



Unit

1

Higher Education

Objectives:

- ◇ Listen to the materials on higher education.
- ◇ Compare the university systems in different countries.
- ◇ Understand the aims of higher education and the role of universities in society.
- ◇ Practise note-taking and outlining skills.

Task 1

Script

My coming to Cambridge has been an unusual experience. From whatever country one comes as a student one cannot escape the influence of the Cambridge traditions—and they go back so far! Here, perhaps, more than anywhere else, I have felt at one and the same time the past, the present and even the future. It's easy to see in the old grey stone buildings how the past has moulded the present and how the present is giving shape to the future. So let me tell you a little of what this university town looks like and how it came to be here at all.

The story of the University began, so far as I know, in 1209 when several hundred students and scholars arrived in the little town of Cambridge after having walked 60 miles from Oxford.

Of course there were no colleges in those early days and student life was very different from what it is now. Students were of all ages and came from anywhere and everywhere. They were armed; some even banded together to rob the people of the countryside. Gradually the idea of the college developed, and in 1284, Peterhouse, the oldest college in Cambridge, was founded.

Life in college was strict; students were forbidden to play games, to sing (except sacred music), to hunt or fish or even to dance. Books were very scarce and all the lessons were in the Latin language which students were supposed to speak even among themselves.

In 1440 King Henry VI founded King's College, and the other colleges followed. Erasmus, the great Dutch scholar, was at one of these, Queens' College, from 1511 to 1513, and though he wrote



that the college beer was “weak and badly made”, he also mentioned a pleasant custom that unfortunately seems to have ceased.

“The English girls are extremely pretty,” Erasmus said, “soft, pleasant, gentle, and charming. When you go anywhere on a visit the girls all kiss you. They kiss you when you arrive. They kiss you when you go away and again when you return.”

Many other great men studied at Cambridge, among them Bacon, Milton, Cromwell, Newton, Wordsworth, Byron and Tennyson.

Key

A. Fill in the blanks with what you hear on the tape.

My coming to Cambridge has been an unusual experience. From whatever country one comes as a student one cannot escape the influence of the Cambridge traditions—and they go back so far! Here, perhaps, more than anywhere else, I have felt at one and the same time the past, the present and even the future. It’s easy to see in the old grey stone buildings how the past has moulded the present and how the present is giving shape to the future. So let me tell you a little of what this university town looks like and how it came to be here at all.

B. Fill in the following chart.

A Chronicle of Cambridge’s Early Years

Years	Events
1209	Several hundred students and scholars arrived in Cambridge from Oxford.
1284	Peterhouse, the oldest college in Cambridge, was founded.
1440	King Henry VI founded King’s College.

C. Answer the following questions.

1) In what ways was college life strict in the Middle Ages?

Key: Students were forbidden to play games, to sing (except sacred music), to hunt or fish or even to dance.

2) What was the pleasant custom mentioned by Erasmus?





Key: When people went anywhere on a visit, the pretty English girls all kissed them.

3) List at least five great men who once studied at Cambridge.

Key: Erasmus, Bacon, Milton, Cromwell, and Newton (or Wordsworth, Byron, Tennyson, etc.).

Notes

1 As one of the oldest universities in the world and one of the largest in the United Kingdom, the University of Cambridge is rich in history—its famous colleges and University buildings attract visitors from all over the world. Many of the University’s customs can be traced to roots in the early years of the University’s long history.

In this letter, a young student, who came to Cambridge, looks to the past to find the origins of much that is distinctive in the University.

2 This is the story of how the University of Cambridge began.

In 1209, several hundred students and scholars arrived in Cambridge from Oxford. They were all churchmen and had been studying in Oxford. It was a hard life at Oxford for there was constant trouble, even fighting, between the townsfolk and the students. Then one day a student accidentally killed a man of the town. The Mayor arrested him, along with three other students who were innocent, and by order of King John (who was quarrelling with the Church) they were hanged. In protest, many students left Oxford, some coming to Cambridge; and so the new University began.

3 Some great figures who once studied at Cambridge

Erasmus, Desiderius (1469—1536): Dutch humanist who was the greatest scholar of the northern Renaissance, the first editor of the New Testament, and also an important figure in patristics and classical literature

Bacon, Francis (1561—1626): English statesman, philosopher, and essayist. His essay “Of Studies” is popular among Chinese readers.

Milton, John (1608—1674): English poet and prose writer. His famous works include the epics *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*.

Cromwell, Oliver (1599—1658): Chief commander of the parliamentary forces in the English Civil Wars against Charles I. He was Lord Protector of England, Scotland and Ireland from 1653 to 1658 in place of a king during the Commonwealth.



Wordsworth, William (1770—1850): Major English Romantic poet and poet laureate of England.

His *Lyrical Ballads*, written with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, helped launch the English Romantic Movement.

Byron, George Gordon (1788—1824): English Romantic poet. His major works include *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *Don Juan*.

Tennyson, Alfred (1809—1892): English poet often regarded as the chief representative of Victorian poetry

Newton, Sir Isaac (1642—1727): English physicist and mathematician

Task 2

Script

Now let me give you some idea of what you would see if you were to walk around Cambridge. Let us imagine that I am seeing the sights for the first time. It is a quiet market town and the shopping centre extends for quite a large area, but I notice more bookshops than one normally sees in country towns, and more tailors' shops showing in their windows the black gowns that students must wear—long gowns that hang down to the feet for graduates and shorter ones for undergraduates.

In the centre of the town is the market place where several times each week country traders come to sell their produce. Everywhere there are teashops, some in modern and many in old buildings, reached by climbing narrow stairs. There is a great deal of bicycle traffic, mainly undergraduates who race along thoughtless of safety, with long scarves (in various colours to denote their college) wound round their necks.

Continuing, I find my way to the river which flows behind the college buildings and curls about the town in the shape of a horseshoe. This narrow river is the Granta, and a little farther on changes its name to the Cam. It flows slowly and calmly. The "Backs", as this part of the town behind the colleges is called, have been described as the loveliest man-made view in England. It is indeed beautiful. To the left, across the stream, there are no buildings, merely meadows, colleges' gardens and lines of tall trees. Everything is very green and peaceful. On the river bank are willow trees with their branches bending into the water and, at intervals along the river, stone bridges cross the stream and lead into the colleges which line the right bank. The deep coloured brick or stone of the college walls, sometimes red and sometimes grey, is 500 years old. The walls rise out of their own reflection in the water and



their colour contrasts charmingly with glimpses of the many green lawns.

Walking along the river bank, where the only sound is the noise of the gentle wind in the tree tops, I came to my college, King's College. Across a bridge and beyond a vast carpet of green lawn stands King's College Chapel, the largest and most beautiful building in Cambridge and the most perfect example left of English fifteenth-century architecture.

The colleges join one another along the curve of the river. Going through a college gate one finds one is standing in an almost square space of about 70 yards known as a "court". Looking down into the court on all sides are the buildings where the students live. The colleges are built on a plan common to all. There is a chapel, a library, and a large dining-hall. One court leads to another and each is made beautiful with lawns or a fountain or charming old stone path. The student gets a good impression of all the English architectural styles of the past 600 years—the bad as well as the good.

There are 28 colleges, excluding three for women students. Women students do not play a very active part in university life at Cambridge, but they work harder than men.

It is difficult to walk around the quiet courts of the colleges without feeling a sense of peace and scholarship. And the sense of peace that green lawns always suggest to me is found in the town too, for often one is surprised to meet open stretches of grass in the midst of the streets and houses giving a charmingly cool countryside effect and reminding one of the more graceful days of the eighteenth century. I'll finish as I began on that note, the feeling one has here of the past in the present, of continuing tradition and firm faith.

Key

A. Choose the best answer.

- 1) In the centre of Cambridge, _____ often race bicycles along the streets without considering their own safety. [← **a**]
a) undergraduates b) graduates c) country traders
- 2) _____ have/has been described as the loveliest man-made view in England. [← **b**]
a) The colleges b) The "Backs" c) The centre of the Cambridge town
- 3) _____ is the largest and most beautiful building in Cambridge. [← **a**]
a) King's College Chapel b) Queens' College c) The Granta
- 4) At Cambridge, there are _____ colleges including those for women students. [← **c**]
a) 28 b) 30 c) 31



B. Answer the following questions.

- 1) What do students at Cambridge usually wear? How can you distinguish a graduate from an undergraduate there?

Key: They usually wear black gowns. Long gowns that hang down to the feet are for graduates, and shorter ones for undergraduates.

- 2) What does Petro say about the women students at Cambridge?

Key: Women students do not play a very active part in university life at Cambridge, but they work harder than men.

C. Fill in the blanks with what you hear on the tape.

- 1) It is indeed beautiful. To the left, across the stream, there are no buildings, merely meadows, colleges' gardens and lines of tall trees. Everything is very green and peaceful. On the river bank are willow trees with their branches bending into the water and, at intervals along the river, stone bridges cross the stream and lead into the colleges which line the right bank. The deep coloured brick or stone of the college walls, sometimes red and sometimes grey, is 500 years old. The walls rise out of their own reflection in the water and their colour contrasts charmingly with glimpses of the many green lawns.
- 2) It is difficult to walk around the quiet courts of the colleges without feeling a sense of peace and scholarship. And the sense of peace that green lawns always suggest to me is found in the town too, for often one is surprised to meet open stretches of grass in the midst of the streets and houses giving a charmingly cool countryside effect and reminding one of the more graceful days of the eighteenth century.

Notes

- 1 In the second half of the letter, Petro describes what he sees and hears during his pleasant walk around the Cambridge town: places, objects, people and events. It is important for students to understand the spatial relationships between the places he describes. Pay attention to the prepositions indicating the relationships, for instance:

—In the centre of the town is the market place where...

—... I find my way to the river which flows behind the college buildings and curls about the town...

—Walking along the river bank, where the only sound is the noise of the gentle wind...



—Across a bridge and beyond a vast carpet of green lawn stands King’s College Chapel, ...

- 2 In Cambridge, there are 31 colleges including three for women (New Hall, Newnham and Lucy Cavendish). Each college is an independent institution with its own property and income. The colleges appoint their own staff and are responsible for selecting students, in accordance with University regulations. The teaching of students is shared between the colleges and University departments. Degrees are awarded by the University. The colleges are also the places where students live, eat and socialise. In addition to resources provided by the University, each college has its own library and sports facilities, and some have their own bar and theatre. Most colleges have their own clubs and societies, offering a variety of non-academic activities to students.

Task 3

Script

On March 7, US Consul General David Hopper and three other officials from the Visa Section of the American Embassy met with students at Peking University. One of the officials presented “Five Secrets” for getting a student visa.

Secret One:

Get free, accurate information on applying for a student visa. Visit the US Embassy website. There is no charge for using these resources. Why pay to get the same information from other sources?

Secret Two:

Be thoroughly prepared. Make sure you bring:

- Your I-20 form (or IAP-66 form);
- Your diploma(s);
- Your standardized test score reports (TOEFL, GRE, GMAT, LSAT, etc.);
- All letters and e-mails from the school, especially those that discuss scholarships, assistantships, fellowships and other forms of financial aid;
- Evidence of funding for your studies (bank documents, etc.);
- Your business cards (if you have a job);
- Any other documents that you think might be important.

Secret Three:

Answer those questions that are asked. Don’t give the visa officer a prepared speech! Here’s an



example of what to avoid.

Visa officer: Hi, how are you today?

Applicant: I'm going to study chemical engineering at X University.

Visa officer: X University? I've been to the campus many times.

Applicant: I will surely return to China and find a good job with a major multinational company.

Visa officer: So tell me, what color is the sky?

Applicant: I was given a teaching assistantship because the school believes my test scores and credentials are excellent.

These people are not communicating, and the applicant is not advancing his cause!

Secret Four:

Tell the truth. If the visa officer thinks you're lying, you won't get a visa.

Secret Five:

Come back to China. We mean that in two ways:

1. Come back to see your family and maintain your ties to China. Keep up your friendships and professional contacts here. Students returning on vacation don't even need to come in for an interview; they can simply use the drop-box service offered at many CITIC Bank locations.
2. Come back to China after you graduate. Use those advanced skills and theories that you learn in the US to make China a better place.

Key

A. Choose the best answer.

- 1) What does the example of the conversation between a visa officer and applicant illustrate?
[← **b**]
 - a) An applicant must be thoroughly prepared.
 - b) An applicant must avoid a prepared speech.
 - c) An applicant must be honest.
- 2) A student who comes back to China on vacation _____ when he/she returns to the US. [← **c**]
 - a) does not need a visa
 - b) must go to the US embassy to get a visa

c) may get a visa through the service offered at the CITIC Bank

B. Complete the following outline of the passage.

“Five Secrets” for Getting a Student Visa

Secret One: Get free, accurate information by visiting the US Embassy website.

Secret Two: Be thoroughly prepared.

Bring: I-20 form or IAP-66 form;

Diploma(s);

Standardized test score reports (TOEFL, GRE, GMAT, LSAT, etc.);

All letters and e-mails from the school, esp. those discussing financial aid;

Evidence of funding for the applicant’s studies;

Business cards;

Any other documents that might be important.

Secret Three: Answer the questions that are asked. Don’t give the visa officer a prepared speech.

Secret Four: Tell the truth.

Secret Five: Come back to China in two ways:

- 1) Come back to see the family and maintain the ties to China.
- 2) Come back to China after graduation.

Notes

7 Further information on student visa from the website of the US Embassy

To obtain a visa to study in the United States, applicants must demonstrate that the sole (not just “primary”) purpose of their travel is to pursue a program of study; they have the ability and intention to be a full-time student in the United States; they possess adequate funds to cover all tuition, living and anticipated incidental expenses without taking unauthorized employment; they have sufficiently strong social, economic, and other reasons to compel their departure from the United States upon completion of the projected program of study.

Applicants must bring proof that they have been unconditionally accepted to an accredited academic program. The school must provide a completed I-20 form and an acceptance letter. Applicants should also bring proof that they have the skills and background necessary to successfully complete the course; this generally includes their diploma, transcripts listing courses they have



taken and grades received, and results of tests or exams normally required for admission to US schools (GRE, GMAT, TOEFL, etc.).

Applicants must show that they have the intent to depart from the United States after the completion of their studies. This may be done in a variety of ways. They may show that they have the talent to succeed in fields that are in demand in China. Often these are students from the top schools in China that will be able to compete for the best jobs when they return.

2 I-20 form and IAP-66 form

The I-20 form is an official government document that an American college or university will send to a foreign applicant either with the acceptance letter or later. The I-20 form is not a visa. It is, however, the most important document needed to apply for a student visa (F-1 visa). While a foreign student is studying at a US college or university, it is important to keep his/her I-20 form valid at all times.

The IAP-66 form is an official document for exchange visitors prepared by a designated sponsoring organization. Once an applicant receives the form from his/her Program Sponsor, he/she should apply for a J-1 visa at the US Embassy or the US Consulate.

3 GMAT and LSAT

The GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test) provides a selection test for MBA candidates. Today, GMAT scores are leading criteria for MBA admissions and for evaluating the selectiveness of an MBA program's admissions.

LSAT (Law School Admission Test) is a standardized test developed by the Law School Admissions Services. It is designed to indicate a candidate's potential to succeed in the first year of law school.

Task 4

Script

John: I disagree, Peter. I don't think it really matters what your educational background is. Anyone who is bright enough is going to do well whatever their education.

Peter: But John, ...

John: In fact, I think some people carry on with their education when they would do a lot better to



get out and start building their own careers by learning things in real life.

Peter: Yes, but the whole point is, life is getting so much more complicated these days that unless you carry on with your studies you just can't cope.

John: For certain things, and certain people, okay. But to my mind, the big problem in education is that you specialize too quickly. I mean, in England, you start specializing from the third year in secondary school, when you're about 14. And it gets steadily narrower until you do your A-levels in only two or three subjects. You either do languages, or natural sciences, or social sciences.

Peter: But surely these days you have to, John—you can't possibly study everything, because there's just too much.

John: Yes, but how many kids at the age of 16 really know what they want to do? How many of them are convinced that the three subjects they've chosen, or have been recommended, are the ones that will let them follow the careers they eventually decide on?

Peter: Oh, I think most young people who stay on at school have a fair idea of what they want to do.

John: I'm not so sure, Peter. And after all, that's not the end of it. When they get to university in England, the subjects they study are so narrow that they are only good for one thing; so they are stuck with it.

Peter: But I don't really see that there is any alternative if people are going to learn enough to be competent in their subject. They've got to specialize early, and I suppose those that realize they've made a mistake can always swap to something else.

John: Ah, but that's just it. You can't. Suppose you study languages at university and then decide that you are not cut out for it and would like to be a doctor. You've burnt your bridges. You can't just change horses in midstream; you've got to go right back to the beginning and you lose years. I think the American system is much better.

Peter: In what way?

John: Well, for your first degree you've got to study a fairly wide range of subjects, and you can choose them yourself, within certain limits.

Peter: Fine, but doesn't that mean that American students with a first degree don't have the depth of knowledge they should have?

John: Should have for what?

Peter: Well, they often aren't accepted for postgraduate work in England with just a first degree.

John: Maybe not, but I don't really think that's important. They come out with a pretty good general knowledge in a wide area. After all, when you think about a lot of the stuff English students



have to study, what good is it to them afterwards? I'm sure the majority of British students never use 90 percent of what they studied at university.

Peter: That may be true of some arts subjects, but what about the sciences?

John: Even there, a lot of what they do at university is so academic and abstruse that they will never be able to put it to any practical use. I'm sure they would benefit far more from on-the-job experience. And if they've had a broader course of study they've got two advantages.

Peter: How do you mean?

John: First of all, they will have a better understanding of the world in general, so they will be more flexible in their jobs, and then if things do go wrong they will be able to switch jobs more easily.

Peter: That all sounds very simple, but I think you're still underestimating the amount of pure learning that you need these days, particularly in technical and scientific areas. I mean even at school these days, children have to learn far more things than we did when we were at school.

John: All the more reason why we should not try to concentrate on such a few things at such an early age. Things are changing so rapidly these days that we have to change with them. When we were younger, there was a pretty good chance that we would be able to carry on in the profession we'd chosen until we retired. But these days, people have got to be prepared to change their jobs and learn new skills as technology moves ahead. Take just the area of the office, for example. How many offices...

Key

A. Write down what the idioms mean in the dialogue.

- 1) You are not cut out for it.

Meaning: You are not well suited for it. / You do not have the necessary qualities or abilities for it.

- 2) You've burnt your bridges.

Meaning: You cannot go back to the previous situation. / You cannot change your mind.

- 3) You can't just change the horse in midstream.

Meaning: You can't change halfway the subjects you choose to study.



B. Choose the best answer.

- 1) John thinks that _____. [←b]
- a) school education is very important for bright people
 - b) bright people can do well in their careers by learning things in real life
 - c) school education and practical experience are equally important for bright people
- 2) In Britain, children start to specialize at about _____. [←a]
- a) 14
 - b) 15
 - c) 16
- 3) According to John, a student for A-level in England usually doesn't study _____ at the same time. [←c]
- a) French and English
 - b) Physics and Chemistry
 - c) English and Biology
- 4) _____ claim(s) that most students have not decided what they want to do by the age of 16. [←a]
- a) John
 - b) Peter
 - c) Both Peter and John
- 5) Peter thinks that John has _____ the importance of pure learning. [←a]
- a) underestimated
 - b) exaggerated
 - c) got a fair idea of
- 6) Which of the following statements is true? [←b]
- a) One can easily change subjects at a British university.
 - b) John claims American college students can choose their subjects within certain limits.
 - c) Both Peter and John agree American undergraduates specialize in a narrow area of study.

C. Debate on the following topic in class.

University students should take a broader course of study.

References:

In the text, John criticizes the British university system for being too specialized in their curriculum, and argues that the American system is a better one. But Peter, the US student, doesn't agree. In the debate, encourage students to refer to the points made by Peter or John in the conversation. They may also use their own experience at a Chinese university to support their viewpoints.

John's arguments for a broader course of study:

—Students who follow a broader course will have a better understanding of the world in general, and they will be more flexible in their jobs, so that if things go wrong they will be able to change jobs more easily.



- Things are changing so rapidly that we have to change with them. Too much emphasis on specialization makes it difficult for us to renew or update our knowledge.
- The majority of British students never use 90 percent of what they have studied at university, because what they learned is too academic and difficult.

Peter's arguments against John:

- There are too many subjects today. You won't be competent in anything if you don't focus. Life is short. You can't do everything.
- People usually know what they want to do in high school.
- There are not many alternatives if students want to learn enough to be competent in their subject.
- American students with a first degree don't have the depth of knowledge they should have.
- Specialization is particularly important in sciences.
- People need to acquire a lot of pure knowledge, particularly in technical and scientific areas. The importance of pure knowledge should not be underestimated.

Notes

- 1 The university systems in the UK and the US are different in some ways. In the US students have more chances to attend university than in the UK. Americans can earn credits in a variety of subjects; while in Britain, students tend to specialize in a narrow area of study, and study those subjects in greater depth. Students may think about the advantages and disadvantages of the different approaches and compare them with the higher education system in China.
- 2 “And it gets steadily narrower until you do your A-levels in only two or three subjects. You either do languages, or natural sciences, or social sciences.”
“A-level” refers to the standardized British examinations in secondary school subjects used as a qualification for university entrance. They are studied typically between the ages of 16 to 18 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. To gain entry to a top UK university a student needs 3 or 4 good A-level grades. There is a broad range of A-levels for students to choose from, including Business, Science, Arts and Humanities subjects. In most cases, students are encouraged to choose subjects closely related to specific degree areas. For example, a student who wants to major in medicine usually takes A-levels in Maths, Chemistry and Biology.
- 3 Help students learn to figure out what some idioms mean from the context, for example, “You’ve



burnt your bridges”, “You can’t change horses in midstream.” See Exercise A.

4 “... they often aren’t accepted for postgraduate work in England with just a first degree.”

Peter uses this example to illustrate the disadvantage of the American system: The courses are too broad; students do not go deep enough; and therefore the graduate schools in the UK usually will not accept American students with only a first degree.

Task 5

Script

That a record 572,509 foreign students from 180 countries attended colleges and universities in the US in the past academic year is perhaps the most vivid indication that there are important advantages in American higher education.

No other country receives even half as many foreign students, yet international students represent only 3 percent of the total enrollment at US colleges and universities. In all, some 15 million students attend America’s institutions of higher education.

These statistics illustrate four major features of the American higher education system which make it attractive to both domestic and foreign students: size, diversity, flexibility and accessibility.

Today there are more than 3,600 institutions of higher education in the United States. Some of the large state university systems, such as those in New York, California and Texas, comprise dozens of campuses and hundreds of thousands of enrolled students. Indeed, higher education has become one of the biggest “industries” in the US, employing some 3 million people.

The range and diversity of institutions and programs of study in the US are even more impressive. The system encompasses both prestigious private universities such as Harvard and Stanford, which are among the best in the world, and local publicly funded community colleges; both huge state university campuses enrolling 40,000—50,000 students and tiny private institutes with fewer than 100 students.

American higher education is diverse in other ways, too. Not only do most colleges and universities enroll foreign students, but foreign faculties and visiting scholars play an important role on many campuses, particularly at the large universities. In most comprehensive institutions, there are as many female students as male, and the numbers of students and faculty from ethnic minorities, particularly Asian-Americans and Hispanic-Americans have been steadily increasing. As a result, the



campus communities of many American universities reflect in microcosm the diversity of larger society.

Higher education in the US is also unique in offering an enormous variety of subjects and course options, ranging from Aerospace Engineering to Women's Studies and from Art to Zoology. Because it is dependent on tuition for funding, higher education in the US is student-centered and consumer-oriented; institutions teach what society as a whole thinks is useful. For example, the large public universities of New York, Ohio State University, and the University of Texas at Austin offer hundreds of different degree programs and have academic catalogues listing thousands of courses.

The variety of programs and courses contributes to the flexibility of the American system. Undergraduates usually begin their program taking "general education", "liberal arts", or "core curriculum" courses—in order that they might become more "well-rounded" students—and only later select their major in many cases, not until their second year.

Because they do not specialize from the very beginning, undergraduate students have more options than their counterparts in other countries. Not infrequently, American undergraduates change their mind and decide to take a different major, but this does not oblige them to start over, for at least part of their course work can still be applied to the new degree.

Most academic programs include "elective courses" which students can sometimes take outside their main field of study. This gives them added choice in planning their education, and enables them to broaden their perspective by learning about other subjects. Thus, much is left up to the student, who is expected to choose from a bewildering variety of institutions, degree programs and courses, and often must depend on his/her academic advisers for help in planning a program of study.

The size, diversity and flexibility of the American higher education system all contribute to its accessibility. Americans take for granted that everyone, regardless of their origin, should have a right to a higher education, and opportunities do exist for a large percentage of college-age young people to pursue postsecondary studies. It should be remembered that in the US the category "higher education" can encompass vocational, technical, professional and other specialized training.

Fundamental to American culture is the high value it places on education. At whatever level, education is considered a form of self-improvement, which can lead to new career opportunities, economic advances and personal betterment, regardless of one's age. An increasing number of older, "non-traditional" students are attending colleges and universities in the US, many having gone back for additional training or to prepare for a new career. Moreover, as many as 15 million Americans, including a large number of retired people, enroll in noncredit college courses (in other words, courses not leading to a degree) every year.



Key

Take notes while listening, and complete the following summary based on your notes.

American higher education has four major features, which make it attractive to both domestic and foreign students. These features are size, diversity, flexibility, and accessibility. Today, there are more than 3,600 institutions of higher education in the US, some of which have dozens of campuses and hundreds of thousands of enrolled students. Higher education has become one of the biggest industries in the US, employing about 3 million people.

American higher education is diverse in several ways. The system consists of both prestigious private universities (e.g. Harvard, Stanford) and publicly funded community colleges, both huge state universities and small private institutions. They are highly diverse in the number of foreign students, faculties, visiting scholars, female students, and students and faculty from ethnic minorities.

American higher education is also unique in offering a wide variety of subjects and course options. It is student-centered and consumer-oriented. The variety of programs and courses contributes to the flexibility of the American system. Undergraduates usually do not have to specialize in the first year of their study. Most academic programs include elective courses, which students can take outside their main field of study.

American higher education is also characterized by its accessibility. Americans believe everybody should have a right to a higher education. A large portion of young people can pursue postsecondary studies. Moreover, an increasing number of older people are attending colleges and universities for additional training or for preparing for a new career. Even a large number of retired people enroll in noncredit college courses.

Task 6

Script

Part 1

We know that something called “education” is a good thing. And all African states therefore spend a large proportion of government revenue on it. But, I suspect that for us in Africa the underlying



purpose of education is to turn us into black Europeans, or black Americans, because our education policies make it quite clear that we are really expecting education in Africa to enable us to emulate the material achievements of Europe and America. We have not begun to think seriously about whether such material achievements are possible or desirable.

The primary purpose of education is the liberation of man. To “liberate” is to “set free”. It implies impediments to freedom having been thrown off. But a man can be physically free from restraint and still be unfree if his mind is restricted by habits and attitudes which limit his humanity.

Education is incomplete if it enables man to work out elaborate schemes for universal peace but does not teach him how to provide good food for himself and his family. It is equally incomplete if it teaches man to be an efficient tool user and tool maker, but neglects his personality and his relationship with his fellow human beings.

There are professional men who say, “My market value is higher than the salary I am receiving in Tanzania.” But no human being has a market value—except a slave. When people say such things, in effect they are saying, “This education I have been given has turned me into a marketable commodity, like cotton or sisal.” And they are showing that, instead of liberating their humanity by giving it a greater chance to express itself, the education they have received has degraded their humanity. Their education has converted them into objects—repositories of knowledge like rather special computers.

We condemn such people. Yet it is our educational system which is instilling in boys and girls the idea that their education confers a price tag on them—which ignores the infinite and priceless value of a liberated human being, who is cooperating with others in building a civilization worthy of creatures made in the image of God.

Part 2

A formal school system, devised and operated without reference to the society in which its graduates will live, is of little use as an instrument of liberation for the people of Africa. At the same time, learning just by living and doing in the existing society would leave us so backward socially and technologically that human liberation in the foreseeable future is out of the question. Somehow we have to combine the two systems. We have to integrate formal education with the society and use education as a catalyst for change in that society.

Inevitably it takes time to change. We have not solved the problem of building sufficient self-confidence to refuse what we regard as the world’s best (whatever that may mean), and to choose instead the most appropriate for our conditions. We have not solved the problem of our apparent inability to integrate education and life, and education and production. We have not solved the



of African people.

2. Learning only by living and doing in the existing society doesn't enable us to overcome the social and technological backwardness.

B. The solution lies in:

1. Integrating formal education with society, and

2. Using education as a catalyst for social change.

II. We need some time to change, for we have a number of problems to solve.

The problems include:

A. How we can build sufficient confidence to refuse what we regard as the world's best and choose the most appropriate

B. How we can integrate education and life, and education and production

C. How we can overcome the belief that we should judge a child or an adult by their academic ability

III. It is not a failure within the formal education system, but of society as a whole. The society has not yet accepted that character, cooperativeness and a desire to serve are relevant to a person's ability to benefit from further training.

Note

About the author

Julius Nyerere (1922—1999) was the first Prime Minister of Tanganyika (1961), the first President of Tanzania (1964—1985), and the major force behind the Organization of African Unity (OAU; now the African Union).

As a political leader of one of the world's poorest countries, President Nyerere had a vision of education from perspectives of the third world. He believed the purpose of education was for the liberation of man and for self-reliance. There was a strong concern to counteract the colonialist assumptions and practices of the dominant, formal means of education. He saw it as enslaving and oriented to "Western" interests and norms.

His critique of the Tanzanian (and other former colonies) education system is:

—Formal education is basically elitist in nature, catering to the needs and interests of a small proportion of people who manage to enter the hierarchical pyramid of formal schooling.

—This education system divorces its participants from the society for which they are supposed to be trained.



—This system breeds the notion that education is synonymous with formal schooling, and people are judged and employed on the basis of their ability to pass examinations and acquire paper qualifications.

—This system does not involve its students in productive work.

Task 7

Script

For beauty and for romance the first place among all the cities of the United Kingdom must be given to Oxford. The impression that Oxford makes upon those who, familiar with her from early years, have learnt to know and love her in later life is remarkable. Teeming with much that is ancient, she appears as the embodiment of youth and beauty. Exquisite in line, sparkling with light and colour, she seems ever bright and young, while her sons fall into decay and perish. “Alma Mater!” they cry, and love her for her loveliness, till their dim eyes can look on her no more.

And this is for the reason that the true loveliness of Oxford cannot be learnt at once. As her charms have grown from age to age, so their real appreciation is gradual. Not that she cannot catch the eye of one who sees her for the first time, and smiling, hold him captive. This she can do now and then; but even so her new lover has yet to learn her preciousness.