Reading

READING 1

PREPARING TO READ

UNDERSTANDING KEY VOCABULARY

1 Complete the table with the words from the box.

academic course lecture vocational course
tuition fees face-to-face seminar module
distance learning scholarship tutorial

elements of a university course	ways to deliver education	types of course	ways to pay for education
lecture	face-to-face		

VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

2 Use the words in the table to complete the sentences below.

1 A _____ is an award that helps pay for a student's education, usually because of their academic achievement.
2 _____ learning is with a teacher, rather than by computer.
3 A _____ is a specific part of a whole course.
4 A _____ focuses on subjects which are linked to a particular job.
5 _____ focus more on the theory of subjects.
6 A _____ is a formal talk on an academic subject given to a large group of students.
7 _____ are payments made to cover the cost of an educational course.
8 A small group meeting with your teacher is a _____ .
9 Courses which are taken in an online environment are examples of _____ .
10 A _____ is when teachers and students discuss a topic in detail, on a one-to-one basis.

3 Work in pairs. Answer the questions below about your country or region.

1 What are popular academic courses at universities?
2 What kinds of vocational courses can you take in colleges?
3 How can students get help to pay their tuition fees?
4 How long does the English degree course last?
5 How are students assessed?

4 Read the web page and answer the questions in Exercise 3 about Middletown University.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Welcome to

Middletown University

Preparing you for success, whatever you want to do

Whether you are a national or an international student, we welcome you to Middletown University. Our reputation is built on providing high-quality education in both academic and vocational subjects. As well as priding ourselves on our traditional face-to-face learning, we have recently introduced a range of distance-learning courses.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What kind of courses do you have?

Are you looking for a general academic course to increase your knowledge? Or do you need a vocational course to develop your skills for a specific profession? Or perhaps you need both. Whatever your academic and vocational needs, we are sure to have an appropriate course for you.

What do they cost?

Costs for our courses vary considerably. Click on each department's homepage for more information. Scholarships and bursaries are available for certain courses, particularly for those in the sciences and education.

OUR MOST POPULAR COURSES

Academic courses

Mathematics, English literature and History

Vocational courses

Engineering, Nursing, Accounting, Plumbing, Teaching and Catering

SAMPLE COURSE OVERVIEW

BA in English Language and Literature

The main purpose of this course is to develop your ability to describe, analyze and manipulate features of the English Language, and to see how these are expressed in literature. As well as taking core modules which cover these areas, students will be able to specialize in their fields of interest.

Duration: three-year course

Course: Choose 12 out of 20 modules.

Weekly timetable: eight hours of lectures / four hours of seminars

Assessment: essays, exams and an 8,000-word dissertation at the end of the third year

Requirements: academic experience and interest in the subject; good school-exam grades

Diploma in teaching

In the first term, you will learn about the theory of teaching and how to be an effective teacher. In the second term, you will also begin teaching in a school. The third term is completely practical.

Duration: one-year course

Course: Choose six out of ten modules (three are compulsory).

Weekly timetable: six hours of lectures / two hours of seminars / six hours of classroom teaching

Assessment: combination of essays and classroom observation

Requirement: first degree in specific subject area

LATEST NEWS

- Apprenticeship opportunities now available with local businesses including carpenters, electricians and plumbers
- New part-time job opportunities available for undergraduates/graduates

LIVEWORKSHEETS

WHILE READING

READING FOR DETAIL

5 Read the web page again. Are the statements below true (T), false (F) or the web page does not say (DNS)?

1 Only face-to-face learning opportunities are available. _____
2 There is one fee for all courses. _____
3 More than 30 different courses are available. _____
4 Courses are assessed in different ways. _____
5 Essays and dissertations must be written on a computer. _____
6 To access the BA English course, you need to have passed school examinations. _____
7 A teaching diploma involves learning theory in the second term. _____
8 Students can choose any of the modules on the teaching diploma course. _____
9 There are opportunities for part-time jobs at Middletown University. _____

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

Sometimes, writers suggest the meaning of something without saying it directly. Being able to read this inferred meaning (as well as the literal meaning of the words) is a useful skill. Practise using reasoning, logic and your knowledge of the world to work out the real meaning behind the words you read.

MAKING INFERENCES FROM THE TEXT

6 Work with a partner. Discuss the questions below.

1 Why do the costs for courses at Middletown University vary considerably?
2 Why do you think there are state scholarships for science and education courses?
3 On the BA course, what kind of topics could you write about for your dissertation?
4 Why are there some 'core' modules which are compulsory, and others that you can choose?
5 Why aren't there any exams for the Diploma?

DISCUSSION

7 Work with a partner. Discuss the questions below.

1 What kind of study or training would you like to do in the future?
2 Should universities be free for students? Why / Why not?
3 Is it useful to study academic subjects like Philosophy or History, which may not directly lead to a job?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

READING 2

PREPARING TO READ

UNDERSTANDING KEY VOCABULARY

1 Match collocations (1–9) with their meanings (a–i).

1 modern phenomenon	a key values
2 distance learning	b electronic communication
3 technological advances	c individual connection
4 credible alternative	d online college
5 virtual university	e reliable substitute
6 core principles	f recent trend
7 personal relationship	g important distinction
8 online conversations	h online course
9 significant difference	i scientific developments

2 Look at the statements below. Do you think they are true (T) or false (F)?

1 Distance learning is a new idea. _____
2 It has been possible to get a university degree online in America since the 1980s. _____
3 Distance learning requires good technological access. _____
4 Distance learning is very personal. _____
5 Students generally enjoy meeting face-to-face with other people on their course. _____
6 Face-to-face learning is better than distance learning. _____

3 Read the article on the next page and check your answers to Exercise 2.

WHILE READING

READING FOR MAIN IDEAS

4 Match paragraph descriptions (1–5) to the correct paragraphs (A–E) in the article.

1 Knowledge transfer _____
2 General summary and conclusions _____
3 Instructor–pupil interaction _____
4 The history and background of the topic _____
5 Peer-to-peer contact _____

LIVEWORKSHEETS



Distance or face-to-face learning – what's the difference?

A Although many people think it is a modern phenomenon, distance learning has been around for at least 200 years in one form or another. Historical examples of long-distance learning include students being sent a series of weekly lessons by post. The technological advances of the past 20 or so years, however, have meant that this form of education is now able to rival face-to-face learning as a credible alternative. Indeed, 1996 saw the establishment of the world's first 'virtual university' in the United States, showing how far distance learning has come in a relatively short space of time.

B When comparing the two systems, the first and most obvious area to focus on is the way that learning is delivered. Distance learning is heavily dependent on technology, particularly the internet. On a face-to-face course, students may only require a computer for the purpose of writing an essay. In comparison, when learning remotely, technology is the principal means of communication. The flexibility this provides means that students may be better able to learn at their own pace, following their own timetable, but it may also mean that learners have to be well-organized and self-disciplined. They must therefore be highly motivated in order to do well on the distance-learning courses.



C In terms of the teacher–student relationship, the core principles remain the same. Namely, the teacher is the 'knower', and is responsible for helping students understand the key components of the course. However, the nature of the relationship may differ slightly within the two modes of delivery. With face-to-face learning, the teacher and student have the opportunity to develop a personal relationship through lectures, seminars and tutorials. This is different from a distance-learning course, where the teacher may seldom or indeed never actually meet the student. This may make it hard for teachers to understand their learners' specific learning needs.

D For many students, interaction with their peers is one of the best aspects of university education. Generally, students like to meet regularly and talk to people on the same course. However, this kind of interaction on a distance-learning course is less common. Although people can increasingly interact through online conversations and messageboards, there is a significant difference between virtual and real interaction. Time and geography must also be considered when contrasting these two types of learning. Face-to-face learning must take place in real-time and in one location. Conversely, distance learning can happen at any time and in any location, since the learning is not restricted by geography.

E In conclusion, it is difficult to state whether one form of learning is better than another, as they cater for different audiences. What is important to understand is the different ways in which they operate, and that there are strong similarities between the two systems, which can both produce positive results.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

READING FOR DETAIL

5 Tick the correct parts of the table. Are statements (1–5) about distance learning, face-to-face learning or both?

	distance learning	face-to-face learning	both
1 develops a strong student–teacher relationship		✔	
2 heavily reliant on technology			
3 flexible with time			
4 students can interact with each other in person			
5 can be effective ways of teaching			
6 requires a high level of motivation			
7 not limited by geography			
8 can suit many types of students			

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

MAKING INFERENCES FROM THE TEXT

6 Work with a partner. Answer the questions below, based on information in the article.

1 Why do some people think distance learning is a modern idea?
2 Why can online learning be slightly impersonal?
3 Why do students often like to meet other people on the same course?
4 Does the author of the article generally approve or disapprove of distance learning?

DISCUSSION

7 Work with a partner. Discuss the questions below.

1 Have you ever tried to learn something online? What were the advantages and disadvantages of doing this?
2 Are there any problems with face-to-face teaching?
3 How do you think teaching will change in the future?
4 Will distance learning become the most common kind of teaching in the future?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

EDUCATION VOCABULARY

1 Complete each sentence below with a word from the box. Use the Glossary on page 195 to help you.

assignment journal examination plagiarism term
lecturer tutor dissertation semester

1 The word for a written essay at university is an _____ .
2 A timed assessment under silent conditions is an _____ .
3 An academic year can be split into three periods, each called a _____ .
4 An academic year can also be divided into two periods, each called a _____ .
5 _____ is when students copy from, or do not acknowledge, their sources when writing an essay.
6 A _____ is a quarterly peer-reviewed collection of research papers.
7 A _____ is a long essay of between 8,000 and 12,000 words.
8 A _____ is the holder of a research position at a university who also teaches.
9 A _____ assumes responsibility for students' academic and personal welfare.

ACADEMIC WORDS

2 Match academic words (1–11) to definitions (a–k).

1 alternative	a the foundation or starting of an organization
2 establishment	b parts or features of something
3 virtual	c enthusiasm for doing something
4 significant	d different from something else
5 core	e particular or exact
6 a principle	f existing in a technological environment
7 a component	g communication between things or people
8 interaction	h important or noticeable
9 motivation	i the most important part of something
10 aspects	j a part which makes up something bigger
11 specific	k a basic idea or rule

LIVEWORKSHEETS

3 Complete the sentences below with the correct form of some of the words from Exercise 2.

1 Many students prefer to study a vocational subject as an _____ to an academic course.
2 For many students, _____ with their peers is important.
3 One of the best _____ of university education is meeting the other students on the course.
4 Tutors help their students understand the key _____ of their course.
5 Distance learning requires a high level of _____ .
6 Distance learning can make it hard for teachers to understand students' _____ learning needs.
7 As well as taking _____ modules, students will be able to specialize in their areas of interest.
8 1996 saw the establishment of the world's first _____ university, which operated only on the internet.

LIVEWORKSHEETS