

**Unit  
1**

# Starting out

## **First impressions of a fresher**

**Read how one student settles  
down during her first few days**

## **Memories of college in the 1950s**

**Then and now and  
how it's all changed**

## **Now you're here, but will you survive?**

**Find out how students cope  
with starting university in  
other countries**

## Starting point

1 Work in pairs. Look at the photo of a university. Choose words to describe it.

modern friendly traditional dynamic  
quiet serious busy impressive  
spiritual lively academic

Now think of words to describe your own college.

2 Make a list of places on your college campus.

Example: gym sports centre  
swimming pool laboratory  
bar dormitory medical centre  
Students' Union library lecture hall  
seminar room bookshop supermarket  
arts centre dining hall Internet café

Which ones will you spend most time in?

## Active reading (1)

### Predicting

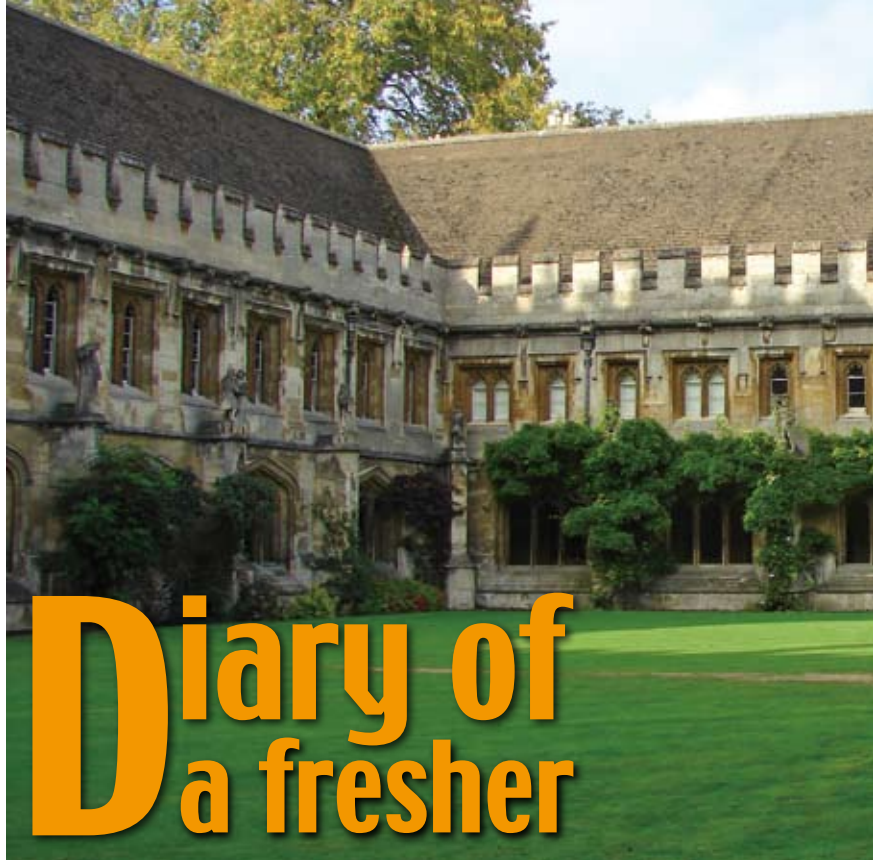
Before we start reading a passage, we may look at the title, headings and photos to predict what the passage is about. We may prepare ourselves by thinking about:

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

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

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

Now read the passage and check your answer.



### Sunday ☀

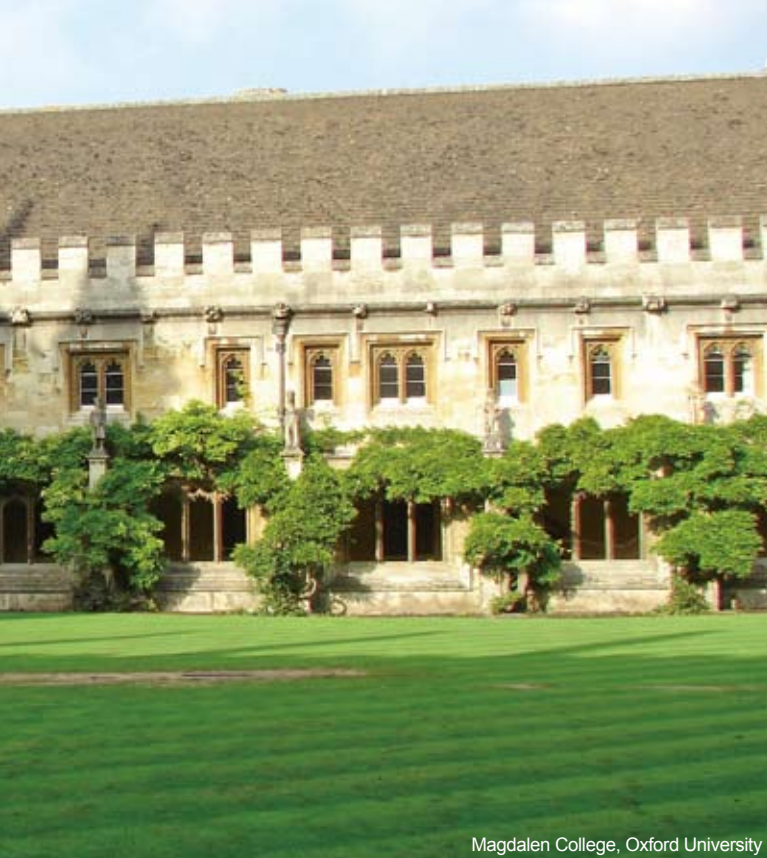
- 1 After a long drive from home, we arrive at my hall of residence, and I check in. The warden gives me a set of keys and a room number. It's five floors up, and the lift doesn't work. Finally, with my mother red in the face and short of breath, we find Room 8, I unlock the door, and we all walk in.
- 2 After one minute, my father climbs out. The room is barely big enough for one, and certainly not big enough for the whole family. I can lie on the bed and touch three walls without moving a muscle.
- 3 Lucky my brother and my dog didn't come too.
- 4 Later. My parents have just left. I'm here alone, surrounded by my books and a suitcase. What do I do next?

### Monday ☀

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

### Tuesday ☁

- 10 Am feeling a little hungry, and I realize I haven't eaten for two days. I go downstairs and find that I can have three meals a day



Magdalen College, Oxford University

in the dining hall. I go down and join a very long queue.

- 11 "What's for breakfast?" I ask the boy in front of me.
- 12 "Don't know. I was too late for breakfast. This is for lunch."
- 13 It's self-service and today's menu includes chicken, rice, potatoes, salad, vegetables, cheese, yoghurt and fruit. The boy in front puts it all on his plate, pays for it, and goes to sit down.
- 14 Not feeling very hungry any more.
- 15 My mother calls. She asks if I'm eating proper meals.

### Wednesday 🦉

- 16 I have a lecture at 9 am. I wake up at 8.45. No one has woken me. Strange.
- 17 I get dressed, and rush over to the lecture hall. I sit down beside a girl who looks half asleep. She looks at me. "Just got up?" she asks. How can she tell?
- 18 The lecture takes an hour, and at the end I look at my notes. I can't read my handwriting.
- 19 The girl's name is Sophie and she's an English literature major, like me. She looks very intelligent, and when we chat after the lecture, she tells me she read the whole of this term's reading list during her gap year. She impresses me, and I feel so ignorant that I shouldn't even breathe the same air as her.
- 20 Mum calls. She asks if I slept OK.

### Thursday ☀️

- 21 It's the Freshers' Fair today, and Sophie and I go along to see how many clubs we can join. We both agree that we want to make a lot of friends, so I sign up for ballroom

dancing, the Artificial Intelligence Society, bell ringing and the Extreme Sports Club. Sophie signs up for Amateur Dramatics and the Mozart choir.

- 22 I wonder if Sophie and I are going to stay good friends.
- 23 Mum calls. My brother has tried to rent out my bedroom back home. Mum assures me that it's mine for as long as I need it, that it's my home and that they miss me very much, especially the dog. I burst into tears.

### Friday 🍷

- 24 In the morning, I go to the library. But it seems I need an ID card which is used for identification. For some reason, I have to swear that I won't damage the books or break the library rules, and if I do, I'll be sent to prison. (What!? For speaking too loudly?) It seems that it's a very old library, and the university is very proud of it.
- 25 There's a disco tonight, but I've run out of clean clothes. I'm not sure what happens to my dirty clothes after putting them in the clothes basket and before finding them clean, ironed and folded in my wardrobe. Maybe Mum will call soon. ■

## Language and culture

A **freshman** (*AmE* freshman) is a student in their first year at university.

A **hall of residence** (*AmE* dormitory) is a large building at a college or university where students live. Students usually have their own room or share with one person.

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

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

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

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

## Reading and understanding

### 2 Check (✓) the true statements.

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

### 3 Choose the best way to complete the sentences.

- 1 The writer is staying in \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (a) a hall of residence
  - (b) a flat
  - (c) a small study
  - (d) a hotel
- 2 The writer's tutor \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (a) finds it easy to relax with the new students
  - (b) is very friendly
  - (c) welcomes her warmly to the university
  - (d) doesn't seem to find the students interesting
- 3 The writer \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (a) has been to many lectures before
  - (b) has already met Sophie
  - (c) arrives earlier than Sophie
  - (d) is attending the first lecture of her university course
- 4 At the Freshers' Fair students can choose to join \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (a) music and drama clubs
  - (b) sports clubs
  - (c) the same clubs as their friends
  - (d) all kinds of clubs for all interests
- 5 The university library \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (a) has very strict rules
  - (b) doesn't allow people to use the books
  - (c) only has books about prison
  - (d) contains only a few books
- 6 At the end of her first week, the writer \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (a) is missing her mother
  - (b) is enjoying herself enormously
  - (c) has done all her washing
  - (d) wants to finish her assignments

## Dealing with unfamiliar words

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

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

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

### 4 Match the words and expressions in the box with their definitions.

check in   gap   impress   muscle   sip   swear

- 1 to make a sincere statement that you are telling the truth
- 2 a piece of flesh that connects bones and moves a particular part of your body
- 3 to make you admire or respect someone
- 4 to drink in small amounts
- 5 a period of time between two events
- 6 to arrive somewhere and give your personal details to the person working at the reception desk

### 5 Replace the underlined words with the correct form of the words and expressions in the box.

assure   barely   ignorant   intelligent  
run out of   sign up   spill

- 1 There was only just enough room for two people.
- 2 Be careful or you'll accidentally pour your drink down your clothes.
- 3 He was completely unaware of what to do in the library.
- 4 She was very clever and got excellent grades.
- 5 You write your name on the list to join the club.
- 6 She tells me that she's definitely read the book.
- 7 I need to go and buy some tea, I have finished it all.

**6 Answer the questions about the words and expressions.**

- 1 Is a *warden* likely to be (a) a teacher at the college, or (b) someone who looks after the hall of residence?
- 2 Is a *tutor* likely to be (a) a teacher, or (b) a student?
- 3 If you *go along* somewhere, do you (a) go to a place and join other people there, or (b) walk a long way to get to a place?
- 4 If you *rent out* a room, do you (a) paint and decorate it, or (b) allow it to be used by someone who pays you regularly to use it?

**Reading and interpreting****Humour through exaggeration**

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

*I can lie on the bed and touch three walls without moving a muscle.* The writer doesn't really mean the room is too small to the extent that she can't move a muscle, she is exaggerating.

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

- 1 As he speaks, he moves his head from side to side, which makes his coffee spill into the saucer. Is this the real reason the coffee spills into the saucer?
- 2 ... "splendid," he says, without waiting for the answer, and moves on. Is the tutor really interested in the students he's talking to?
- 3 ... today's menu includes chicken, rice, potatoes, salad, vegetables, cheese, yoghurt and fruit. The boy in front puts it all on his plate, pays for it, and goes to sit down. Is this a usual amount of food to eat at one meal?
- 4 She impresses me, and I feel so ignorant that I shouldn't even breathe the same air as her. What does the writer think of Sophie?

**Developing critical thinking****8 Work in pairs and discuss the questions.**

- 1 Do you think the diary extract is funny?
- 2 Have you had any similar experiences during your first weeks at university?
- 3 What are the main differences between the writer's university and yours?
- 4 Which aspects about the writer's university do you like or dislike?

**Talking point****WHAT'S A COLLEGE EDUCATION FOR?**

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

**(1 = most important, 10 = least important)**

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

## Active reading (2)

### Predicting

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

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

### *Tis: A Memoir*

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

- 1 What difficulties might Frank McCourt have faced as an immigrant when he arrived in New York?
- 2 Why might a lack of formal education be a disadvantage?
- 3 How do you think he became a schoolteacher?
- 4 What do you think the blurb means when it refers to "survival"? Does it suggest he had an easy life?
- 5 Which information describes facts, and which describes opinions about the book?

2 Read the extract from the novel *Tis: A Memoir*. Decide where it comes in the novel, and what it describes.

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

everyone else, especially the Irish. I'd like to raise my hand and tell the professor how the Irish suffered for centuries under English rule but I'm sure everyone in this class has a high school diploma and if I open my mouth they'll know I'm not one of them.

- 5 Other students are easy about raising their hands and they always say, Well, I think.
- 6 Some day I'll raise my hand and say, Well, I think, but I don't know what to think about Pilgrims and their education. Then the professor tells us ideas don't drop fully formed from the skies, that the Pilgrims were, in the long run, children of the Reformation with an accompanying world-view and their attitudes to children were so informed.
- 7 There is more notebook scribbling around the room, the women busier than the men. The women scribble as if every word out of Professor Green's mouth were important.
- 8 Then I wonder why I have this fat textbook on American education which I carry in subways so that people can admire me for being a college student. I know there will be examinations, a mid-term and a final, but where will the questions come from? If the professor talks and talks and the textbook is 700 pages I'll surely be lost.
- 9 There are good-looking girls in the class and I'd like to ask one if she knows what I should know before the mid-term exam in seven weeks. I'd like to go to the university cafeteria or a Greenwich Village coffee shop and chat with the girl about the Pilgrims and their Puritan ways and how they frightened the life out of their children. I could tell the girl how I read Dostoyevsky and Melville and she'd be impressed and fall in love with me and we'd study the history of education in America together. ■

## Language and culture

**Dostoyevsky** (1821–1881) was a Russian novelist. His most famous novels are *Crime and Punishment* and *The Idiot*.

**Melville** (1819–1891) was an American writer who wrote a long novel called *Moby Dick*.

**NYU** is the shortened form for New York University.

A **brogue** is a strong local accent, especially an Irish or a Scottish accent.

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

**The Reformation** refers to a period of religious change in Europe in the 16th century, when the teachings of Roman Catholicism were challenged by reformers. This finally led to a split with the Pope and the Catholic church, and then to the establishment of the Protestant church.

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

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



## Reading and understanding

### 3 Answer the questions.

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

## Dealing with unfamiliar words

### 4 Replace the underlined words with the correct form of the words in the box.

admirable detect inadequate  
persecution scribble subway

- 1 When he speaks, people notice that he sounds Irish.
- 2 Frank McCourt had read a lot of books which was deserving respect considering he had no high school education.
- 3 You can tell the students on the underground trains by the number of books they carry.
- 4 The woman in the admissions office suggests that his European education is not good enough.
- 5 The professor was writing very quickly in his notebook.
- 6 Many immigrants came to America to escape extremely bad treatment because of their race, religion or political beliefs in their own countries.

### 5 Answer the questions about the expressions.

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

## Reading and interpreting

### Inferring

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

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

- 1 She says The History of Education in America course will provide me with the broad cultural background I need after my inadequate European education. How does the writer feel about his European education being described as inadequate?
- 2 All around me are students scribbling away in their notebooks and I wish I knew what to scribble myself. How am I supposed to know what's important out of all the things she's saying up there? How does he feel about being in class at the moment?
- 3 Some students raise their hands to ask questions but I could never do that. The whole class would stare at me and wonder who's the one with the accent. Does he feel part of the class yet?
- 4 I could tell the girl how I read Dostoyevsky and Melville and she'd be impressed and fall in love with me and we'd study the history of education in America together. Do you think he has made friends yet? How does he feel about this?

## Developing critical thinking

### 7 Work in pairs and discuss the questions.

- 1 How did you feel when you first started college?
- 2 How do you feel during lectures?
- 3 How often do you ask questions during a lecture?
- 4 Do you always agree with what the professor says?
- 5 Do you think life in an American university is different from life in a Chinese university?



## Talking point

1 Work in pairs. Read *Starting out at college* and discuss the questions.

### Starting out at college – how to survive student life

I'm very shy. How will I find the courage to make new friends? **Mary, Oxford**

I have to shop and cook for myself and I haven't a clue what to do. Where do I start? **Tony, Manchester**

I get really worried by exams, but have always had my family to help me. How will I cope now? **John, London**

I get homesick very easily, and I'm sure I'll miss my family. What should I do? **Katy, Stirling**

I've never had to handle my own finances. How do I stop getting into debt? **Jo, Exeter**

I've heard that everyone is incredibly clever at university. I'm sure I'm going to feel stupid. How can I appear more intelligent? **Malcolm, Birmingham**

I've heard that work at university is different from senior high school. What can I expect? **Callum, Belfast**

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

### Beating the homesickness blues! Here are some tips.

Call home once a day.

Have familiar things around you, such as photos of your family and friends.

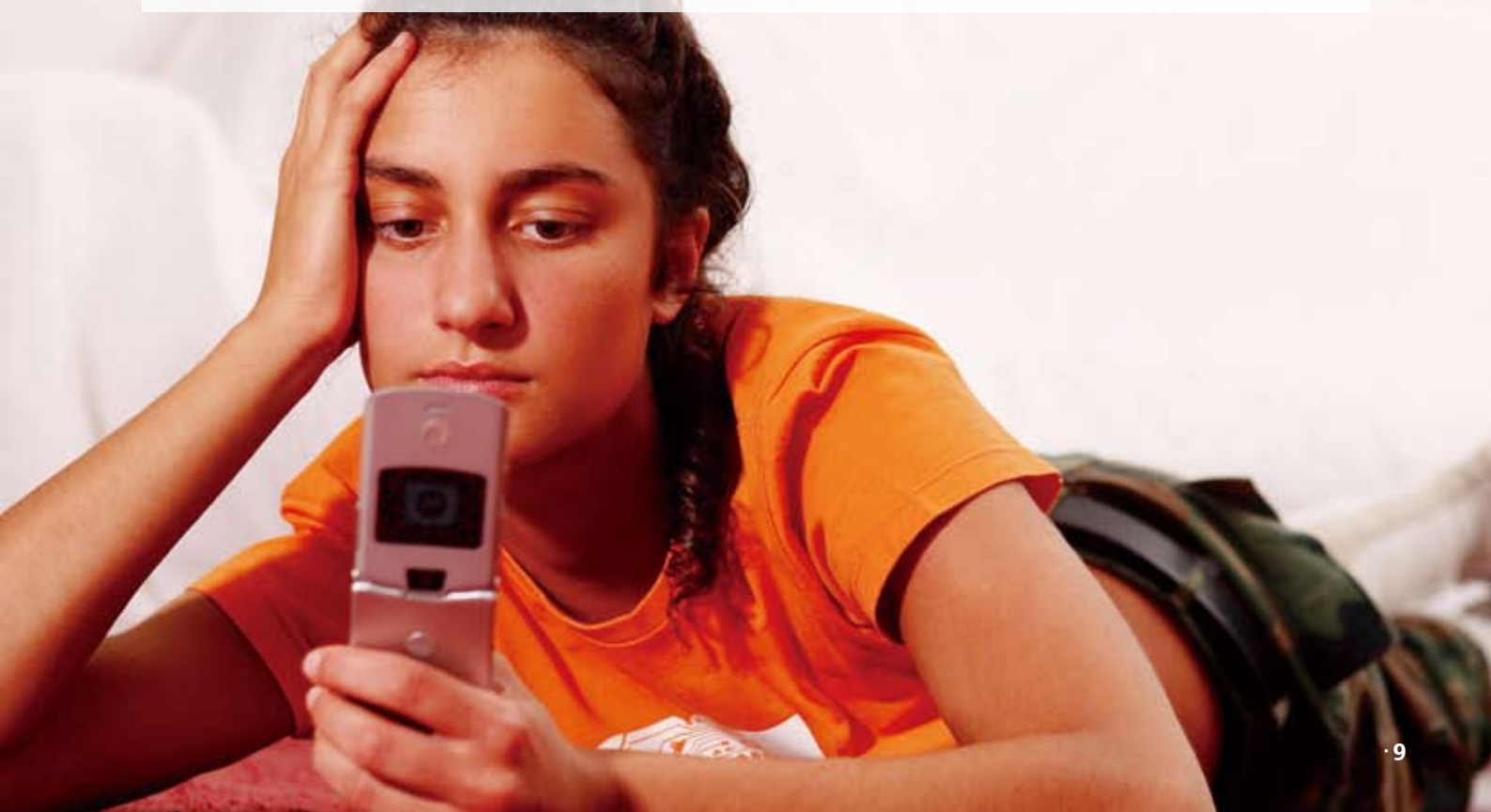
Cook your favourite food.

Take lots of exercise, especially in the first few weeks.

Join lots of clubs and societies.

Check you know everyone in the rooms near yours. If you don't, knock on the door and introduce yourself.

Go shopping.



## Language in use

### with / without

#### 1 Match the sentences with the uses of *with* / *without*.

- 1 ... with my mother red in the face and short of breath
- 2 ... with Professor Maxine Green up there
- 3 ... with an accompanying world-view
- 4 ... without moving a muscle
- 5 ... without waiting for the answer
- 6 ... someone without a high school education

- (a) used for saying what possessions, qualities, or features someone or something has
- (b) used for describing what is happening at the same time
- (c) used for saying what you do not do when you do something else
- (d) used for saying what someone or something does not have

#### 2 Rewrite the sentences using *with* / *without*.

- 1 Her tutor moves his head from side to side. He spills his coffee into the saucer.
- 2 "Splendid," he says. He doesn't wait for an answer.
- 3 Frank McCourt speaks in class. He has an Irish accent.
- 4 He plans to go on the subway. He has the books covered in purple and white NYU jackets.
- 5 He's only allowed to take two courses. He isn't told why.
- 6 He would like to ask a question. He doesn't like to raise his hand.

### collocations

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

#### 3 Read the explanations of the words and expressions. Answer the questions.

- 1 **climb** When you *climb into* / *out of* / *through something*, you do it with difficulty.
  - (a) So why does the writer's father *climb out of the room*?
  - (b) Why would you *climb into bed*?
  - (c) If you *climb through a hole*, what do you do with your body?
- 2 **spill** This word usually suggests several ideas: liquid, accidentally, movement and out of control.
  - (a) What has happened if you've *spilt coffee all over your desk*?
  - (b) What has happened if *toys spilt out all over the carpet*?
  - (c) What might be happening if *crowds were spilling out of the bars and restaurants*?
- 3 **join** When you *join something*, you become part of it. The writer *joins a queue*, and *several clubs*.
  - (a) When might someone *join a band*?
  - (b) What has happened if you *join the unemployed*?
  - (c) What do you do when you *join in*?
- 4 **burst into** This phrase suggests that something suddenly happens, or someone suddenly starts doing something.
  - (a) What does the writer suddenly start doing when she *bursts into tears*?
  - (b) What *bursts into bloom*?
  - (c) What do you do when something *bursts into flames*?

**5 clean** This word usually suggests several ideas: not dirty, not illegal or wrong, without problems, inoffensive.

- (a) If you've got a *clean licence*, what have or haven't you done?
- (b) If you use *clean language*, what do you avoid saying?
- (c) If something has a *clean bill of health*, is it healthy or working correctly?

**6 easy** This word usually suggests that something is not difficult or doesn't need much work. It can also suggest that a person is confident, happy and not worried about anything.

- (a) If someone is *easy-going*, how do they behave with other people?
- (b) If someone is *easy on the eye*, how do they look?
- (c) If something is *easier said than done*, is it more or less difficult to do?
- (d) If someone tells you to "*Take it easy*", what are they telling you to do?

#### 4 Complete the sentences using the collocations in Activity 3.

- 1 If ever I \_\_\_\_\_ my clothes, it's because I have put on a lot of weight and my clothes don't fit me any more.
- 2 The last time someone made me \_\_\_\_\_ was when I was a small child and someone hurt me.
- 3 I always use \_\_\_\_\_ when I talk to my teachers or parents.
- 4 It was \_\_\_\_\_ said than done when someone suggested that we should put the flag on the top of the mountain.
- 5 I'll never forget the time when I had to \_\_\_\_\_ a window because I was locked out of the house.
- 6 Unfortunately, I \_\_\_\_\_ water over my assignment, so I had to print another copy.
- 7 When my friends suggested that they wanted to play football on the beach, I decided to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 8 When the cherry trees \_\_\_\_\_, I think of my visit to Japan two years ago.

9 I would only lose my \_\_\_\_\_ if ever I had a car accident in which I was driving under the influence of alcohol.

10 The people I think are \_\_\_\_\_ are attractive and pleasant to look at.

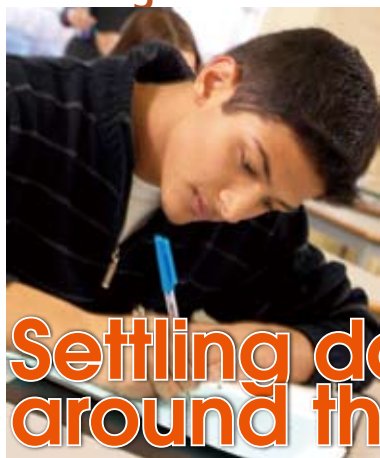
#### 5 Translate the sentences into Chinese.

- 1 Finally, with my mother red in the face and short of breath, we find Room 8, I unlock the door, and we all walk in.
- 2 She impresses me, and I feel so ignorant that I shouldn't even breathe the same air as her.
- 3 I don't know why I have to be introduced to literature but the woman in the admissions office says it's a requirement even though I've read Dostoyevsky and Melville and that's admirable for someone without a high school education.
- 4 I'm in heaven and the first thing to do is buy the required textbooks, cover them with the purple and white NYU book jackets so that people in the subway will look at me admiringly.
- 5 Then the professor tells us ideas don't drop fully formed from the skies, that the Pilgrims were, in the long run, children of the Reformation with an accompanying world-view and their attitudes to children were so informed.

#### 6 Translate the sentences into English.

- 1 他们对业余剧社的介绍给索菲留下了深刻的印象，于是她就报了名。(Amateur Dramatics; sign up for)
- 2 网络教育为全职人员提供了利用业余时间接受继续教育的机会。(work full time)
- 3 刚上大学时，他不知道是否需要把老师讲的内容一字不落都记下来。(be supposed to; scribble down)
- 4 没有人觉察出他隐藏在笑容背后的绝望。(detect)
- 5 有些学生能轻松自如地与陌生人交谈，可有些学生却很难做到这一点。(be easy about)

## Reading across cultures



# Settling down at college around the world

### Tanya Zarutskaya *Moscow, Russia*

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

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

### Miguel Fonseca *Guadalajara, Mexico*

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

### Francine Bonnet *Lyon, France*

When I first arrived, the university seemed very large and unfriendly. I found the freedom and the lack of guidance difficult at first. At school, I was used to a timetable with homework in the evening.

I also had a lot of trouble managing my allowance. You have to buy food, books, bus fares, clothes and everything, so it's not like the pocket money you had as a kid at home. The money arrives all in one go, so I felt pretty rich at the start of term. Then I spent too much, and could only afford to eat a sandwich once a day!

But now I've realized that it's no longer my parents' or teachers' responsibility to look after me. For the first time, it's me who's responsible for my life ... and I don't know what to do! ■

#### 1 Read the passage and answer the questions.

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

#### 2 Work in pairs and discuss the questions.

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

## Guided writing

### Writing a narrative

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

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

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

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

#### **This time last year ... / When I first arrived at**

**university** A narrative of the past experience usually begins with these expressions of past time.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## UNIT TASK

### Preparing a welcome guide for next year's freshers

1 Work in pairs and prepare a welcome guide for next year's freshers.

- Make a list about the things you thought about when you first arrived. Think about:

what to do if you're homesick

how to make new friends

how to begin studying

- Make notes on how you dealt with these challenges or problems.

2 Write some friendly advice to freshers who might have the same problems as you did.

3 Place your welcome guide somewhere everyone can see it.



# UNIT FILE

### Vocabulary

admirable assure barely check in detect gap ignorant impress  
inadequate intelligent muscle persecution run out of scribble  
sign up sip spill subway swear

### Reading skills

Predicting  
Humour through exaggeration  
Inferring

### Guided writing

Writing a narrative

### Unit task

Preparing a welcome guide for next year's freshers