

Unit 1

College Education

Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, you'll be able to

- get the general idea of a passage by means of skimming;
- get to know the writing technique of listing;
- understand more about college education.

Starter

When it comes to college education, we have in mind these questions:

- Does it mean teaching students useful skills?
- Does it mean conveying knowledge to students?
- Are there any differences between middle school education and college education?
- Does it mean conveying knowledge, developing practical skills and cultivating positive attitudes?
- To learn practical skills, can we simply go directly to companies or factories to “learn by doing”?

Passage A



INTRODUCTION

For an individual, college education means a lifelong influence. For a nation, college education means more than “producing” qualified labour forces.



TEXT

The Value of a College Education

Questioning whether you should go to college? Here are four ways that a college education will make you a better person:

1. It is likely to make you more prosperous¹.
2. It will give you a better quality of life.
3. It will be something you can pass on to your children.
4. It makes you a major contributor to the world's economy.

First things first. The lifetime income of families headed by individuals² with a bachelor's degree will be about \$1.6 million more than the incomes of families headed by those with a high-school diploma³, according to the Postsecondary⁴ Education Opportunity Research Letter (PEORL). The U.S. Census⁵ Bureau tells us that in 1999, average income for a male aged 25 or over who holds a bachelor's degree was about \$61,000, compared to about \$32,000 for a male with a high-school diploma—so the college graduate's income was about \$29,000 more annually⁶ than the high-school grad's.

A college education is an extraordinarily profitable investment⁷. Every dollar spent on a young man's college education produces \$34.85 in increased lifetime income. Any Wall Street stockbroker⁸ would envy that kind of investment yield⁹—especially these days. You say you can't afford to go to college? The Postsecondary Education Opportunity Research Letter says you can't afford not to.

John G. Ramsay, a professor at the Perlman Center for Learning and Teaching, said that the credentials¹⁰ you gain with a college education “are about setting yourself apart, being employable, and becoming a

1. prosperous: *adj.* 成功的

2. individual: *n.* 个人

3. diploma: *n.* 文凭

4. postsecondary: *adj.* 大专

5. census: *n.* 统计

6. annually: *adv.* 一年一次

7. investment: *n.* 投资

8. stockbroker: *n.* 股票经纪人

9. yield: *n.* 产量, 收益

10. credential: *n.* 证书

legitimate¹¹ candidate for a job with a future. Strong credentials trigger¹² that magical set of middle class ‘firsts’,” Ramsay said, “the first real-world job, the first non-student apartment, the first new car, and of course, the first loan payments.



Weak credentials can be painful reminders of a string¹³ of misfortunes: poor advice, money problems, bad decisions, and wasted time.”

Next, quality of life. Is there anyone who wouldn’t like to live a longer, healthier life? Studies show that, compared to high-school graduates, college graduates have:

- longer life spans¹⁴
- better access to health care
- better dietary¹⁵ and health practices
- greater economic stability and security
- more prestigious¹⁶ employment and greater job satisfaction
- greater participation in artistic activities
- more book purchases¹⁷
- greater community service and leadership
- more self-confidence

The third point is that a college education is a legacy¹⁸ for your children. The idea of having children may be as remote¹⁹ to you as the international space station, but trust us, your college education will benefit your children. Research shows that children of college-educated parents are healthier, perform better academically²⁰, and are more likely to attend college themselves than children of those with lower educational attainment.

Fourthly, more money and greater quality of life for you and your children aren’t the only reasons for a college education. Education is the cornerstone of the world’s development. We must ensure that our whole population receives an education that will allow full and continuing participation in this dynamic²¹ period of economic history.

Without college, you may be left out. The relationship between a college education and success will become more and more significant in our information-driven global economy. Technology and the information age are not the only reasons to be well educated; the trend is toward multiple jobs

11. legitimate: *adj.* 合法的, 正统的

12. trigger: *v.* 引发, 触发

13. string: *n.* 一串, 一行

14. life span: *n.* 寿命

15. dietary: *n.* 饮食之规定

16. prestigious: *adj.* 声望很高的

17. purchase: *n.* 购买

18. legacy: *n.* 遗赠物

19. remote: *adj.* 遥远的

20. academically: *adv.* 学术上

21. dynamic: *adj.* 充满活力的

and even multiple careers, and higher education prepares you to make the transitions²² to new fields.

Your education builds a foundation for your development—for our nation’s development, and for the development of our global community—which leads to the last point.

(603 words)

22. transition: *n.* 转换, 过渡



EXERCISES

1. Give a short answer to each of the following questions.

- 1) According to the author, what are the symbols or basic elements for the middle class?
- 2) What are the key criteria for the quality of life according to the author?
- 3) What does “cornerstone” mean in this passage?
- 4) What does “You say you can’t afford to go to college? The Postsecondary Education Opportunity Research Letter says you can’t afford not to” mean?

2. Fill in the table with the words or expressions given below.

high possibility, low possibility, more, less, higher, lower, stronger, weaker, greater, smaller, longer, shorter, easy, difficult

	Individuals with college education	Individuals with middle-school diploma
Income	<i>higher</i>	<i>lower</i>
Credential		
Transitions of profession		
Multiple careers		
Multiple jobs		
Self-confidence		
Participation in artistic activities		
Job satisfaction		
Access to health care		
Life span		
Real-world job		
Bad decisions		
New car		
Loan payment		

3. Discuss the following questions.

- 1) Are there any more benefits of college education in addition to the four items mentioned in the passage?
- 2) What is your opinion on college education?
- 3) Why could college education help students have higher income in the future?

Passage B



INTRODUCTION

Sports in university play a very important role in college education to build students' character. Read the following text and learn the opinions of some American educators.



TEXT

Another Education in University

Educators in America believe that sports in university are a kind of education. The idea that organized sports build character is a Western tradition dating from ancient Greece.

Organized sports, classified into two categories¹, competitive sports and club sports, are a valuable and productive use of a young person's time. Sports, in short, are a kind of education, teaching important life skills that can't be learned in other forms.

Competitive sports, at least, may help some players to be sport stars on campus. Ideas about the educational value of competitive sports vary widely. For some, sports foster² the social development of young people, teaching the young how to interact³ with their peers outside the classroom. Sports teach students what it means to compete—how to cope with losing, how to respond gracefully to success. Sports are about teamwork, how to work together toward a common goal. Sometimes they're about developing a sense of self-esteem⁴.

1. category: *n.* 种类

2. foster: *v.* 促进

3. interact: *v.* 互相合作, 互动

4. self-esteem: *n.* 自尊

Young students, energetic, rambunctious⁵, long to kick and throw things and tackle⁶ each other, and the fields of organized play offer a place in which to act out these impulses. The time spent on the athletic fields is meant to be productive. Conscientious⁷ coaches seek to impart lessons in teamwork, self-sacrifice, competition, gracious winning and losing. Some bold⁸ advocates claim that competitive sports build character.



Education is an important theme in youth athletics in the U.S. Universities—Princeton, Harvard, Rutgers, Yale—were the birthplaces of American football and baseball; education—the formation of “character”—was an important part of what those coaches and players thought they were achieving. In 1913, when football was almost outlawed⁹ in the U.S., the game’s most prominent¹⁰ figures traveled to Washington and argued successfully that football was an essential part of the campus experience and that the nation would be robbed of its boldest young men, its best potential leaders, if the game was banned.

The athletic fields become less a place to learn about soft values like teamwork than about hard self-discipline and competition. Competitiveness, after all, is prized highly by Americans. For a young student, being cut from the hockey¹¹ team or denied a spot on the swimming is a grave disappointment—and perhaps an opportunity for emotional or spiritual growth.

Club sports in university, by contrast, are basically egalitarian¹² institutions, unselective and welcoming (at least in theory) of different levels of ability. Basketball or football teams are places where the ethos¹³ of competition is given still stronger emphasis. Although the coaches still consider themselves as educators, the sports they oversee are not simple extensions of the classroom. They are important social institutions, for football games bring young people together. Sometimes club sports are simply about finding a healthy way to tire hyperactive¹⁴ boys and girls out so they’ll sit still in class or get to bed at a reasonable hour. An important question in modern society: how to balance this wish to be inclusive¹⁵ with

5. rambunctious: *adj.*
难控制的

6. tackle: *v.* 捉住, 扭住, 扭倒

7. conscientious: *adj.*
尽责的

8. bold: *adj.* 大胆的

9. outlaw: *v.* 宣布……
为不合法

10. prominent: *adj.* 著名的, 突出的

11. hockey: *n.* 曲棍球

12. egalitarian: *adj.* 主张人人平等的

13. ethos: *n.* 精神, 风气

14. hyperactive: *adj.* 过度活跃的

15. inclusive: *adj.* 包含的, 包括的

the need to maintain authentic¹⁶ competition and play to win? This is indeed an important question in all walks of life and in any country.

16. authentic: *adj.* 真正的

(546 words)



EXERCISES

1. Give a short answer to each of the following questions.

- 1) How many categories can sports be classified into according to the passage?
- 2) Where were the birthplaces of American football and baseball?
- 3) Why did the football game's most prominent figures go to Washington in 1913?
- 4) What are the main characters that the competitive sports can foster?
- 5) Which country in the world prizes the competitiveness highly according to the author?
- 6) What are the basic functions of club sports in university?

2. Compare the competitive sports and club sports by filling in the table with the information given in the text.

	Competitive sports	Club sports
Members		
Character foster		
Basic functions		

3. Discuss the following questions.

- 1) Have you ever heard of the expression "fair play"? What does it mean?
- 2) Why can competitive sports foster the spirit of self-sacrifice? Can you give an example?
- 3) Do you often participate in competitive sports or club sports in your college? If the answer is no, what other activities do you take part in?

Reading Skills

Skimming

Have you ever found yourself in some of the following situations or the like?

1. You want to find out some information about the recent elections in France. There is a long newspaper article on the subject, but you don't have time to finish it.
2. You need some information about the theories of Sigmund Freud. You have found many books about Freud and now you need to know which will be the most useful.
3. You went to a movie last night and you thought it was terrible. You notice a review of that movie in a magazine today. You want to find out quickly if the reviewer agrees with you.
4. You are reading a detective story and you are in a hurry to find out who the murderer is.

So much information floods in the world, and only a very small amount of them needs to be "digested"; most of the rest should be "swallowed". Skimming, a useful device in speeding up reading by only skipping over the text for general idea, is a good technique to be applied for efficient "swallowing". Most readers may have already applied it in their reading unconsciously when they are in any of the above situations or the like. We read only the words that will help us get the general meaning of the text. In this way, a lot of time can be saved.

For example:

Even if some of the details in the following passage are missing, we still could tell its main idea by reading the words left. This also shows us how to skim.

Read the first sentences or paragraphs carefully. The beginning often contains general information about the rest of the text.

If the text is long, you might also read the second paragraph. Sometimes the first paragraph is only an introduction and the second paragraph contains the main idea.....

.....

After that, you should look at the beginning of each paragraph maybe read a few words

.....in the middle

..... Usually the topic sentence is at the beginning.

But sometimes it may be at the end

.....

skip some paragraphs

.....*not important*

You should usually read the last paragraph more carefully. The author often summarizes the main idea at the end. These are the general rules about skimming. And this is all the text you need to read when you skim.

Here are some guidelines for effective skimming:

- a) Always work as fast as you can. Don't let details slow you down.
- b) Always keep in mind your reason for skimming.
- c) Be flexible when you are skimming. How much you skim in a passage depends on your purpose and on the passage.



EXERCISES

1. Skim Passage A, and underline the key words, top sentences, summary and conclusion while reading. Then check with a partner about your findings.
2. Skim the article given below as quickly as you can and then write down the main idea of each paragraph.

Going Beyond Life As You Know It

College is a time for making lifelong connections—with new people, new interests and passions—a time of endless possibilities. It's a time to go beyond life as you know it now and do the things you've always dreamed of doing. At our college, you'll instantly become part of a unique, upbeat community with all the resources to help you excel academically, socially, and physically. Whether you're a resident student or commuter student, we'll help you find your niche!

Right on campus you'll find countless sources of entertainment, action, and challenge. You can unwind at the snack bar over a game of pool, meet friends at a movie night, just listen or take a turn behind the mic at a Coffeehouse or Comedy night. Work out in the weight room or exercise your voice in the campus chorale. Join one of the many student clubs and organizations or volunteer for community service projects.

Life as a student extends beyond the campus, too. You can hike or ski in the nearby Reservation, and will have an easy access to big city excitement and resources just seven miles away in downtown.

The staff in the offices of Student Affairs—Student Activities, Residence Life, Public Safety, and Health and Counseling—are all committed to helping you develop your personal goals and establish relationships within the college community. We encourage your involvement and leadership in all aspects of college life.

Supplementary Reading

Universities and Their Function

By Alfred North Whitehead

The universities are schools of education, and schools of research. But the primary reason for their existence is not to be found either in the mere knowledge conveyed to the students or in the mere opportunities for research afforded to the members of the faculty.

5 The justification for a university is that it preserves the connection between knowledge and the zest of life, by uniting the young and the old in the imaginative consideration of learning. The university imparts information, but it imparts it imaginatively. At least, this is the function which it should perform for society. A university which fails in this respect has no reason for existence. This atmosphere of excitement, arising from imaginative consideration, transforms knowledge. A fact is no longer a bare fact: it is invested with all possibilities. It is no longer a burden on the memory: it is energizing as the poet of our dreams, and as the architect of our purposes.

10 Imagination is not to be divorced from the facts: it is a way of illuminating the facts. It works by eliciting the general principles which apply to the facts, as they exist, and then by an intellectual survey of alternative possibilities which are consistent with those principles. It enables men to construct an intellectual vision of a new world, and it preserves the zest of life by the suggestion of satisfying purposes.

15 Youth is imaginative, and if the imagination is strengthened by discipline, this energy of imagination can in great measure be preserved through life. The tragedy of the world is that those who are imaginative have slight experience, and those who are experienced have feeble imaginations. Fools act on imagination without knowledge; pedants act on knowledge without imagination. The task of a university is to weld together imagination and experience.

20 These reflections upon the general function of a university can be at once translated in terms of particular functions of business school. We need not flinch from the assertion that the main function of such a school is to produce men with a greater zest for business.

In a simpler world, business relations were simpler, being based on the immediate confrontation with all relevant material circumstances. Today business organization requires an imaginative grasp of psychologies of populations engaged in different modes of occupation; of population scattered through cities, through mountains, through plains; of populations on the ocean, and of population in mines, and of populations in forests. It requires an imaginative grasp of conditions in the tropics, and of conditions in temperate zones. It requires an imaginative grasp of the interlocking interests of great organizations, and of the reactions of whole complex to any change in one of its elements. It requires an imaginative understanding of laws of political economy, not merely in the abstract, but also with the power to construe them in terms of the particular circumstances of a concrete business. It requires some knowledge of the habits of government, and of variations of those habits under diverse conditions. It requires an imaginative vision of the binding forces of any human organization, a sympathetic vision of the limits of human nature and of the conditions which evoke loyalty of service. It requires some knowledge of the laws of health, and of the laws of fatigue, and of the conditions for sustained reliability. It requires an imaginative understanding of the social effects of the conditions of factories. It requires a sufficient conception of the role of applied science in modern society. It requires that discipline of character which can say “yes” and “no” to other men, not by reason of blind obstinacy, but with firmness derived from a conscious evaluation of relevant alternatives.

The universities have trained the intellectual pioneers of our civilization—the priests, the lawyers, the statesmen, the doctors, the men of science, and the men of letters. The conduct of business now requires intellectual imagination of the same type as that which in former times has mainly passed into those other occupations.

There is one great difficulty which hampers all the higher types of human endeavor. In modern times this difficulty has even increased in its possibilities for evil. In any large organization the younger men, who are novices, must be set to jobs which consist in carrying out fixed duties in obedience to orders. No president of a large corporation meets his youngest employee at his office door with the offer of the most responsible job which the work of that corporation includes. The young men are set to work at a fixed routine, and only occasionally even see the president as he passes in and out of the building. Such work is a great discipline. It imparts knowledge, and it produces reliability of character; also it is the only work for which the young men, in that novice stage, are fit, and it is the work for which they are hired. There can be no criticism of the custom, but there may be an unfortunate effect—prolonged routine work dulls the imagination.

The way in which a university should function in the preparation for an intellectual career, such as modern business or one of the older professions, is by promoting the imaginative consideration of the various general principles underlying that career. Its students thus pass into their period of technical apprenticeship with their imaginations already practiced in connecting details with

60 general principles. The routine then receives its meaning, and also illuminates the principles which give it that meaning. Hence, instead of a drudgery issuing in a blind rule of thumb, the properly trained man has some hope obtaining an
65 imagination disciplined by detailed facts and by necessary habits.

Thus the proper function of a university is the imaginative acquisition of knowledge.

70 Apart from this importance of the imagination, there is no reason why business men, and other professional men, should not pick up their facts bit by bit as they want them for particular occasions. A university is imaginative or it is nothing—at least nothing useful.

(1,002 words)



Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947): British mathematician, logician and philosopher, contributed significantly to the 20th century logic and metaphysics by his study on process philosophy and education.

“Universities and Their Function”, a piece of masterpiece by Alfred North Whitehead, is a famous essay which has been appreciated by educators all over the world.

The significant function of university is neither simply conveying knowledge from teachers to students nor offering a research institution for the faculty. The author reveals that the function of university is to connect knowledge with the zest of life, and a university should be imaginative.

“A university is imaginative or it is nothing—at least nothing useful.” We may ask ourselves: Are our colleges imaginative? Are the graduates from our colleges dull craftsmen with technical skills or knowledgeable youth with passion of life?