23,000, those in Arkansas $23,700, and those in Mississippi $25,000. At the same time, teachers in Connecticut had an average salary of $45,000, their colleagues in Alaska $44,100, and in New York $43,700. Attempts by the federal government to provide special funds to poorer areas and school districts have helped to some degree, but the basic differences remain. Also, some Americans are worried that more federal help could lead to less independence and local control of their schools.

Local control of the schools has also meant that there is a great deal of flexibility. There is much opportunity to experiment and to fit programs to a community's wishes and needs. Typically, high schools will offer courses of study which they feel best reflect their students' needs. Students at the same school will commonly be taking courses in different areas. Some might be

following pre-university programs, with an emphasis on those academic subjects required for college work. Others might well be taking coursework which prepares them for vocational or technical positions. Still others might enroll in a general program combining elements of the academic and vocational. The range of courses available in schools throughout the U.S. is enormous, including everything from computers in the elementary schools to car design and construction in the vocational programs. Just about anything, from Portuguese to pole-vaulting, is being taught somewhere by someone.

There have recently been attempts at the federal level to pass laws which would encourage the states to adopt so-called national standards, introduce nation-wide testing, or even accept some type of national curriculum. Such efforts are unlikely to have much immediate effect, for two reasons. First, the diversity among schools and school systems - their freedom to experiment and innovate - is a recognized strength of the American approach. And secondly, the federal government simply does not have the constitutional authority to impose a national system. State-supported universities and colleges also to some degree tailor their courses of study to the needs of the states and the students. States with strong agricultural economies will often support major departments in related sciences. States with strong technological interests, for example California and Massachusetts, will often give much support to technological and scientific research institutions. On the other hand, while a state university in the heart of the Midwest might offer doctoral-level studies in "Dairy Science," it will also offer doctoral programs in, say, Oceanography, Environmental Studies, Chinese, and African Languages.

What makes American education at the secondary level so different from most other countries is that all such programs, whether academic,

technical, or practical, are generally taught under one roof. The American high schools therefore best seen as if it were a combination of all the various types of schools which are usually separated and kept in separate buildings in other countries. As often as possible, too, handicapped children attend the same schools that anyone else does. Although most high school students in America are following different "tracks," or courses of study, Americans feel that they should be kept together as long as possible. They feel that students pursuing different educational goals should learn together and thereby learn to get along together. A common error in comparing American secondary education with that of other countries, therefore, is to compare all American high school students with only the small proportion of students - usually an elite - who attend higher secondary schools in, for instance, European countries. An American high school includes all of the students within the age group, not just those with the highest academic achievement or interests.

Goals of Education

The cultural influences on American education are just as important, but more difficult to define. Basically, Americans have always aimed for equal opportunity in education, regardless of social class, national origin, or racial or ethnic group. A high general level of education has always been seen as a necessity in this democratic society. Education in America has also traditionally served the goal of bringing people together, that is, of "Americanization." Schools in the U.S. served (and still serve) to bring together the hundreds of various cultural and linguistic groups, religions, and social and political backgrounds represented by the millions and millions of immigrants.

For the past several decades, nonetheless, public policy and legal decisions have increasingly emphasized special rights for ethnic and linguistic minorities in the area of education. For example, the Bilingual Education Act as well as recent court decisions have meant that children whose first language is not English must be taught in their mother tongue, be it Spanish, Navajo, or Cantonese. One result is that several million students with limited ability to speak English receive special help each year. Another is that around 80 languages are being used for instruction in American schools.

The view that education should help lessen differences in social background as well as those of ethnic or racial origin was and is widely accepted. This explains some of the special characteristics of the American system of education. One of these, for example, is the "busing" of children. The goal is to have in each school the same proportion of children from various racial or ethnic groups that exist in the city's population overall. Although such programs also have their opponents, they do reflect the predominant American view that education should help to reform society.

Most universities, public and private, also actively support this goal of "democratic diversity" and demonstrate it in selecting their students. In 1991 at the University of California at Berkeley, for example, the freshman (first-year) class was two-thirds minority students, 11 percent of them African Americans. In achieving this ethnic diversity, Berkeley turned away 2,500 white and Asian students who had "straight-A" averages. Since this involved discriminating against a successful minority, it gave rise to considerable controversy. In the same year, the entering class at Harvard University was one-third minorities, with over 8 percent Blacks. Similarly, many colleges which were historically Black - originally founded to give more opportunity to African Americans not allowed into "white" universities - are today

seeking students from all ethnic groups. But largely, education has been seen as a way of bettering oneself," of "rising in the world," as a fundamental part of the American Dream. Thus the millions of immigrants coming to America often tied their hopes for a better life to a good education for themselves and, most importantly, for their children. The social and economic mobility of Americans, which has so often been commented on by foreign observers, comes largely from the easy access to education that most Americans have enjoyed. The first step up - whether the ultimate goal was money, status, power, or simply knowledge - usually started at the school door.

Higher Education

The American ideal of mass education for all is matched by an awareness that America also needs highly trained specialists. In higher education, therefore, and especially at the graduate schools (those following the first four years of college), the U.S. has an extremely competitive and highly selective system. This advanced university system has become widely imitated internationally, and it is also the one most sought after by foreign students. Of the 438,000 foreign students enrolled in institutions of higher education in the United States in the 1992/93 academic year, 44 percent were enrolled in graduate programs.

While the American education system might put off selecting students until much later than do other systems, it does nonetheless select. And it becomes increasingly selective the higher the level. Moreover, because each university generally sets its own admission standards, the best universities are also the most difficult to get into.

Some universities are very selective even at the undergraduate or beginning levels. In 1991, for example, some 13,500 individuals sought

admission to Stanford University, a private university south of San Francisco. Because these individuals must pay a fee to even apply for admission, these were "serious" applications. Of that number, only 2,700 (20 percent) were admitted for the first year of study. It is interesting to note that the great majority of those who were accepted had attended public - not private - schools. Many state-supported universities also have fairly rigid admission requirements. The University of California at Berkeley, for example, admitted only 40 percent of all qualified applicants in 1991. For Harvard, the figure is 17.2 percent (1991). Admission to law or medical schools and other graduate programs has always been highly selective.. It is true, as often stated, that children who wish someday to go to one of the better universities start working for this goal in elementary school.

Needless to say, those children who have attended better schools, or who come from families with better educated parents, often have an advantage over those who don't. This remains a problem in the U.S., where equality of opportunity is a central cultural goal. Not surprisingly, the members of racial minorities are the most deprived in this respect - with the notable exception of the Asian-Americans.

In 1990, for instance, 23 percent of all Americans 25 years and older had completed four years of college or more. However, the figure for Blacks was 12 percent and for Hispanics 10 percent. Compared with the figures from 1970, when the national average was only 10.7 percent (with 11.3 percent for whites, 4.4 percent for Blacks, and 7.6 percent for students of Hispanic origin), this does reveal a considerable improvement within two decades. The number of students who fail to complete high school, too, is much larger among minority groups. The national average of all 14 to 24-year-olds who did not graduate from high school was 10.5 percent in 1991. For white

students it was 10.5 percent, for Blacks 11.3 percent, and for Hispanics the figure was as much as 29.5 percent. Yet, it is still a fact today, as the BBC commentator Alistair Cooke pointed out in 1972, that "a Black boy has a better chance of going to college here than practically any boy in Western Europe." Today it would also be true of a Black girl.

Academic Degrees Conferred by Sex (in 1,000s)

	Bachelor's degrees		*Master's degrees*		*Doctor's degrees*	
Year	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
1960	224.5	140.6	57.8	26.8	9.5	1.1
1970	475.6	364.1	138.1	92.3	27.5	4.6
1980	469.9	465.2	147.0	148.7	22.7	10.2
1990	504.0	590.5	156.5	180.7	24.7	14.5

Source: Digest of Education Statistics 1993, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics.

The educational level is still relatively lower for women than for men. While 24.5 percent of male Americans had four years of college or more in 1989, only 18 percent of women had. But as indicated in the table above, there have been some recent improvement

Elementary and Secondary Education

Because of the great variety of schools and colleges and the many differences among them, no one institution can be singled out as typical or even representative. Yet there are enough basic similarities in structure among the various schools and systems to permit some general comments.

Most schools start at the kindergarten level. There are some school districts that do not have this beginning phase, and others which have an additional "preschool" one. There are almost always required subjects at each level. In some areas and at more advanced levels, students can choose some subjects. Pupils who do not do well often have to repeat courses, or have to have special tutoring, usually done in and by the schools. Many schools also support summer classes, where students can make up for failed courses or even take extra courses.

In addition to bilingual and bicultural education programs, many schools have special pro- grams for those with learning and reading difficulties. These and other programs repeat the emphasis of American education on trying to increase equality of opportunity. They also attempt to integrate students with varying abilities and backgrounds into an educational system shared by all. At the same time, many high school students are given special advanced coursework in mathematics and the sciences. Nationwide talent searches for minority group children with special abilities and academic promise began on a large scale in the 1960s. These programs have helped to bring more minority children into advanced levels of university education and into the professions.

Like schools in Britain and other English- speaking countries, those in the U.S. have also always stressed "character" or "social skills" through extracurricular activities, including organized sports. Because most schools start at around 8 o'clock every morning and classes often do not finish until 3 or 4 o'clock in the afternoon, such activities mean that many students do not return home until the early evening. There is usually a very broad range of extracurricular activities available. Most schools, for instance, publish their own student newspapers, and some have their own radio stations. Almost all

have student orchestras, bands, and choirs, which give public performances. There are theater and drama groups, chess and debating clubs, Latin, French, Spanish, or German clubs, groups which meet after school to discuss computers, or chemistry, or amateur radio, or the raising of prize horses and cows. Students can learn flying, skin-diving, and mountain-climbing. They can act as volunteers in hospitals and homes for the aged and do other public-service work.

Many different sports are also available, and most schools share their facilities - swimming pools, tennis courts, tracks, and stadiums - with the public. Many sports that in other countries are normally offered by private clubs are available to students at no cost in American schools. Often the students themselves organize and support school activities and raise money through car washes, baby-sitting, bake sales, or by mowing lawns. Parents and local businesses often also help a group that, for example, has a chance to go to a state music competition, to compete in some sports championship, or take a camping trip. Such activities not only give pupils a chance to be together outside of normal classes, they also help develop a feeling of "school spirit" among the students and in the community.

Standards of Education

Those who believe that American schools are more play than work overlook an important fact: a high school diploma is not a ticket that allows someone to automatically enter a university. Standardized examinations play a decisive role at almost every level of education, especially in the admission to colleges and universities. Students who wish to go to a good university but only took high school courses that were a "snap," or who spent too much time

on extracurricular activities, will have to compete with those who worked hard and took demanding courses.

There are two widely used and nationally- administered standardized tests for high school students who wish to attend a college or university. One is the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test), which attempts to measure aptitudes in verbal and mathematical fields necessary for college work. The other is the ACT (American College Testing program), which attempts to measure skills in English, mathematics, and the social and natural sciences. Both tests are given at specific dates and locations throughout the U.S. by non-governmental organizations. The tests are used by universities as standards for comparison, but are not in any way "official."

Each year, the SAT is taken by some two million high school students. One million of these students are in their last year of high school. Another million are in their next-to-last year. The ACT, more commonly used in the western part of the U.S., is taken each year by another million high school students. With so many different types of high schools and programs, with so many differences in subjects and standards, these tests provide common, nationwide measuring sticks. Many universities publish the average scores achieved on these tests by the students they admit. This indicates the "quality" or level of ability expected of those who apply.

Similar testing programs exist at higher levels, as well. Someone who has already finished four years of university and wishes to go to a law or medical school is also required to take standardized tests. These tests have been agreed upon by the various law and medical schools and are administered nationwide at scheduled times. Like the SAT or ACT, these tests are not official or governmentally controlled. Other examinations, however,

are official and usually quite difficult. For example, even after someone has studied for many years and earned a medical degree from a university, this still does not mean that he or she can begin to practice in the U.S. The individual states require still further examinations.

Other pressures also operate at the university level. Most universities require mid-semester and final (end-of-semester) examinations. It is possible, as a great many students have learned, to "flunk out" of a university, that is to be asked to leave because of poor grades. And most students who have scholarships must maintain a certain grade average to keep their scholarships. Since tuition fees alone can be rather high (ranging from some $20,000 for an academic year at Harvard, Yale or Stanford to under $1,000 at small public institutions) at most colleges and universities, a large number of students hold jobs besides studying. These part-time jobs may be either "on camps" (in the dormitories, cafeterias, students services, in research, and in teaching and tutoring jobs) or "off campus" (with local firms and businesses, in offices, etc.). In this way, for example, more than half of all students at Stanford University earn a significant part of their college expenses during the school year. In addition, there are work-study programs at a number of universities, and financial assistance programs which are provided by the states and the federal government. At Michigan State University, for instance, 50 percent of all students receive some form of financial aid through the university, and 85 percent of undergraduate students worked part-time on campus during the academic year 1991-92. At Harvard, 74 percent of beginning students ("freshmen") and 61 percent of continuing students received financial aid in the 1991 -92 academic year. The average award for the 66 percent of beginning students receiving aid at Stanford was $13,600 per year. Students who must work as well as study are the rule rather than the exception.

Students also cannot simply move from one university to another, or trade places with other students. Before changing to another university, students must first have been accepted by the new university and have met that university's admission requirements.

Adult and Continuing Education

The concept of continuing (or lifelong) education is of great importance to Americans. In 1991, 57 million Americans 17 years and older furthered their education through participation in part-time instruction, taking courses in universities, colleges, professional associations, government organizations or even churches and synagogues. Most participants in continuing or adult education have a practical goal: they want to update and upgrade their job skills. As a result of economic changes and the rapid advance of the "information age," the necessity to acquire new occupational skills has increased. Adult education thus fills a need of many Americans who want to improve their chances in a changing job market. This is one explanation for the continuing growth of adult education classes over the past several years. Of course, not all people who take courses in adult education do this for job-related purposes. Many simply want to broaden their knowledge or learn something they would enjoy doing such as print-making, dancing, or photography.

Continuing education courses are provided mainly by community or junior colleges and mostly take place in the evenings. The types of courses adults enroll in range from hobby and recreational activities to highly specialized technical skills. Courses in business, health care and health sciences, engineering, and education are most popular. Most of these courses are taken by employees because the employer provided major support for educational programs, either by paying part of the fees, giving time off, or

providing other incentives. While some 50 percent of all people in adult education are enrolled in programs sponsored by educational institutions, about 15 percent were sponsored directly by business and industry. Over 80 percent of all companies today conduct their own training programs. Many large corporations offer complete degree programs, and some even support their own technical and business colleges and universities. In the 1980s about 5 million students took industry-sponsored university programs and roughly twice that number were involved in corporate education of some kind. A great many universities and colleges, public and private, also admit part-time students to their programs. Many offer evening courses so those who work can attend, and most institutions have summer semesters, as well. This way many American are able to earn a university degree, bit by bit, and year by year. State universities have long "taken education to the people" by setting up extension campuses in small towns, or largely rural areas. Therefore, someone at home in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, for example, will be able to take courses taught by professors from the University of Wisconsin's main campus in Madison.

Reform and Progress

A major conflict has always existed between two goals of American education. One is the comprehensive, egalitarian education with the goal of providing equal opportunity. The other is the highly selective educational emphasis that aims at excellence and the training of academic and scientific elites. Some Americans feel that more money and efforts should be spent on improving comprehensive education. Others think that more money should be provided for increasing scientific knowledge and maintaining America's position in technology and research. And some people, of course, demand that more money be spent on both.

As a result, better training and payment for teachers has been advocated and more stress has been placed on academic subjects. But striking a balance between a comprehensive, egalitarian education and one of specialization and excellence has always been a difficult task, and is likely to remain so.

Schools and universities have also been asked to do more and more to help with, or even cure, certain social and economic problems, from the effects of divorce to drug problems, from learning disabilities to malnutrition. Most school systems not only have lunch rooms or cafeterias, they also offer to give free or low-cost meals, sometimes including breakfast, to needy pupils. They also employ psychologists, nurses, staff trained to teach the handicapped, reading specialists, and academic as well as guidance and employment counselors. Because of their traditional ties with the communities, schools are expected to be involved in many such areas. There is a growing belief among some Americans that the public schools cannot really handle all such social problems, even if enough money were available where it is most needed.

Summing up results is extremely difficult. There are, for instance, literally thousands of special programs and hundreds of experimental schools across the nation. School "choice" approaches - allowing parents more freedom in determining which public, or, in some cases, private schools their children can attend - have been started in many districts. And, as another example, many areas have started "magnet" schools. These offer special curricula, perhaps an emphasis on science, mathematics, or even dance, and attract, and motivate, students.

Given America's history and that of its people, their many backgrounds, needs, and desires, the fact that American education is sensitive to its weaknesses (and aware of its strengths) speaks well for the future.

(From *"American life and institutions"*)

ASSIGNMENTS

FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH THE CORRECT WORD FROM THE LIST:

Elective, tuition, major, diploma, high school, elementary school, semester, school, alumnus, freshman, instruction, curriculum, quota, syllabus, credit, graduate school, session

1. Either of the two periods into which a year at school, college or university is divided is called _____. 2. The part of a year or a day during which a school holds classes is called_____. 3. A department that teaches a particular subject at an American university is called_____. 4. A secondary school that usually includes grades 9 or 10 through 12 is called_____. 5. An optional academic course or subject is called_____. 6. A school attended for the first six to eight years of a child's formal education is called _____. 7. A part of the course completed by a student is called _____. 8. A male graduate of a school, college or university is called_____. 9. One can earn a master's degree at _____ which follows the first four years of college. 10. A first–year student of a U.S. high school or college is called _____. 11. The act or practice of teaching or educating is called _____. 12. All the courses of study offered in a school, college or university form_____. 13. A field of study chosen as an academic specialty is called_____. 14. An arrangement of subjects for a particular course of

studies is called_____. 15. An official paper showing that a person has successfully finished a course of studies is called_____. 16. The money students pay for instruction at a private school or college is called _____. 17. In order to ensure that a certain number of minority people will be admitted to a professional school, the school may set _____.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What are the main things that influence American education?

2. Why do Americans call education " a national concern, state responsibility, and a local function"?

3. In what way are schools funded?

4. The author maintains that the key word in describing the American school system is diversity. What reasons does he provide to support this idea?

5. Why are the attempts of the federal government to introduce a national curriculum unlikely to bring any results?

6. What types of coursework do students take at school?

7. What are the main goals of American educational system?

8. In what way are the rights of ethnic and minority groups emphasized?

9. What are the reasons for the social and economic mobility of Americans as viewed by the author?

10. According to the author, a lot of American universities have rigid admission requirements. What examples can prove it?

11. What do standardized tests for high school students measure?

12. In what way are the tests administered?

13. What examinations do the universities require?

14. In what way do the students cover a part of their college expenses?

15. In what way are continuing education courses are provided?

16. What is understood by taking education to people?

17. According to the author, American educational goals are controversial. Do you agree with it? Give your reasons.

18. In what way are American and British school systems different?

EXPLORING IDEAS

1. What do you think should be taught in public high schools? What should be priorities? Read the following list of areas which are covered in American schools and decide which are the most important. Provide your arguments.

a) Teaching students how to think

b) Developing students' moral and ethical character

c) Developing students' appreciation of art, music, and other cultural pursuits

d) Preparing students who do not go to college for a job or career after graduation

e) Preparing students for college

2. How important is college education, from your point of view? Who should attend college?

3. Why do Americans put stress on extracurricular activities? In what nonacademic clubs and activities did you participate when at school?

EXPLAIN THE MEANING OF THE FOLLOWING WORDS AND COLLOCATIONS:

A community school, to accredit a school or a university, vocational/academic courses, a scholar, diversity, busing of children, to flunk out of a university, academic subjects

GIVE THE ENGLISH EQUIVALENTS FOR:

символическая плата за обучение, средний балл, полученный на экзамене, обучение ведется на 80 языках, внеаудиторные занятия, первокурсник, начальная школа, перевестись в другой университет, совмещать учебу с работой в университетском городке или вне его, устанавливать собственные правила приема, подать заявление в Стенфордский университет, открывать филиалы вуза в небольших городах, получить ученую степень, курс обучения, ведущий к получению степени доктора наук

PARAPHRASE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES:

Most students who have scholarships must maintain a certain grade average to keep their scholarships. A lot of high school students take demanding courses. The university turned away a student with “straight-A” averages. The SAT and ACT are nationwide measuring sticks. They try to update and upgrade their job skills. The universities tailor their course of study to the needs of the state.

If Schools Could Pick Their Students ...

By SAUL SCHACHTER

Critics of public schools have it all backward: we shouldn't let students pick their schools. We should let schools pick the students.

Let me cite a story - fairly typical among my teacher colleagues - to illustrate my reasoning. A few years ago, a student I'll call "Jeremy" came to our middle school. He was disruptive and abusive to his peers, and he quickly became known throughout school as a troublemaker.
The following year, in seventh grade, Jeremy was in my class. On the second day, the tall, lanky 12-year- old let loose with a fusillade of profanity at the poor little girl to his right. I immediately threw him out of the room. The next morning I found a scathing letter on my desk from Jeremy's mother. In it she claimed I'd expelled her son because he "didn't have a pencil for class." Obviously, there was a communication problem here. A meeting was set up, the record was straightened out and the year went on more or less uneventfully.

In eighth grade, I heard, Jeremy continued to lie and be disrespectful. A couple of weeks after he graduated from our school, Jeremy's dad called me at home while I was having lunch. "We want to send Jeremy to a private high school. Could you write a recommendation?" I almost choked on my cucumber.

A recommendation? After all the grief he'd put me and my colleagues through? "He liked you," the father said quietly. And, in a way, I believed him. Jeremy did eventually settle down a bit in my class. His father probably

asked me to write a recommendation because I was the only teacher he had a chance of persuading.

I grudgingly agreed, and a few hours later Jeremy and his parents were on my doorstep. They were on their way to Jeremy's interview. "Oh, Mr. Schachter!" the mother cooed. "Thank you so much for writing this letter for Jeremy." This was from the woman who the year before had wanted my head for daring to discipline her child. Smiling wanly, I promised, "I'll do what I can." Jeremy's dad handed me the school's questionnaire, and off they went.

I curled up in my big chair and looked over the categories from which I was to mark Jeremy from "outstanding" to "poor." "Performance as a student": I circled fair. "Scholastic ability"- fair. And then I paused. Uh-oh. "Behaviour," "Respect for others" and "Emotional stability". I looked up and down the form, but, alas, there was no "You've got to be kidding" column.

I read on. "Has any punitive action ever been taken against this student?" (I wanted to write, "On a daily basis? Hourly?") "Does the student have any exceptional abilities?" ("Yes, the ability to infuriate anyone he comes in contact with.")

The next day I called his prospective school and talked to the principal. I explained that I couldn't, in all honesty, write a favorable recommendation for this boy. ."I understand," he said. "I just interviewed him and his parents." Jeremy, he said, showed no interest in the school or its program. His parents, on the other hand, spoke glowingly of his former school. When the principal pointed out the F's and D's on his report card, they pooh-poohed the marks. "He's a late starter," they said. After 45 minutes, the principal said, he had seen and heard enough. Jeremy was rejected.

I wish we could run our public schools like this. Schools, to me, are

sacred and should be treated like places of worship. And teachers should be treated in a similar fashion. I once spent a summer teaching English in China. Every time I entered the classroom, students stood at attention. One child would bring me a cup of tea.

I don't expect standing ovations or a hot beverage each morning from my students. But it would be nice if teachers were treated with courtesy and respect instead of as doormats.

Students should be prepared for learning every day: they should be well rested, fed and dressed properly. They should leave at home the baseball caps, the gum and the T shirts with obscene messages. And at the end of the year, their teachers will evaluate them. Those who are hard working and conscientious will be invited to return. The students who are disruptive will be sent to alternative schools.

Will this idea cure all of our nation's educational ills? No, it will not. There are many other problems. I think we have to do something about the inequities of school funding. I feel overcrowding should be eliminated and crumbling schools replaced.

These are problems that must be tackled. But first we must make sure that education is taken seriously. Letting schools pick their students would be a first step toward that end.

ASSIGNMENTS

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. The author maintains that schools should be given power to select their students. What story illustrates his reasoning?

2. In what way did Jeremy's mother react when her son was expelled?

3. Why did Jeremy's father ask the author to write a recommendation?

4. Why did the teacher agree to write it?

5. Why was Jeremy rejected a place at the private high school he applied to?

6. Contrast the behavior of students in American school with that in the Chinese school.

7. What is the way to treat teachers as viewed by the author?

8. According to the author what nation's educational problems should be solved?

9. If you had been Jeremy's teacher, how would you have handled him?

10. Do you agree with the author's idea of sending disruptive students to alternative schools?

EXPLORING IDEAS

1. Schools around the world differ in their expectations of students. How should students behave in class from your point of view?

2. What are the possible reasons for some students' disruptive behavior and truancy?

3. What measures on the part of a teacher can help break the cycle of disruptive behavior?

GIVE THE RUSSIAN EQIVALENTS FOR:

Uncooperative parents, a disruptive student, fusillade of profanity, to straighten the record, performance as a student, scholastic ability, a crumbling school

GIVE THE ENGLISH EQUIVALENTS FOR:

Наказывать ученика, директор школы, написать положительную характеристику, трудолюбивый, добросовестный ученик; оскорблять сверстников, выгнать из класса, переполненная школа

Test Case: Now The Principal's Cheating

It's one of the most basic lessons kids learn, right up there with the ABCs and the three Rs: Cheating is wrong. But it seems a number of educators have yet to master that. Last week, the principal of Potomac Elementary School, a top-ranked school in one of Maryland's lushest suburbs, resigned and a teacher was placed on administrative leave amid charges that they had rigged a statewide achievement test. The whistleblowers? Fifth graders, who allege that they were prompted to modify essay responses, provided correct answers, and given extra time to finish.

"I can't even imagine why anyone would do this, especially at the third-highest- achieving school in the state," says Patricia O'Neill, president of the local Montgomery County' Board of Education, noting Potomac Elementary's affluent, high-achieving student body. "Was it so important to be No. I?"

The latest example of high-level cheating comes in this era of high-stakes testing, where scores are increasingly tied to everything from educators' job security and salaries to students' promotion and graduation. Such reforms are part of a nationwide movement to boost quality and to hold

educators accountable for student achievement. But they have also had some unexpected consequences. "The evidence is pretty clear that there has been an increase in educators cheating on standardized exams," says Walt Haney, a senior research associate at Boston College's Center for the Study of Testing, Evaluation, and Educational Policy.

Fallen model? This spring alone, there has been a flurry of charges in schools across the country, from California to Louisiana to Florida. A Columbus, Ohio, grade school, touted as a model by the visiting President Clinton for its skyrocketing test scores - including a fourfold jump in the percentage of students who passed the reading portion of the state exam in one year - now stands accused by a teacher and three students who insist school aides prodded fourth graders to cheat, in one case actually grabbing a boy's hand and moving his pencil to the correct multiple choice answer. The principal denies the charges and a district investigation found no conclusive evidence of wrongdoing, but a state inquiry is pending. In New York City, even a scathing December report that fingered 52 educators at 32 schools for myriad cheating infractions failed to deter such behavior: A follow-up review, released last month, charges that teachers, paraprofessionals, and librarians in five schools tampered with recent test scores.

Critics say the tests-not teachers-are to blame. "The major problem is the unreasonable, unfair, and inappropriate use of standardized exams," says Monty Neill executive director of the National Center for Fair & Open Testing, and a staunch opponent of high-stakes tests. Twenty-eight states now use standard exams to determine graduation and to govern student promotion; a growing number also dole out performance-based bonuses for schools that show progress and threaten intervention, even closure, for those that don't. In Maryland, schools that improve scores on the state standardized

test, given in grades three, five, and eight, split $2.75 million each year. “These sorts of incentives and the subsequent pressure-cooker climate can drive teachers to do anything and everything to boost scores,” says Neill. "The only way to stop [cheating] is to return tests to their appropriate role, not as an absolute determinate of kids' progress but as one source of information, to be judged in conjunction with things like grades and teachers' judgements."

Still, the prevailing view is that standardized exams are the best way to measure achievement-and failure-and to help improve the nation's schools. "The cause [of cheating] is not the test, not the standards movement, but some character flaw," insists Jeanne Alien, president of Washington, D.C.'s Center for Education Reform. "These tests . . . are challenging, but they reflect what should be taught in various grades, and if educators are cheating, it means they don't have the ability to get these kids to learn, which means they shouldn't be teaching in the first place."

Whatever the cause, experts agree that the ones who lose most when educators tamper with tests are students. "If kids have had a teacher giving them the correct answers, or telling them when things are wrong, then it's very easy for them to justify cheating themselves," says Edward Stancik, special commissioner of investigation for the New York City public schools, who has exposed the rampant educator-assisted cheating and worries about the fallout. "It has a residual effect on the kids, who are not stupid, and who have to make up their own minds about right and wrong."

ASSIGNMENTS

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What allegations made the principal of Potomac Elementary School resign?

2. What are the reasons for an increase in aducators' cheating on standardized examinations?
3. Do you agree with the theses that it is the test – not teachers – that is to blame.
4. What is the basic purpose of the standardized examinations?
5. What impact does the educators' cheating have on students?

EXPLORING IDEAS

1. Should a student's progress be determined basically by test scores? Are grades and teacher's judgements less important than test scores?
2. Illustrate the difference between a good and a bad examination with examples known to you from your own experience.
3. What do you think the main purpose of tests and examinations is?
4. Do you think that there is a link between the amount of work you do and the grades you get?

EXPLAIN THE FOLLOWING:

performance-based bonuses for schools, top-ranked school, to boost scores, to temper with tests, a residual effect on the kids, high-stakes testing, pressure-cooker climate

PROVIDE THE RUSSIAN EQUIVALENTS FOR:

educator, to rig a statewide achievement test, skyrocketing test scores, paraprofessional, grade school, cheating infractions

GIVE THE ENGLISH EQUIVALENTS FOR:

учителя несут ответственность за успеваемость учеников, четвероклассник, третья по успеваемости школа в штате, убежденный противник экзаменов; превозносить, расхваливать

Inside College Admissions

An exclusive look at the admissions process of three top schools exposes the myths that keep students from getting into the college of their choice

WHAT TO DO ABOUT Theater Boy? That was the question vexing Peggy Walbridge and David Field as the two admissions readers paged through his application to Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y. With a 1,420 SAT score, solid grades and top scores on two advanced- placement exams, the applicant- we're calling him Theater Boy to protect his identity - certainly looked like Cornell material. He had appeared in professional musical productions and helped raise over $50,000 to stage plays at his school. "That's pretty amazing," Walbridge muttered. Field chuckled as he read through the applicant's essay about his voice changing from a once beautiful boyhood soprano. Said Field: "There's a nice sense of humor in this writing."

Still, something gave the readers pause. There was nothing outstanding in the applicant's two teacher recommendations. A more gushing letter came from his boss at the pizza place where he worked after school, detailing Theater Boy's rapport with the restaurant's immigrant cooks. "He sure sounds like a wonderful employee," said Walbridge. Field interjected, "But is he a real scholar?" Theater Boy wrote that he wants to study politics and history. But the two readers wondered why he hadn't studied more of them already. Theater Boy’s moment was fading as quickly as it had come. "The more I

think about it, I don't see enough real scholarship here." said Field. "I just have a feeling we can do better."

They can, because Cornell, like other elite colleges, has seven applicants for every spot in its freshman class. As 1.2 million high school seniors begin the college-application process in earnest this month, competition has never been fiercer. Nor have students been better prepared. These days, kids in junior high take high school academic classes to make room for more demanding courses in the later grades. And in just the past decade, there's been an 83% increase in the number of ninth- graders who take the SAT-just for practice. But even if you didn't study calculus in the ninth grade, there are steps you can take at application time to better your odds.

Last spring three of the country's most selective schools-Rice University, Bowdoin College and Cornell University-allowed TIME behind the closed doors of their admissions deliberations. The one stipulation: that TIME not use the names or certain identifying characteristics of kids like Theater Boy. The insights we gleaned won't substitute for top scores and grades. But they did puncture some of the myths that often prevent an applicant from winning admission to his or her favorite college.

Myth 1: Make yourself look as well-rounded as possible

You would think that a flutist-cum-poet with a 1,520 SAT, unblemished transcript and a passion for philosophy would find a warm welcome at Houston's Rice University. Renaissance Girl was involved in so many extracurricular activities - band, the literary magazine, the astronomy, philosophy and poetry clubs - that it took minute handwriting to squeeze them onto the application. Yet she never made it off the waiting list.

In the parlance of Rice's admissions committee, Renaissance Girl was a

"clubber," a serial joiner of I school organisations who never rises to a leadership position. A Cornell applicant submitted a one-page, single-spaced addendum to his application that catalogued, as an admissions officer exasperatedly termed it, "every activity he's ever participated in." With the "spread too thin" designation on his voting sheet, even his perfect 800 score on the verbal half of the SAT wasn't enough to stave off rejection.

Says Don Saleh, Cornell's dean of admissions and financial aid: "Students should occupy leadership roles and show years of commitment. That's one way we know kids aren't doing activities just to put them on their applications." Another is to ask how many hours students spend on each activity. And in an instance where the numbers seemed high? A gimlet-eyed Cornell officer whipped out a calculator to reveal that the (unsuccessful) applicant claimed to spend 50 hours a week on after-school pursuits.

Myth 2: The essay counts only in close calls

Before even glancing at grades or test scores, admissions officers at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, rate a student's personal statement That first impression can color the whole discussion. The committee, for example, issued a swift rejection to a student whose essay was riddled with typos. After reading a moving tale of how a student bonded with a Chilean immigrant struggling to educate his children, assistant dean Debbie DeVeaux went to bat for the applicant: "I love this guy. I hope you love him as much as I do."

A little warmth and humor never hurt either. Bowdoin requires a second, shorter essay on an influential teacher. Most students opt for a boiler-plate hymn to the hardest teacher in school. But a rare description of a teacher who "was big, but not overweight ... like you could trust her to provide you with bread and beef through the winter" got the committee laughing. And the

essay's touching conclusion - "she taught me how to improve from a mistake and still like myself" - sent them straight for the ADMIT stamp. Otherwise, the student's B record would not have got him in.

Admissions officers say the most successful essays show curiosity and self- awareness. Says Cornell's Saleh: "It's the only thing that really lets us see inside your soul." While there's no one right formula for soul baring, there are many wrong ones. Ifs disastrous to write, as a Rice applicant did, of what he could "bring to the University of California." A self-absorbed or arrogant tone is also a guaranteed turnoff. Exhibit A: a Rice essay beginning, "I have accumulated a fair amount of wisdom in a relatively limited time of life." Exhibit B: a Cornell applicant who set out to "describe the indescribable essence of myself."

The officers accept that student essays are often heavily edited and adapted for multiple applications. But if an essay seems too polished, they'll often compare the writing with that in other parts of the application, and even to a student's verbal SAT score.

Myth 3: Send your "award-winning" art portfolio

Each spring admissions officers amass boxes full of discarded watercolors and videotaped productions of the Music Man - and the occasional batch of brownies - all sent by students hoping such extras will increase their prospects. More often they distract readers from the real meat of the application. A Cornell applicant. Budding Author, directed readers to her "countless short stories and novellas." Though the admissions officers were impressed with the other parts of Budding Author's application, they didn't quite know what to make of her creative writing. "Well ifs not quite soft

porn," said a confused Walbridge. Instead of receiving a fat acceptance packet. Budding Author was wait-listed.

At Cornell and Bowdoin, admissions readers typically send art slides and music tapes out to department heads to get an expert appraisal. Those rare applicants who get a ringing endorsement are usually instant hits back in the committee room. That was the case for a student's trumpet performance, which received the top rating from Cornell's music department. But, noted reader Ken Gabard, "it's only I in 100 who gets this kind of reception."

Myth 4: Don't spill your guts!

Admissions officers love a good against- all-odds story. "We like to see that kids have overcome adversity," says Cornell's Cabard. "Goodness knows, they'll face adversity in college." Provided the adversity is authentic - like a death in the family - it can make a much more gripping essay topic than a summer jaunt through Europe. And if applicants have suffered any dip in academic performance, they need to account for it, either in an essay or in a counselor's letter.

With scattered Cs in the ninth and 10th grades and football and guitar as his only extracurriculars, Comeback Kid would normally have missed Bowdoin's first cut of applications. But in his essay he wrote of how he'd spent those first two years of high school "slowly poisoning myself in a pool of malted hops." Then a close relative who was an alcoholic died of a stroke. After that, Comeback Kid cut out the beer, got A- pluses in his senior year and won a national writing award. He also won a unanimous thumbs-up for admission.

Schools are also taken with good students from families with little education or money. At Bowdoin, this is known as an "NC/BC" case, for no

college/blue collar, at Rice, it's an application with "overcome" factors. At Cornell, admissions readers were initially not too impressed by a student with good test scores but whose grades were all over the map. Then a reader noticed that she came from a family with no higher education and worked up to 40 hours a week as a cashier. But it was her essay that really swayed the committee, as she described being derisively called "white girl" by some other blacks and related how a classmate told her that he "looked forward to seeing me 'flipping burgers' after graduation."

Before you go Grafting your sob story, it bears noting that college admissions officers are among the world's finest b.s. detectors. A case in point: a student s Cornell essay about a relative's homosexuality struck an admissions reader as gratuitous: "This has got shock value written all over it."

Myth 5: If a teacher says he'll write a rec, it will be a good one

For admissions officers, there's a distinct hierarchy to recommendation letters. "Brilliant means more than bright," says Bowdoin's senior associate dean of admissions Linda Kreamer. "'Hardworking and motivated' probably means the student isn't too smart." Cornell readers bristled at a recommendation hailing a Translation: If admitted, he'd wind up on academic probation. student who "cares more about what he learns than what grades he gets."

The best recommendations describe a student's accomplishments with specific and knowing details. Bowdoin's admissions committee was on the fence about an applicant who had good grades but below average test scores. Then it scanned his two recommendations, "A rare gem," said one letter; the other called him a "mature humanitarian." Most compelling, though, was a

tidbit missing from the rest of the application. The student had come up with a unique scheme for supporting world-famine relief: he pledged his weekly allowance and persuaded his parents to give matching grants. Cornell readers were similarly impressed with a letter that touted an applicant's papers on Billie Holiday and Vietnam veterans.

To improve his accolades, a student shouldn't necessarily ask the best teacher in school, who's probably swamped with other requests, but should instead seek out someone who really knows him and his work. A student should also jog the memory of his recommender with a cheat sheet of his accomplishments - including a copy of a well-received term paper.

Myth 6: Don't be too eager!

Colleges want students who want them. That's one reason why kids who apply for early decision have a leg up. But for all applicants, it's unwise to skip a college's visit to your high school or, as a Rice applicant did, to ask an alumni interviewer if Rice was just a "second-tier" institution. As with most interactions a student has with a college, this one was duly noted. The interviewer wrote, "I don't think Rice should accept him."

There are also less obvious faux pas, like stating your intended major without checking that it is offered. Students are sometimes asked the number of schools to which they're applying, and some colleges take offence at being one of many under consideration. Rice was weighing a superbly qualified applicant when a reader mentioned that the school was just one of 15 on his list. The student wound up on the wait list.

But such close calls can just as easily swing the other way. Bowdoin's committee was ambivalent about one applicant until it read a last-minute

addition to his file, a note saying, "Bowdoin College is at the top of my list." He was admitted.

ASSIGNMENTS

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What reasons does the author give for saying that Theater Boy looked like Cornell material?
2. Why did the admissions readers reject Theater Boy?
3. What facts prove that Cornell is an elite college?
4. What do admissions officers think of the applicants involved in numerous extracurricular activities?
5. What sort of essays do the admissions committee prefer?
6. What examples of wrong essays are provided in the article?
7. Why was Budding Author, a Cornell applicant, wait-listed?
8. According to the author, admissions officers love applicants with "overcome" factor. Illustrate it with examples.
9. What recommendations tend to impress admissions readers?
10. Why do colleges prefer those who apply for early decision?
11. List the myths that prevent applicants from winning admission to their favorite college.
12. What are the advantages and disadvantages of admission policies in this country?

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES USING THE TEXT AS A GUIDE

1. Cornell, like other elite colleges, has seven applicants ....
2. There are steps you can take at application time to ....
3. Renaissance Girl was involved in so many extracurricular activities that....

4. Even his perfect 800 score on the verbal half of the SAT was not enough to....
5. The officers accept that student essays are often heavily edited and....
6. Provided the adversity is authentic....
7. With scattered Cs in the ninth and 10th grades and football and guitar as his only extracurriculars, Comeback Kid ....
8. It was her essay that really swayed the committee ....
9. Cornell readers bristled at a recommendation hailing a student ....
10. Bowdoin's admissions committee was on the fence about an applicant....
11. To improve his accolades, a student shouldn't necessarily ask the best teacher in school but ....
12. Student are sometimes asked the number of schools to which they are applying ....

PARAPHRASE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES:

1.I do not see enough real scholarship here.2.These days, kids in junior high take high school academic classes to make room for more demanding courses in the later grades. 3.In the parlance of Rice's admissions committee, Renaissance Girl was a "clubber". 4.At Cornell, admissions readers were initially not too impressed by a student with good test scores but whose grades were all over the map. 5.If admitted, he'd wind up on academic probation. 6.That's one reason why kids who apply for early decision have a leg up. 7.You would think that a flutist-cum-poet with a 1,520 SAT, an unblemished transcript and a passion for philosophy would find a warm welcome at Houston's Rice University.

PROVIDE THE ENGLISH EQUIVALENTS FOR:

Приемная комиссия, сочинение со множеством опечаток, увеличивать шансы, проницательный член приемной комиссии, быть в

нерешительности, отлично ладить с кем-либо, похвала, бывший ученик/студент, освежить память, непрестижный университет, снижение успеваемости, преодолеть трудности, тщательно отредактированное сочинение, развеять миф

Ivy Leagues Apart

When John Kenneth Galbraith, a Canadian expert in agricultural economics, found himself, to his surprise, involved in the admissions process at Harvard in the 30s, he was startled to be equipped with a sheet of paper that divided applicants into five categories. One listed aspirants from a group of private boarding schools, Groton and others. Two listed similar groups from other New England boarding schools. Another listed... Jews. The last was for graduates of all the public admission high schools across the rest of the American continent.

Harvard has changed dramatically, of course. Since the 50s it has admitted more than the handful of Jews it previously allowed to study. The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tip O'Neill, tells in his memoirs how he came to hate Harvard almost as much as "the English" when he was working for the university as a gardener. But the Irish, once despised and rejected, are now allowed in, conveniently, since they control the politics of Boston where the university is located. Since the 70s, African-Americans, and especially Asians, have appeared in substantial numbers.

It says something immensely sad that the best model the British Chancellor, Gordon Brown, and New Labour's leader in the House of Lords, Margaret Jay, can find for an egalitarian university is Harvard, rather than, say, Berkeley or Wisconsin. For Harvard is proudly and unapologetically both elite and elitist. It is a ferociously competitive place. It is also authoritarian

and hierarchical. It is a private university, heavily dependent on a vast endowment created by private donations and increased by shrewd investment.

The university now makes efforts to bring in young people from a wider socio-economic catchment area. These efforts, while admirable and quite effective, hardly compare in scale or intensity with Harvard greatest glory, its fund-raising. The effort to bring poor kids to Harvard on scholarship, however welcome, is a public relations campaign.

Before Britain rushes to adopt the Harvard solution to the problems of funding a world-class research and teaching university, a few things should be remembered. Harvard is seriously expensive. Whereas all British universities were free once a student had been accepted, and now cost less than $1,500 a year, tuition at Harvard is more than $30,000 a year. That is approximately the entire income of the average American. And tuition is only the beginning. To send two children to Harvard for four years each will cost a family close to half a million dollars. For the average family that is unthinkable.

Funding any serious number of scholarships depends on the United States law that allows taxpayers to set their charitable donations against tax. Does New Labour contemplate relying for the expansion of educational opportunity on tax-free donations to Oxford and Cambridge?

Harvard now says that no one who meets the university's requirements will be turned away on grounds of cost alone. That is enlightened, an inspired stroke of public relations. It is also a luxury that few even among US private universities can afford, an unattainable example rather than a solution. Harvard's British admirers do not perhaps understand how the Harvard system works. Harvard offers not free education to those who pass its means test, but

a package. Some money will come from grants, some from loans, some from the opportunity to work for the university. (Does Brown feel comfortable with the idea that poor students at British universities should work for rich students in the kitchen? Because that is the American way.)

And then, those loans. It is said many students leave the Harvard law school with debts of $75,000 or more. If they can get jobs with big New York and Washington law firms, their starting pay may be around $100,000 a year. But is this what New Labour wants? That Oxbridge graduates should be obliged to work in the financial services sector, or to emigrate, to pay back a proportion of their fees?

The Brown case, if that is not too strong a word for a piece of demagogic improvisation, seems confused. For Harvard's dedicated recruiters must presumably also, like Oxford, have to make choices between qualified applicants from equally underprivileged backgrounds.

Harvard is one of the glories of the American educational system. That does not mean that British politicians should imitate it out of an inferiority complex, and more than they should imitate any other aspect of a foreign country that they understand so imperfectly.

ASSIGNMENTS

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What idea is supported by the example given at the beginning of the article?

2. In what way has Harvard admission policy changed since the 30s?

3. Some British politicians think Harvard the best model of an egalitarian university. What do they mean by such an observation?

4. What does the author mean by calling Harvard both elite and elitist?

5. What does the author think of the effort to bring poor kids to Harvard on scholarship?

6. What facts are provided to prove that Harvard model cannot be applied to British educational system?

7. In the article does the author endeavor to explain, to inform, or to persuade? Give your reasons.

8. Do you agree with the author that British politicians should not imitate American system of higher education?

9. Is the title of the article appropriate? Explain your answer.

EXPLORING IDEAS

1. Do elitist private universities conflict with the American ideal of equality of opportunity?

2. In what way is the American system of higher education different from the British one? In what way are they similar?

GIVE THE RUSSIAN EQUIVALENTS FOR:

unattainable example, to pass the university means test, public admission high school, endowment, tax-free donation, socio-economic catchment area, inferiority complex, aspirant, university fund-raising, an inspired stroke of public relations.

СИСТЕМА ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ В ВЕЛИКОБРИТАНИИ И США: Учебно-методические материалы для студентов переводческого факультета

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Лицензия ЛР № 020073 от 20.06.97.

Подписано к печати Формат 60x90 1/16.
Печ. л. Тираж экз. Заказ
Цена договорная

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