Education and Work

VOCABULARY

A Choose the correct definition for the words below.

a An applicant
   1 A person who sits for an exam.

b A candidate
   2 An organisation like Greenpeace, The Red Cross
      or Oxfam.

c An NGO
   3 This document gives personal information about
      somebody. It is usually used for applying for jobs.

d A CV
   4 A course that you follow at university to obtain
      a graduate qualification.

e A degree
   5 A person who applies for a job or a place on a
      course.

READING

B Match the words in column A with the words in column B to form logical
   collocations. Then read through the text and find these collocations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLUMN A</th>
<th>COLUMN B</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>school</td>
<td>recession</td>
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<tr>
<td>degree</td>
<td>spending</td>
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<td>A-level</td>
<td>leavers</td>
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<tr>
<td>public</td>
<td>experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>economic</td>
<td>results</td>
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<tr>
<td>work</td>
<td>work</td>
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<tr>
<td>voluntary</td>
<td>course</td>
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<td>long</td>
<td>climate</td>
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SCHOOL LEAVERS

More than 150,000 British school leavers didn’t get a place on a degree course at university this year. What has caused this lack of university places?

There are two main reasons. Firstly, national A-level results in 2010 were exceptional; 97.6% of exam candidates got a pass mark (A-E), and 27% got A grades. This has led to more university applicants than ever before. The second reason is the recession and cuts in public spending. Universities are anxious not to over-recruit in the present economic climate, and so there are fewer places available.

For those school-leavers who have not got a place, there have been lots of suggestions: unpaid work experience, NGO work, a gap-year travelling around the world, training, etc. Aaron Porter, president of the National Union of Students, says: “Don’t panic. There are still lots of training, volunteering and work opportunities out there.”

The universities minister, David Willets, has said that students without a place should take up voluntary work to improve their CVs. He described the present economic climate as “intensely competitive for young people” and told school-leavers to “look at the extras you can put on your CV”.

Another option for school-leavers is to do a distance course at the Open University. Yet another option – for those with the money – is to pay for a private degree course.

But there are more university applicants every year and, with the prospect of a long recession, competition for university places will only get fiercer. It’s going to be a difficult time for school leavers in the next few years.
C \textbf{Read the text again and choose the best answer – a, b or c.}

1 This year in Britain...
   - a there were too many places available in universities.
   - b there weren’t enough places available in universities.
   - c 150,000 students left school.

2 This year...
   - a 97.6% of students got an A grade.
   - b 97.6% of students passed their A-levels.
   - c 27% of students passed their A-levels.

3 Because of the present economic climate...
   - a universities want to recruit fewer students for their courses.
   - b universities want to recruit more students for their courses.
   - c universities have stopped recruiting students for their courses.

4 Aaron Porter is...
   - a pessimistic about the situation.
   - b indifferent about the situation.
   - c optimistic about the situation.

5 David Willets...
   - a is giving advice to students who haven’t got a university place this year.
   - b is giving advice to students who have got a university place this year.
   - c isn’t giving advice to anyone.

6 A private degree means...
   - a you have to pay for it.
   - b it is a distance course.
   - c you don’t have to pay for it.

7 The future for school leavers is going to be...
   - a more or less the same as it is at the moment.
   - b less competitive than it is at the moment.
   - c more competitive than it is at the moment.
GRAMMAR

D ★ Write the verb in brackets in the correct form.

1. At the moment, John’s brother . . . . . . . . . French at Bath University. (study)
2. We always . . . . . . . . . . . our classes at 9 o’clock. (start)
3. Thousands of school leavers . . . . . . . to go to university every year. (apply)
4. Most students . . . . . . . . to take a gap year before going to university. (prefer)
5. “That’s our teacher over there. She . . . . . . . . . . . to some students.” (talk)
6. We . . . . . . . . at a friend’s house until our flat has been redecorated. (stay)
7. They . . . . . . . . at the moment because it is the summer holidays. (not study)
8. “Listen! They . . . . . . . . . . . a party next door!” (have)

E ★★ Circle the correct option.

I arrived at my new university at 9 o’clock on Monday morning, ready to begin.
(1) They / There were thousands of students there, all looking for their class.
(2) There / It was extremely confusing. I don’t know how (3) many / much people were there, but there were (4) a lot / a lot of. My first class was starting at 9.15, so I didn’t have (5) many / much time to find my way around. There weren’t (6) enough people / people enough to help students find their way around, and (7) it / there were just (8) too many / too much confused students walking round lost. I finally found my class at 10.15, just as it was ending!
F ★★★ Rewrite these sentences correctly.

1. It is a very important university in this city.

2. The theory was too much complicated for us to understand at first.

3. There weren’t places enough for all the applicants.

4. It wasn’t enough hot to wear a T-shirt.

5. I haven’t got money enough to do a private degree.

6. There was a lot of students on this course.

7. It costs much money to study abroad.

8. I’m sorry, I don’t have many time – I can’t help you with your homework.
Hi!

My teacher has given me your e-mail address from the International E-friends Association. I’m going to be your new e-friend!

Well, I’ll tell you a little about myself. I’m 14 years old (15 in January). I go to Harrison College in Brighton. I’ve been studying here since I was twelve. Before that I was in Primary school near my house.

My favourite subjects at school are French and German. I’d like to start studying Spanish too. I love languages and when I’m older I want to be an interpreter or a translator.

In my free time I like chatting to my friends on line. I’ve got hundreds of friends all over the world. I also like rock music. I play the guitar in a group with some friends from school. I do some sports too. I don’t like football very much but I really like cricket and squash.

Write to me soon and tell me about yourself. I hope we can become friends and maybe you can help me with my Spanish.

Bye for now,

Peter
Reply to the e-mail following these steps. Use the e-mail above to write about yourself.

- Write one paragraph about your age and where you study.
- Write another paragraph about your favourite subjects and what you want to be when you are older.
- Write another paragraph about what you like doing in your free time.

Begin your e-mail with an informal greeting.

Hi! Hello! How are you? How are things?

Then thank your friend for the e-mail.

Thanks for the e-mail. It was very interesting/a nice surprise ...

Say why you are writing.

Here’s some information about myself.
I’m writing to tell you about ...

Say goodbye.

Bye for now. Write back soon.

SPEAKING

H Work in pairs. Take turns to talk about these things for 30 seconds.

1 Your favourite subject.
2 Your least favourite subject.
3 What you want to be when you finish your education.
4 Will you go to university? Why/Why not?
I Work in pairs. Put these school subjects in order from most important to least important. Justify your choices. Try to reach an agreement. Use some of the useful phrases below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>History</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>PE</td>
<td>Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>Language &amp; Literature</td>
<td>Citizenship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**USEFUL PHRASES**

In my opinion...

X is (much) more important than Y because ...

X is (not) as important as Y because ...

X is (much) less important than Y because ...

The most/least important subject of all is X because ...

I agree/disagree with you because ...
LISTENING

http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/sites/podcasts/files/learnenglish-uk-culture-university-education-support-pack.pdf *

J Listen to the recording and decide which of the following statements best sums it up.

- 1 British universities have more and more international students.
- 2 Some people wonder whether an expensive university education is worth it.
- 3 British universities are the best in the world. This is why lots of overseas students want to attend them.

K Listen again and decide whether these statements are true or false.

. . . . . . . . 1 More than 80% of students borrow money to go to university.
. . . . . . . . 2 The students pay no interest on the money they borrow.
. . . . . . . . 3 The average British graduate lives with their parents until they are thirty.
. . . . . . . . 4 Businesses prefer work experience to qualifications.
. . . . . . . . 5 The number of British students attending British universities is falling.
. . . . . . . . 6 The number of overseas students attending British universities is falling.

* OUP is not responsible for the contents of external websites
ANSWER KEY

VOCABULARY

A
a-5, b-1, c-2, d-3, e-4

READING

B
school leavers, degree course, A-Level results, public spending, economic climate, work experience, voluntary work, long recession.

C
1-b, 2-b, 3-a, 4-c, 5-a, 6-a, 7-c

GRAMMAR

D
1-is studying, 2-start, 3-apply, 4-prefer, 5-is talking, 6-are staying,
7-aren’t studying, 8-are having

E
1-There, 2-It, 3-many, 4-a lot, 5-much, 6-enough people, 7-there, 8-too many

F
1 There is a very important university in this city.
2 The theory was too complicated for us to understand at first.
3 There weren’t enough places for all the applicants.
4 It wasn’t hot enough to wear a T-shirt.
5 I haven’t got enough money to do a private degree.
6 There were a lot of students on this course.
7 It costs a lot of money to study abroad.
8 I’m sorry, I don’t have much time – I can’t help you with your homework.
WRITING

G
Students’ own answers

SPEAKING

H
Students’ own answers

I
Students’ own answers

LISTENING

J
2

K
1-true, 2-false, 3-true, 4-true, 5-true, 6-false
Every year, it costs British students more and more to attend university. Students are graduating with larger and larger debts. So is a university degree really worth it?

In 2006, the UK government started to allow universities in England and Wales to charge British students tuition fees. As a result, more than 80% of students in England and Wales now take out a student loan in order to go to university. They use the loan to pay for tuition fees, books and living expenses. Although the interest on student loans is quite low, it begins as soon as the student receives the loan.

The average student in England and Wales now graduates from university with debts of around £12,000. Students of medicine, who study for longer, usually have debts of more than £20,000. That is a lot of money. It means graduates cannot afford to buy a house for many years. They even struggle to pay rent on a flat, because they have to start paying back the student loan when they reach the April after graduating (or after leaving a course). If you start to earn over £15,000 a year, the government takes repayments directly from your monthly salary. Is it any surprise, therefore, that the average British person does not leave their parents’ home until they are 30 years old?

You might think that a British person with a degree will find it easy to get a well paid job. However, most people in “white-collar jobs” seem to have a degree these days, so there is a lot of competition. Also, British companies tend to value work experience over a piece of paper. Like everyone else, graduates usually have to start at the bottom and work their way up. That can be very frustrating for them, since they are often over-qualified for the work they are doing. While at university, they had dreams of getting an exciting, challenging job. Therefore, life after university ends up being quite disappointing for a lot of graduates.

All of the above is beginning to make British people question whether a university degree is really worth the money. Even before the credit crunch started, the BBC stated, ‘The number of British students at UK universities has fallen for the first time in recent history... from 1.97 million in 2007 to 1.96 million last year [2008]’. It looks like the figures will continue to decline, since loan companies are now telling some student that there are no loans available for them. Forecasts are that between 2009-19 there will be fall of 6% in the number of 18-25 year-old university applicants across the UK.

Students have always been seen as not having a lot of money, but “student poverty” is now considered a real problem in the UK. Most British students expect to get a loan, part-time job or summer job. Worse than that, however, is the fact student leaders report there are increasing numbers of students turning to crime to support themselves financially.

By contrast, things are now easier for students from other countries coming to study in the UK, since the value of the British pound has fallen. More international students come to Britain each year. The British universities offer more and more of the available places to richer international students rather than poorer British students. Some British people fear that, one day, there won’t be any university places left for British students at all.