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Fresh Start

Pre-Class Tasks

1 Mini-Research

Search the Internet for information about freshman orientation in universities and answer the following questions.

1. What is the purpose of freshman orientation?
2. In what ways does the orientation benefit the freshmen?

2 Co-Learning

Watch a video clip and discuss the following questions in a group.

1. What are the students' overall impressions of Stockholm University?
2. What do they think of Stockholm?
3. How is the school system in Sweden different from the school systems in other countries?

3 Presentation

Interview your friends or family members with the following questions and make a presentation in class.

1. Have you experienced freshman orientation in college?
2. What were your expectations of the orientation?
3. What have you gained from it?



VIDEO CLIP





Lauren Nevins



AUDIO CLIP

Freshman Orientation

Many of our fears are tissue-paper-thin, and a single courageous step would carry us clear through them.

—Brendan Francis

- 1 “At this time, we ask that parents and students separate into two groups for the remainder of the day.”
- 2 Flocks of incoming freshmen happily abandon their parents upon hearing this announcement. I am less than thrilled at the prospect of starting college, let alone leaving my mother’s side to tour the campus with the rest of the wide-eyed incoming freshmen.
- 3 We follow our senior tour guide. The other incoming students chatter and make casual introductions. I drag behind. How could I have believed I was ready for this? After all, it has only been a few months since I was discharged from the hospital.
- 4 My brooding is interrupted by a peppy voice. “Hi, I’m Jennifer.”
- 5 The voice is attached to a freckle-faced blond girl dressed in what can only be described as hippy-like sports attire.
- 6 “I’m Lauren,” I reply.



- 7 “Commuting or dorming?”
- 8 I fumble for my words, still caught up in my own thoughts. I would dorm, but I have spent the last four years overcoming a major depressive disorder that nearly claimed my life.
- 9 “I, uh, I don’t know yet. My parents think I should dorm, but I don’t really want to,” I say in my most confident voice.
- 10 “You should definitely dorm! I’m going to, and I think it will be a lot of fun!”
- 11 Before I can utter my less-than-enthusiastic reply, the tour guide announces that it is time to create our schedules.
- 12 We crowd into the Student Activity Center, or as the true, full-blown university students call it, the Sac, a nickname that immediately reminds me of the warm, safe bed at home I wish I were nestled in. Three seniors hand out course bulletins as thick as textbooks, and slap registration forms down on the tables in front of us.
- 13 All around me, papers crinkle and pencils scribble furiously. These sounds blare like an alarm clock, screaming “Wake up, Lauren!”
- 14 Students seem to be moving through the process at rapid speed and I have not even opened my course catalog.
- 15 Focus, I tell myself. You can do this.
- 16 Intro to Psychology A or B, Foundations of Biology 2, Calculus, Geology 101, English, History, sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7...the list goes on, and on, and on.
- 17 I begin to panic. How am I supposed to know what to do? I’m just relearning how to live in the real world again, and they want me to make a schedule?!
- 18 I cannot breathe, anxiety is coursing through my veins, and my head is pounding.
- 19 In moments, I am sobbing.
- 20 Other students abandon their tasks to stare at me, making me wish that the earth would open up and swallow me whole. One of the seniors in charge walks over to my table.
- 21 “What’s the matter?” she asks gruffly.
- 22 “I...I can’t do this!” I cry.
- 23 “All you have to do is make your schedule, just like everybody else,” she says, clearly annoyed.
- 24 I cry harder. Then, a warm hand on my shoulder...Jennifer.
- 25 “Everything is alright,” she tells the senior. “I’ll help her.”
- 26 “What’s wrong, sweetie?” Jennifer asks.
- 27 Jennifer’s kindness gives way to new tears. If crying were a major, I would have earned my doctorate in it by now.

- 28 “It is just too much; it is just too overwhelming,” I say. “I...I have depression and I take medication.”
- 29 Why did I say that? She probably thinks I am a freak now. But Jennifer puts her arm around me and her words reach out and wrap warmly around my soul.
- 30 “I know all about that sort of thing,” she says. “My mother has depression. Besides, I think it’s pretty normal to feel overwhelmed right now.”
- 31 Jennifer reaches out and gently places her hand on my arm. “Okay, so you said earlier you wanted to be a Psych major, right?”
- 32 And with that, this girl who was a stranger to me before this day guides me through the process, step by step, until I have everything in place and my schedule is complete. I am amazed at how much more clearly I can see now that the veil of anxiety and tears has lifted. “See,” Jennifer tells me softly, “you knew exactly what to do—you just needed to believe in yourself.”
- 33 That was the beginning of what would blossom into a powerful friendship. As I went to meet my mother, I decided that I would give living on campus a try... after all, I had come this far, and with a little help from a new friend, I had been reminded of the strength that existed in me. Four years later, as I graduated from the university with the distinction of Magna Cum Laude, I looked back on freshman orientation, on all of my fears and insecurities, and smiled.

Notes to the Text

1. commuting

Students who are enrolled at a college or university may choose either to live off campus, which is referred to as commuting, or to live in a dormitory, which is called dorming.

2. major depressive disorder

Major depressive disorder (MDD) is a mental disorder which is also known as depression (抑郁症). People with MDD usually have a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest, accompanied by a variety of emotional and physical problems.

3. Sac

A sac is a part inside the body of a person, an animal or a plant that is shaped like a little bag and contains air, liquid, or other substances. In the text, the Sac is the nickname of the Student Activity Center, which reminds the author of the warm, safe bed at home.

4. Magna Cum Laude

This is a Latin phrase meaning “with great praise,” an honor added to a diploma or degree for work considered to be of much higher quality than average. Latin honors are typically used for undergraduate university degrees in the U.S.A. Note the three levels of honor:

Summa Cum Laude 最优秀 Magna Cum Laude 极优秀 Cum Laude 优秀

New Words and Expressions

freshman /'freʃmən/ *n.* (especially *AmE*) a student who is in his/her first year at a university, college, or high school (大学或中学) 一年级新生

orientation /,ɔ:riən'teɪʃən, ,ɔri-/ *n.* training or information that you are given before starting a new job, course, etc. (任职等前的) 培训

courageous /kə'reɪdʒəs/ *adj.* brave 勇敢的, 无畏的

remainder /rɪ'meɪndə/ *n.* (usually **the** ~) the remaining people, things or time; the rest 剩下的人、事物或时间, 剩余部分

flock /flɒk/ *n.* (~ **of sb**) a large group of people, especially of the same type (尤指同类人的) 一大群

incoming /'ɪnkʌmɪŋ/ *adj.* arriving at or coming to a place 正到达的

abandon /ə'bændən/ *v.* 1) to leave sb, especially sb you are responsible for, with no intention of returning (不顾责任、义务等) 离弃, 抛弃; 2) to stop doing sth, especially before it is finished 放弃, 中止

thrilled /θrɪld/ *adj.* very excited and pleased 非常兴奋的, 极为激动的

prospect /'prɒspekt/ *n.* an idea of what might or will happen in the future 前景, 展望, 设想

chatter /'tʃætə/ *v.* to talk quickly and continuously, especially about things that are not important 喋喋不休, 唠叨

casual /'kæʒuəl/ *adj.* not formal 非正式的, 随便的

drag /dræg/ *v.* to move slowly and with effort 缓慢而费力地移动

discharge /dɪs'tʃɑ:dʒ/ *v.* to give sb official permission to leave a place or job 准许(某人)离开

brooding /'bru:ɪdɪŋ/ *n.* persistent morbid meditation on a problem 焦虑, 忧思, 担忧

interrupt /,ɪntə'rʌpt/ *v.* to stop the continuous progress of sth for a short time 暂停, 中断

peppy /'pepi/ *adj.* (*informal*) lively or full of energy 充满活力的, 生机勃勃的

freckle /'frekəl/ *n.* a small brown spot on someone's skin, especially on the face 雀斑, 斑点

blond /blɒnd/ *adj.* (of hair) pale gold in color (头发) 金黄色的

hippy /'hɪpi/ *n.* someone, especially in the 1960s, who rejected conventional ways of living, dressing, and behaving, and tried to live a life based on peace and love 嬉皮士

attire /ə'taɪə/ *n.* (*formal*) clothes 服装, 衣服

fumble /'fʌmbəl/ *v.* to have difficulty speaking clearly or finding the right words to say 支支吾吾地说

overcome /,əʊvə'kʌm/ *v.* to succeed in dealing with or controlling a problem that has been preventing you from achieving sth 克服

depressive /dɪ'presɪv/ *adj.* connected with the medical condition of depression 抑郁症的

disorder /dɪs'ɔ:də/ *n.* an illness that causes a part of the body to stop functioning correctly 失调, 紊乱

claim /kleɪm/ *v.* (of a disaster, an accident, etc.) to cause sb's death (灾难、事故等) 夺走(生命)

utter /'ʌtə/ *v.* (*formal*) to say sth 说

nickname /'nɪkneɪm/ *n.* an informal, often humorous, name for a person that is connected with their real name, their personality or appearance, or with sth they have done 绰号

nestle /'nesəl/ *v.* to sit or lie down in a warm or soft place, or to put or hold sb/sth in a comfortable position in such a place (使) 舒适地安顿下来

slap /slæp/ *v.* to put sth on a surface in a quick, careless and often noisy way 啪的一声放下, 随意扔放

registration /,redʒə'streɪʃən/ *n.* the act of making an official record of sth/sb 登记, 注册

crinkle /'krɪŋkəl/ *v.* to become covered with or to form a lot of thin folds or lines, especially in skin, fabric, or paper (使某物) 变皱

scribble /'skrɪbəl/ *v.* to write sth quickly and carelessly, especially because you do not have much time 草草记下, 匆匆写下

furiously /'fjuəriəsli/ *adv.* very fast 飞快地

blare /bleə/ *v.* to make a loud and unpleasant noise 发出刺耳的响声

catalog /'kætəlbɒg/ *n.* a complete list of items for sale or courses at a university 目录

foundation /faʊn'deɪʃən/ *n.* a principle, an idea or a fact that sth is based on 基本原理, 基础

panic /'pænik/ *v.* to suddenly feel frightened so that you cannot think clearly or behave sensibly 惊慌失措

course /kɔ:s/ *v.* (of liquid) to move or flow quickly (液体) 快速地流动

vein /veɪn/ *n.* any of the tubes that carry blood from all parts of the body to the heart 静脉

pound /paʊnd/ *v.* to beat quickly and loudly 狂跳, 怦怦地跳动

sob /sɒb/ *v.* to cry noisily, taking sudden, sharp breaths 啜泣, 呜咽

stare /steə/ *v.* to look at sb/sth for a long time 盯着看, 注视

swallow /'swɒləʊ/ *v.* to make food, drink, etc. go down your throat into your stomach 吞下, 咽下

gruffly /'grʌfli/ *adv.* in a rough, unfriendly voice or way 粗声地, 粗暴地

annoy /ə'noɪ/ *v.* to make sb slightly angry 使恼怒, 使生气

doctorate /'dɒktərət/ *n.* the highest university degree 博士学位

overwhelming /,əʊvə'welmɪŋ/ *adj.* having such a great effect on you that you feel confused and do not know how to react 令人不知所措的

medication /,medɪ'keɪʃən/ *n.* a drug or another form of medicine that you take to prevent or to treat an illness 药物

freak /fri:k/ *n.* someone who looks strange or behaves in a strange way 怪异的人

wrap around to put sth around sth else 围住

soul /səʊl/ *n.* the spiritual part of a person 灵魂

in place in the correct position 在正确的位置

blossom /'blɒsəm/ *v.* to grow or develop (into sth) 发展, 长成

distinction /dɪ'stɪŋkʃən/ *n.* a special mark/grade or award given to sb, especially a student, for excellent work 优等评分, 荣誉

look back (on sth) to think about sth that happened in the past 回顾, 回忆

Lexical and Grammar Notes

1. Many of our fears are tissue-paper-thin...

The word *tissue-paper-thin* is a compound (复合词), i.e. a combination of two or more words that is used as a single word. Compounds may appear in hyphenated form (e.g. *wide-eyed*, *freckle-faced*, *hippy-like*, *full-blown*), in closed form (e.g. *incoming*, *freshman*, *textbook*), or in open form (e.g. *registration form*, *alarm clock*). There are no hard and fast rules to follow. The only way to be sure about how a compound is written is to consult a dictionary.

2. Flocks of incoming freshmen happily abandon their parents upon hearing this announcement.

This is a specific example of the tense known as the historic present (also called dramatic present or narrative present), which is the use of a verb in the present tense to describe a past event. In this narrative of a past event, the use of the present tense creates an effect of immediacy and makes the readers feel as if they were experiencing the event with the author.

3. I am less than thrilled at the prospect of starting college, let alone leaving my mother's side to tour the campus...

The phrase *let alone* means “not to mention.” It is used after a statement to emphasize that because the first thing is not true or possible, the next thing cannot be true or possible either, e.g. *We have no hospital, let alone an isolation ward.*

4. After all, it has only been a few months since I was discharged from the hospital.

We can also change the above sentence into: *After all, I was discharged from the hospital only a few months ago* (past simple). The difference is that the first sentence stresses the period of time that “I” was away from the hospital, while the second one simply tells the time when “I” was discharged from the hospital.

The word *discharge* is a momentary verb, which means the action is finished within a very short time. Therefore, it cannot be followed by a period of time. In order to tell the readers how long the author has been away from the hospital, she uses the present perfect in the main clause with the verb *be*. More examples:

He went to New York a week ago. (past simple)

It has been a week since he went to New York. (present perfect)

He has been in New York for a week. (present perfect)

5. ...her words reach out and wrap warmly around my soul.

The phrase *reach out* here means “to make contact with sb, especially to offer help, guidance, comfort or support.” And it means “to stretch one’s arm so as to touch” in *Jennifer reaches out and gently places her hand on my arm.*

Comprehension

1 Find out information about the following and share your findings in a group.

- 1 Brendan Francis
- 2 psychology
- 3 calculus
- 4 geology

2 Analyze the text structure and complete the following table.

Beginning (paras 1-3)	On her first day at college, unlike other _____, Lauren was not _____ at all at the prospect of starting college.
Body (paras 4-32)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1 (paras 4-10) Lauren met _____, who advised her to _____.2 (paras 11-20) _____ was really a difficult task for Lauren. She began to panic and _____ which made others stare at her.3 (paras 21-32) Just at that moment, _____ came over and helped Lauren with the _____.
Ending (para 33)	The _____ with Jennifer meant a lot to Lauren and she was reminded of the _____ that existed in her.

3 Answer the following questions.

- 1 What was Lauren's reaction upon hearing the announcement?
- 2 When asked what she would choose, commuting or dorming, how did Lauren react? Why did she react this way?
- 3 "If crying were a major, I would have earned my doctorate in it by now." (para 27) What is the implied meaning of this sentence?
- 4 What were other students' reactions to Lauren's sobbing?
- 5 Why did Jennifer know all about Lauren's condition?
- 6 Did Lauren decide to live on campus at last on that day? Why or why not?
- 7 From which sentences can you infer that Lauren had a certain depression?
- 8 How did Lauren get out of the bad effects of major depressive disorder at last?
- 9 How do you understand the quotation from Brendan Francis at the beginning of the article?
- 10 How does the author illustrate the viewpoint of Brendan Francis in the story?

Word Application

1 Consult a dictionary and complete the following table.

<i>adj.</i>	<i>n.</i>	<i>v.</i>
courageous	<i>courage</i>	<i>encourage</i>
		thicken
	depression	
		exist
		define
	breath	
normal		
	completion	
	power	
		strengthen

2 Replace the underlined parts of the sentences with the words or expressions given below. Change the form when necessary.

put aside	leave	put an end to	be allowed to leave
surprised	rapidly	be connected with	extremely happy

- Flocks of incoming freshmen happily abandon their parents upon hearing this announcement.
- I am less than thrilled at the prospect of starting college, let alone leaving my mother's side to tour the campus with the rest of the wide-eyed incoming freshmen.
- After all, it has only been a few months since I was discharged from the hospital.
- The voice is attached to a freckle-faced blond girl dressed in what can only be described as hippy-like sports attire.
- I would dorm, but I have spent the last four years overcoming a major depressive disorder that nearly claimed my life.
- Students seem to be moving through the process at rapid speed and I have not even opened my course catalog.
- Other students abandon their tasks to stare at me, making me wish that the earth would open up and swallow me whole.
- I am amazed at how much more clearly I can see now that the veil of anxiety and tears has lifted.

3 Complete the sentences with the proper form of the words given below.

doctorate	registration	utter	panic	insecurity
overwhelm	interrupt	swallow	depression	remainder

- 1 _____ for the course will take place a week before the semester starts.
- 2 Max was so thirsty that he gulped down the _____ of the drink.
- 3 My grandfather's studies were _____ by the sudden outbreak of World War II.
- 4 She went through a long period of _____ after losing her job.
- 5 She sat through the whole meeting without _____ a word.
- 6 Don't _____! Everything will be okay.
- 7 I've caught a cold. My throat really hurts when I _____.
- 8 He was awarded a(n) _____ of philosophy in political science at Columbia University.
- 9 They were _____ by the huge number of applications.
- 10 She has developed an outgoing personality to mask her fears and _____.

4 Complete the sentences with appropriate prepositions or adverbs.

- 1 With the end of the Cold War, competition in space exploration has gradually given way _____ international collaboration.
- 2 _____ your arrival, please report to the reception desk.
- 3 She dressed herself _____ Elizabethan costume for the annual Fancy-Dress Ball.
- 4 I'm very excited _____ the prospect of seeing her again.
- 5 Before the rail links are in operation, passengers can only travel _____ the tunnel by coach.
- 6 When the bundle was nestled _____ her arms, she moved the fold of the cloth to look at the baby's tiny face.
- 7 His latest film is described _____ a "romantic comedy."
- 8 She walked along the path and her dog followed close _____.
- 9 A crater some 20 meters deep has opened _____ in a residential area of the town, swallowing a car, but causing no injuries.
- 10 May you look _____ on the past with much pleasure.

Grammar Application

- 1** Read the passage (written in the historic present) and fill in the blanks with the proper form of the verbs in parentheses.



Twenty-four hours have passed since yesterday's interview and my phone is still quiet.

If you are a freshman at Tsinghua University and you want to study in the Department of Mathematical Sciences (DMS), you will have to take an audition to test if you are qualified right after arriving. If you fail, you'll have to study in some other department.

Now, I am one of the students waiting for the results. I can't do anything else but update my messages continually, but without avail. When I **1** _____ (update) my WeChat, a message which **2** _____ (read) one of my friends has just received the news of her admission suddenly **3** _____ (leap) to my eyes! I update my messages again. However, it is still totally blank. Now I can't help wondering if I will never get the message. When I go back to WeChat, I see more messages showing other students' admission. As if waiting for destiny, I **4** _____ (shut) off WeChat, **5** _____ (turn) the volume of messages up all the way, **6** _____ (throw) my phone on the table and **7** _____ (lie) in my chair with my eyes closed. After waiting for about a century, the phone **8** _____ (ring)! I **9** _____ (bounce) up from my chair and **10** _____ (grab) my phone in such a hurry that I almost throw it away! The happiness I deserve has finally come.

2 Rewrite the following sentences after the examples.

Example A: I was discharged from the hospital a few months ago. →

It has been a few months since I was discharged from the hospital.

- 1 He left Beijing ten years ago.
- 2 We met each other six years ago.
- 3 He bought the computer two months ago.
- 4 The organization was set up a few years ago.
- 5 Scientists started the research into the causes of cancer a century ago.

Example B: I left Xi'an three days ago. →

I have been away from Xi'an for three days.

- 6 Harry came back from Ireland a month ago.
- 7 Amy borrowed a comic book from Tony the day before yesterday.
- 8 The movie began ten minutes ago.
- 9 Sweetie's Sweet Shop opened at 8:00 a.m. today. It's 10:00 a.m. now.
- 10 They turned off the light three hours ago.

3 Complete the sentences with the proper form of the words in parentheses.

- 1 She spent the whole evening _____ (sob).
- 2 All you need to do now is _____ (register) for fall classes.
- 3 If you work hard, you _____ (earn) your doctorate.
- 4 His first act upon _____ (take) office was to repeal the luxury tax.
- 5 On the day you are discharged from the hospital, we require that you _____ (leave) the ward before 11 a.m.
- 6 If I had been 10 years younger back then, I _____ (dress) in the hippy-like sports attire.
- 7 I don't feel like _____ (stare) at people.
- 8 I wish I _____ (can) play the piano like that!

4 Translate the following sentences into English, using the proper form of the words or expressions in parentheses.

- 1 家庭主妇们把垃圾分成厨余垃圾、可回收垃圾和有害垃圾等。(separate)
- 2 导游们和一群群观光客正慢慢地从一座纪念碑走向另一座纪念碑。(flocks of)
- 3 一想到可以再次见到她，我就很激动。(at the prospect of)
- 4 谁会预料到他能成长为一名电影演员呢？(blossom into)
- 5 他以前的一些支持者不再信任他了。(believe in)
- 6 开始上课的时候，我们的老师总是先给大家发一份讲课提纲。(hand out)
- 7 如果你走了，谁来负责这个部门呢？(in charge of)

- 8 你讲的故事让我想起一件我曾经经历过的事。(remind...of)
- 9 索菲娅连生活必需品都没钱购买,更别说奢侈品了。(let alone)
- 10 被告男子被判无罪释放。(be discharged from)

Oral Practice

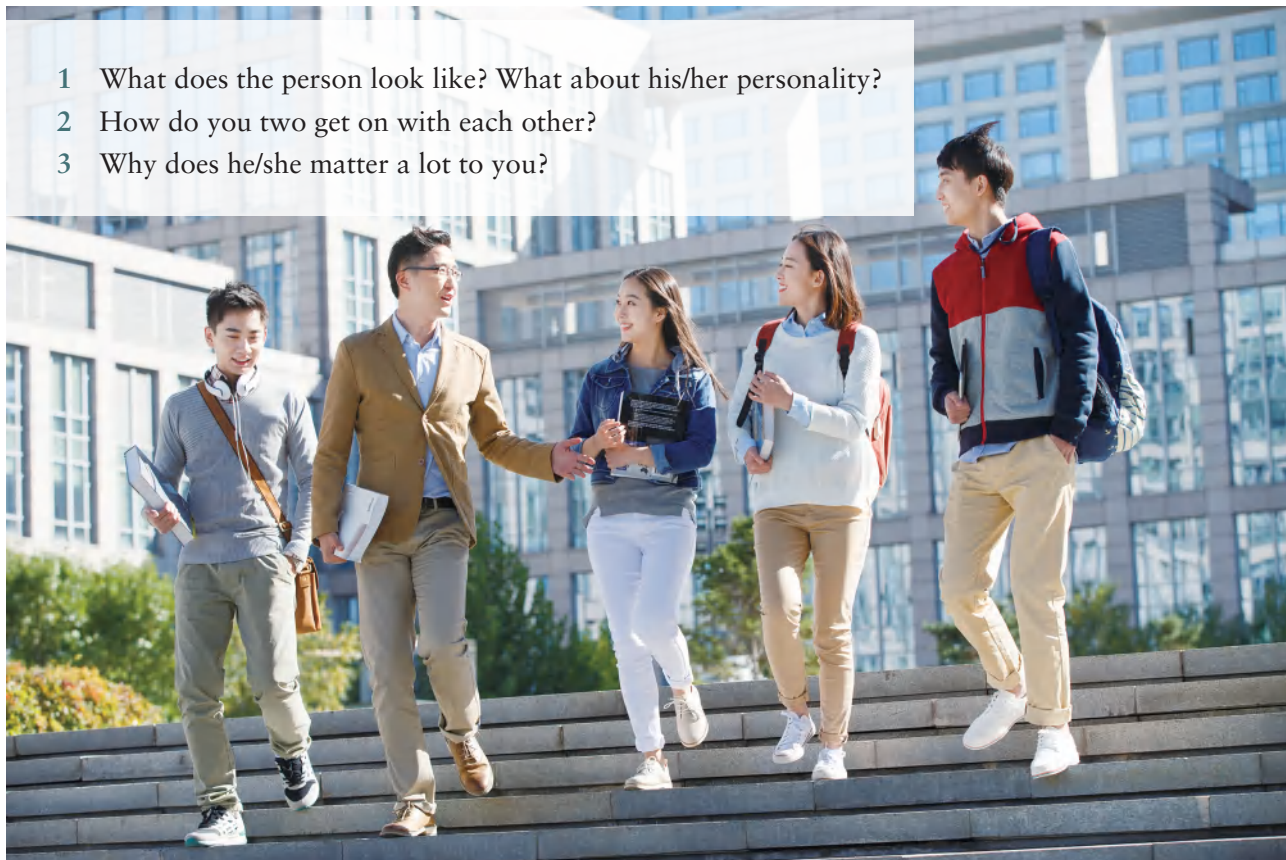
Work in a group and discuss the following questions.

- 1 Which aspects of university life have surprised you?
- 2 How are you adapting yourself to university life?

Writing

Write an essay about someone you met upon your arrival at university, using the “historic present.” The following questions may serve as a guide for your writing.

- 1 What does the person look like? What about his/her personality?
- 2 How do you two get on with each other?
- 3 Why does he/she matter a lot to you?




The Seeds of an Idea

Tawnee Calhoun

If a man aspires to the highest place, it is no dishonor to him to halt at the second, or even at the third.

—Marcus Tullius Cicero

- 
- 1 The college admission process can be a terrifying thing. At least for me it was. Nothing short of an axe-wielding mass murderer can be scarier than filling out all those long pages about yourself and your academic record for strangers into whose hands you are placing your future. Combine that with the fact that I am a homeschooled senior, which took the process to a whole new level of challenging. Nevertheless I made it through the long, dark tunnel of applications and nervous anticipation and emerged unscathed.
 - 2 It would be a lie to say that I didn't start thinking and worrying about college until junior year or so. The truth is that ever since I was a little girl the idea of college had been planted into my head to grow and thrive. When senior year came around it blossomed. My mother was a careful gardener and she made sure those ideas and dreams were seeded carefully and with love.
 - 3 I started researching different colleges as early as my freshman year, back when I was still in a public school. I'd go online and sort

through the vast wealth of information about community colleges, liberal arts colleges and four-year universities. The first choice was the easiest. What type of school did I want to go to? I knew I didn't want to go to community college. I wanted more than an associate's degree. But did I want a liberal arts education or did I want to go to a more prestigious four-year university? I decided I preferred the latter.

- 4 So I began the difficult task of picking which colleges seemed right for me. I used a variety of tools, tests and search engines, and by senior year I had my choices narrowed down to five schools. My top choice was based entirely on personal preferences and my own ambitions: Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. It wasn't too far from home and it was famous for its excellent school of journalism. It was just what I wanted; the only problem was that it was top-notch and accepted only the best of the best.
- 5 After narrowing down my search, it was time to begin the actual application process. But before that there was one more thing I had to accomplish: standardized testing. I wasn't particularly thrilled.
- 6 Early in senior year, I woke up one morning feeling very, very nervous. It was time to take the ACT test.
- 7 "Don't worry. You'll do great," my mother reassured me. I wasn't really convinced.
- 8 Still I hopped into my car and drove to Rockford College, the site of my testing and ironically one of the five colleges I was applying to. As I parked my car and stepped out into the crisp autumn air I was amazed to see so many other high school students just like myself, nervously looking around and wondering what to do, pencils and calculators in hand.
- 9 I entered the big brick building with the rest of them and eventually made it to the classroom I would spend the next four hours searching the files of my brain for all the correct answers for the most important test I'd ever taken in my life. When I received my answer booklet, the nervousness began to magically drain from my body. I was taking the test and it wasn't so bad. It was just one more step on the lengthy road to college, but I had taken it and I was that much closer to my goals.
- 10 Weeks later I received my results. Envelope in hand, I rushed toward my mom. I was almost bobbing up and down with excitement.
- 11 I ripped open the envelope and retrieved the papers within. My eyes fell upon the thirty printed on the page and I was stunned and relieved. I had received a good result. My mother's smile widened and her eyes lit up when she saw what I had seen. Yes, everything was going to be just fine. I had received a good result and anything could happen, anything at all.
- 12 That sense of relief and calm lasted until I got the letter from Northwestern University. Knowing that the envelope I held in my hands determined my future, I was reluctant to look inside. Finally, I took a deep breath, opened the letter and read my future.

- 13 It was a rejection note.
- 14 I did not cry as my hopes and aspirations fell down around me and shattered like fine china, but I was crushed. The smile died on my lips and I felt cold inside. Even knowing that I was not the only person to ever get rejected from their first choice school didn't make me feel any better. At first I felt totally lost and so I looked to my mother, that gardener of ideas, for guidance.
- 15 "So you got rejected from one school," she said. "Don't forget about the four others you were accepted to." She smiled. "It isn't the end of the world."
- 16 And it wasn't. She was right. I had been accepted into those four other schools. My second choice school was still a really fine institution. I put the letter aside and decided upon Loyola University in Chicago. I would attend my second choice school as if it were my first. I was still in charge of my future and I was still going to college. Summoning up a smile, I filled out the housing contract for Loyola.
- 17 I am just finishing up senior year now. Soon I will be going to Loyola to register for fall classes. And you know what? I still have that envelope, that letter of rejection. I keep it because it helps me persevere. As a homeschooled student, I had an added difficulty when it came to getting accepted to college, but I still did it, no matter the fact that my first choice was denied to me. We all face rejection in our lives but that's not what matters. What matters is what we do with the experience, whether we choose to dwell on the bad things in our lives or whether we learn and grow just like those tiny seeds that were first planted in my mind so long ago.



Working with Words and Expressions

Look up the following words and expressions in a dictionary and find out their meaning in the text.

- 1 unscathed (para 1)
- 2 prestigious (para 3)
- 3 top-notch (para 4)
- 4 rip (para 11)
- 5 stun (para 11)
- 6 aspiration (para 14)
- 7 shatter (para 14)
- 8 summon up (para 16)
- 9 persevere (para 17)
- 10 dwell on (para 17)

Understanding the Text

Answer the following questions.

- 1 Why does the author consider the college admission process a terrifying thing?
- 2 Why does the author compare her mother to a careful gardener?
- 3 How did the author pick the right colleges?
- 4 How did the author feel when she received the test result? How did she feel when she got the letter of rejection?
- 5 Why does the author still keep the letter of rejection?
- 6 What advice has the author offered on how to face rejection in our lives?

Voicing Your Views

Work in a group and discuss the following topic.

If a man aspires to the highest place, it is no dishonor to him to halt at the second, or even at the third.

—Marcus Tullius Cicero

Do you agree with Marcus Tullius Cicero? Why or why not?

Reading Between the Lines

Read the paragraph carefully and try to appreciate the beauty of the language. Then complete the following tasks.

I did not cry as my hopes and aspirations fell down around me and shattered like fine china, but I was crushed. The smile died on my lips and I felt cold inside. Even knowing that I was not the only person to ever get rejected from their first choice school didn't make me feel any better. At first I felt totally lost and so I looked to my mother, that gardener of ideas, for guidance. (para 14)

- 1 Underline the words that describe the author's feelings.
- 2 Find out the rhetorical devices employed to vivify the description.