

Дисциплина: Язык профессионального общения

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Название занятия: Who Needs a Degree?

Цели: совершенствование навыков монологической и диалогической речи по данной теме. Формирование коммуникативных иноязычных и профессионально-речевых умений.

1. Read the following newspaper article and find three arguments which are given to support the idea that educational qualifications are not really relevant to people's careers.

Who Needs a Degree?

No number of letters after your name can teach you about life.

Kate Saunders takes a roll call of people who like her have succeeded without going to university.

In the tightly-knit literary circles of the metropolis, people don't ask you which university you went to. They want to know how they could have possibly missed you at Oxford or Cambridge. Like 93% of the adult population, I did not go to any university at all, and this has become faintly embarrassing since I accepted the honour of helping to judge this year's Booker Prize. Certain colleagues look down their noses when they discover I have no dreaming spires in my CV. The sorry truth is that while my contemporaries were frolicking in the groves of Academe? I was playing a nurse in a TV soap, and toting a spear at the National Theatre.

However, I am in excellent company. My fellow graduates of the University of Life include not only entrepreneurial wizards such as Alan Sugar of Amstrad, but also politicians such as John Major and James Callaghan. In the literary field, P.D. James, the thinking person's crime novelist, best-selling romancer Jilly Cooper, and playwright Tom Stoppard have achieved eminence without university degrees.

The fact is, although universities are wonderful places, putting yourself through one of them is no guarantee of brilliance. And many people who have engineered their own education actually believe that they would have been less successful if they had slapped a three-year preservation on their adolescence and gone to university.

The novelist Lisa St Aubin de Teran was too busy roaming the world and picking up three foreign languages in her youth to fit in going to Cambridge, as she had originally planned. "I probably learned more, living the life I did", she says.

Instead of swotting for exams, de Teran was managing a sugar plantation on a remote *hacienda* in the Venezuelan Andes. "When I was younger I did regret not going to university", she admits. "It seemed such an easy way to spend three years. But I was 25 when I returned from Venezuela, and I couldn't really see myself sitting there with a lot of eighteen-year-olds".

Exotic experiences are far more useful to a novelist than a degree. However, the graduate-dominated world of the media is another matter. So it's refreshing to learn that Michael Grade, head of Channel 4, never went to university. Neither did Anne Wintour head of features at BBC Radio. "I remember feeling self-conscious about it at first", she says, "but I stopped worrying about it years ago. Graduates get on by conforming and think people without degrees tend to be more original".

"It all comes back to experience of life", declares Ann Winterton, Conservative MP for Congleton. Like Winston Churchill before her, she has no degree, having entered politics *straight from the kitchen sink in 1983*. "No number of letters after your name can teach you about life. I used to be rather in awe of people with qualifications. But, being self-taught allows you to do things in your own way. I think a lot of people go to university to put off the evil hour of getting stuck into a real job – it can be a soft option.

I must confess, it's this soft option element which makes me wish sometimes that I had gone to university – it does sound such fun, discussing the meaning of life over midnight coffee. And there's a lot to be said for the classic liberal education which broadens the mind by filling it with a lot of delightful and rather useless knowledge. By the time you leave you may not be able to type, but you sure as hell know about Cosimo de Medici.

Picking up culture without a degree is rather like doing Venice without a guide book. You may not have anyone to advise you where to look for the highlights do you are forced to find them for yourself. And you will be freer to form an original opinion, uncoloured by those who wore down the stones before you.

Peter Hault. *The News*.2002.No.34

2. Language focus

1) Explain the meaning of each of the following figurative expressions and comment on their functions in the text:

- dreaming spires;
- look down their noses;
- were frolicking in the groves of Academe;
- entrepreneurial wizards;

- had slapped a three-year preservation order on their adolescence;
- straight from the kitchen sink;
- those who wore down the stones before you.

2) **Give synonyms for the following words and phrases:** tightly-knit, eminence, to put oneself through (a university), to engineer (education), swotting, to conform, liberal education, to get stuck (into a job), soft option.

3. Speech activities

1) **Say if you agree with the author's opinion that.**

- ✓ People without degrees tend to be more original
- ✓ A lot of people go to university to put off the evil hour of getting stuck into a real job.
- ✓ The classic liberal education fills the mind with a lot of delightful and rather useless knowledge.
- ✓ Putting yourself through a university is no guarantee of brilliance.

2) **Answer the following questions.**

- ✓ What do the names *John Major, James Callaghan, Winston Churchill* mean to you? What are those people renowned for?
- ✓ What other outstanding people who achieved eminence without university degrees do you know?
- ✓ To what extent far do you share the opinion that University of Life is more important than a university degree?
- ✓ Can you think of any arguments against the reasons the author gives for not going to university?

4. Writing

1. Imagine that you have been contacted by a principal of a specialized school and asked to work there after graduating from the university. Write a reply either accepting or rejecting the proposal and giving reasons for your decision.
2. Write an article for an educational magazine which sets out all the possible arguments regarding the dependence of this country's future life on the quality of its educational system.