

The UK has a **well-respected** higher education system and some of the top universities and research institutions in the world. But to those who are new to it all, it can be **overwhelming** and sometimes confusing.

October is usually the busiest month in the **academic calendar**. Universities have something called Freshers' Week for their **newcomers**. It's a great opportunity to make new friends, join lots of clubs and **settle into** university life. However, having just left the comfort of home and all your friends behind, the prospect of meeting lots of strangers in big halls can be **nerve-wracking**. Where do you start? Who should you make friends with? Which clubs should you join?

Luckily, there will be thousands of others **in the same boat** as you worrying about starting their university social life **on the right foot**. So just **take it all in** slowly. Don't rush into anything that you'll regret for the next three years.

Here are some top tips from past students on how to survive Freshers' Week:

- **blend in**. Make sure you are aware of British **social etiquette**. Have a few wine glasses and snacks **handy** for your housemates and friends;
- be hospitable. Sometimes cups of tea or even slices of toast can **give you a head start in making friends**;
- be sociable. The more active you are, the more likely you'll be to meet new people than if you're someone who never leaves their room;
- bring a doormat. Keep your door open when you're in and that sends positive messages to your neighbours that you're friendly.

So with a bit of clever planning and motivation, Freshers' Week can give you a great start to your university life and soon you'll be **passing on your wisdom** to next year's new recruits.

Glossary

well-respected – admired, considered to be very good	overwhelming – putting you under a lot of pressure, very difficult to cope with
academic calendar – a period from one October to the next October when all the lectures, seminars, assignments, exams and extra-curricular activities (i.e. activities which are not part of the usual college course) that a student's life is made up of take place	newcomers – here, first year students
settle into – become familiar with and start feeling comfortable and happy about	nerve-wracking – causing great anxiety or distress
in the same boat – in the same difficult or worrying situation	on the right foot – successfully
take it all in – understand and get used to the new environment	blend in – look or seem the same as people around you, fit in with others
social etiquette – rules of behaviour that are accepted by a certain group of people	handy – ready to give out
give you a head start in making friends – help you make new friends more easily and quickly	passing on your wisdom – explain and teach the rules of university life

Read and listen to the story online:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/britain/081028_freshers_week.shtml

1. Reading Quiz

Are these sentences true or false? Or is the answer not given in the text? Circle the correct answer.

1. Freshers' Week is for second year students at universities.
True / False / Not given
2. October is generally the busiest month for universities.
True / False / Not given
3. Having wine glasses in your room is a bad idea.
True / False / Not given
4. It's a good idea to pack a doorstep.
True / False / Not given
5. A bit of planning can make Freshers' Week easier.
True / False / Not given

2. A University Quiz

Answer the questions below with words or phrases from the box.

Freshers'	bachelor's	terms	lecture
Doctor of Philosophy	sandwich	science	prestigious

1. Universities in the UK usually have three _____ in a year.
2. The first degree most students study at university is also known as a _____ degree.
3. What does PhD mean? _____
4. If a degree course includes a one-year industry placement, it's also known as a _____ course.
5. Imperial College in London is famous for its teaching and research in _____.
6. Oxford and Cambridge universities are two of the most _____ universities in the country.
7. The first week of your first year at university is called _____ Week.
8. A lesson at university which takes place in a big hall with lots of students and one teacher is called a _____.

3. Idioms

Look at the idioms below. Each one is connected to university life in some way.

Try to match each idiom to its definition.

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. to live in an ivory tower | a. learning from daily life and work rather than going to university |
| 2. to fly the nest | b. not to be aware of the realities of everyday life |
| 3. saved by the bell | c. to leave your parents' home for the first time in order to live somewhere else |
| 4. the university of life | d. something that you say when a difficult situation is ended suddenly before you have to do or say something that you do not want to |

Now complete the sentences below by using one of the idioms above.

1. My grandfather began to work in the print shop when he was fifteen and learned everything from _____.
2. We were _____ when the fire alarm went before we had to give a very badly-prepared presentation.
3. Parents give their children thousands of pounds to help them _____ and get a foot on the property ladder.
4. Like most professors, Jason seems _____. He has no idea how ordinary people cope with life.

4. Wordsearch

Try to find the words associated with students' life in the puzzle below.

There are ten words to find. Words can be written horizontally (g), vertically (i) or diagonally (m)

h	d	n	l	d	o	p	d	d	k	i	a
r	m	u	n	e	w	c	o	m	e	r	s
d	o	o	r	s	t	o	p	p	o	r	e
c	e	v	t	w	b	r	i	c	t	w	p
n	t	i	u	i	t	i	o	n	q	c	r
a	i	n	j	s	v	h	a	n	d	y	o
b	q	v	m	d	a	a	d	i	d	x	s
c	u	n	x	o	o	l	t	i	l	b	p
p	e	a	n	m	k	l	c	i	e	l	e
b	t	r	e	n	t	c	r	s	o	e	c
z	t	j	k	f	g	a	s	a	l	n	t
r	e	c	r	u	i	t	s	a	m	d	e

hall	motivation	wisdom	recruits	etiquette
blend	newcomers	prospect	doorstop	handy

Answers

1. Reading Quiz

1. Freshers' Week is for second year students at universities. **False**
2. October is generally the busiest month for universities. **True**
3. Having wine glasses in your room is a bad idea. **False**
4. It's a good idea to pack a doorstep. **True**
5. A bit of planning can make Freshers' Week easier. **True**

3. Idioms

1. **to live in an ivory tower** - b. not to be aware of the realities of everyday life
2. **to fly the nest** - c. to leave your parents' home for the first time in order to live somewhere else
3. **saved by the bell** - d. something that you say when a difficult situation is ended suddenly before you have to do or say something that you do not want to
4. **the university of life** - a. learning from daily life and work rather than going to university

Now complete the sentences below by using one of the idioms above.

1. My grandfather began to work in the print shop when he was fifteen and learned everything from **the university of life**.
2. We were **saved by the bell** when the fire alarm went before we had to give a very badly-prepared presentation.
3. Parents give their children thousands of pounds to help them **fly the nest** and get a foot on the property ladder.
4. Like most professors, Jason seems **lives in an ivory tower**. He has no idea how ordinary people cope with life.

2. A University Quiz

1. Universities in the UK usually have three **terms** in a year.
2. The first degree most students study at university is also known as a **bachelor's** degree.
3. What does PhD mean? **Doctor of Philosophy**
4. If a degree course includes a one-year industry placement, it's also known a **sandwich** course.
5. Imperial College is famous for its teaching and research in **science**.
6. Oxford and Cambridge universities are two of the most **prestigious** universities in the country.
7. The first week of your first year at university is called **Freshers' Week**.
8. A lesson at university which takes place in a big hall with lots of students and one teacher is called a **lecture**.

4. Wordsearch

	m		n	e	w	c	o	m	e	r	s	
d	o	o	r	s	t	o	p					
	e		t	w							p	
	t			i							r	
	i			s	v	h	a	n	d	y	o	
	q			d		a					s	
	u			o		l	t			b	p	
	e			m		l		i		l	e	
	t								o	e	c	
	t									n	t	
r	e	c	r	u	i	t	s			d		