"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

Nelson Mandela (1918 – 2013), former anti-apartheid revolutionary and president of South Africa

1. University Discussion

1. Did you go to university? If you did, what did you study? If you didn't, would you like to go? What would you study?
2. Why did / would you choose that subject?
3. Which university did you go to / would you like to go to? Is it a good university? Why?
4. What are the best universities in your country? Why are they considered the best?
5. How many years do people spend studying a typical university course in your country? Do you think this is the right amount of time?
6. Did you enjoy your time at university? If you haven't been to university, how do you think your life would be while you were there?
7. How has your university education affected your life (or how would it)?
8. Do you think everyone should go to university if they can? Why or why not?

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2. University Vocabulary

- **higher education** (noun) – *an optional level of education after secondary education, usually referring to the study of an academic degree.*
- **bachelor's (degree)** (noun) – *an undergraduate degree.*
- **master's (degree)** (noun) – *a postgraduate degree.*
- **fresher** (BrE) / **freshman** (AmE) (noun) – *a university student in their first year.*
- **halls (of residence)** (noun) – *residential accommodation for university students.*
- **tuition (fees)** (noun) – *the money paid to attend a university course.*

Using the vocabulary words above, complete the following sentences (remember to use the correct form of the word, e.g. verb conjugation or plural noun)

1. In my first year of university, I stayed in **halls** before moving into a house with my friends in the second year.
2. Students protested against the government's decision to increase **tuition fees**.
3. Because so many people have degrees these days, competition for jobs is stronger than ever; a good way to differentiate yourself is to study a **master's degree**.
4. The **freshers**' fair will be in the first week of October. Here you can talk to people from various societies at the university and local businesses who provide services to new students.
5. While in some countries you may study for up to five years for a **bachelor's degree**, in the UK there are plans to introduce courses that last only two years.
6. In order to open up opportunities for working class children, the Labour government of the 1960s significantly expanded **higher education**.

University vocabulary comprehension questions

1. Should higher education be compulsory for all? Why or why not?
2. Does having a bachelor's degree improve your status in your culture?
3. Would you like to study a master's degree? What would you study?
4. How was your fresher year different to your other years at university?
5. Is it better to stay in halls at university or at home with your parents? Why?
6. How do students usually fund their tuition in your country?

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3. Video: Free University in Germany

You are going to watch a video by BBC News called "US students head to Germany for free degrees."

Watch the video here: https://yourenglishpal.com/blog/esl-conversation-lesson-plan-university/

While you watch the video, answer the following questions:

Multiple choice

1. How did Anna feel at first when she found out Germany did not charge tuition for university?

   a) confused *b) envious* *c) happy*

2. How many times had Hunter been outside of the US before he moved to Germany?

   a) 0 *b) 1* *c) 2*

3. What was Hunter's main motivation for going to study in Germany?

   a) being able to drink *b) healthcare* ***c) saving money***

4. Within how many years does the university president aim to have all courses taught exclusively in English?

   a) 3 ***b) 5*** *c) 7*

Sentence completion

5. Hunter's living costs are around **€600** per month.
6. The president of the university believes **foreigners** will have to start paying for university in the future.
7. **Berlin** is the most popular destination for students from the United States.
8. German politicians insist that university education should be a **right**, not a privilege.

Short answer

9. How long do 40% of graduates need to stay in the country before Germany begins to recover the cost of tuition? **Five years**
10. What do foreign graduates not have at the end of their course? **A language problem**
11. Who does Katherine work for? **A German startup association**
12. What does Germany have that gives it an incentive to attract young foreign talent? **An aging population**

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4. University Conversation Questions

1. What are the costs involved in going to university? Is university too expensive? Should university be free for everyone? Why or why not?
2. Is it easy to get a job straight from university? Did you start a graduate job directly from university?
3. Is it really necessary to go to university to do many graduate jobs, such as in business, where you could just learn 'on the job'? What are some alternatives to university?
4. Do too many people have degrees these days? Are university degrees worth it anymore? Why or why not?
5. Which subjects do you think are the best to study for a successful career? Which subjects do you think aren't worth studying?
6. Would you vote for a politician that did not have a degree? Why or why not?
7. Do you think studying a post-graduate degree in a different country would be better or worse than studying a post-graduate degree in your own country? Why?
8. Do you think that university education is the most important factor for a country's economic success? Why or why not?

5. University Writing Task

Write about your opinion of university education. Try to use some of the vocabulary you learned earlier in this lesson. In your answer, include the following topics:

- The benefits of studying at university.
- Whether the costs are fair, or whether university should be free for all.
- Whether university is worth it these days.

Alternative exam question

University should be free for all those that want to go. Do you agree or disagree with this?

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