

# 11.2 The value of education

## HOW USEFUL IS YOUR DEGREE?

### Among US graduates



### Among UK graduates

47% are in non-graduate jobs

### In the UK

94% of medical graduates said their degree had helped them find a job

45% of media studies graduates said their degree had helped them find a job



Graduates in science, maths and engineering **EARN ON AVERAGE 50% MORE** than graduates in arts and humanities

### In the US

41% say they could do their jobs without the degrees they got

48% of graduates say they would have done better with a different degree

57% plan to go back to college

63% say they will need more training in their careers

## GRAMMAR Conditionals

### 1 Work in pairs. Answer the questions.

- Did you decide or have you decided to continue your education after school? Why? / Why not?
- Do you think that a university degree is necessary to have a successful career? Why? / Why not?

### 2 Look at the infographic. Answer the questions.

- What kinds of degree did graduates most benefit from?
- In general, how useful did graduates find their degrees?
- How does the data back up this statement: 'A degree is simply evidence that you are ready to start learning.'

### 3 Read the sentences (1–8) in the Grammar box on page 123. Answer the questions (a–c) in the box.

### 4 Complete the sentences by putting the verbs in the correct tense or form.

- Sociology is an interesting subject, but if you \_\_\_\_\_ (not / like) statistics, then you \_\_\_\_\_ (not / like) sociology. If you \_\_\_\_\_ (be) to do well, you \_\_\_\_\_ (need) to choose something you like doing.
- If you \_\_\_\_\_ (think) that going to university is just about getting a qualification, then you \_\_\_\_\_ (be) mistaken. If I \_\_\_\_\_ (be) you, I \_\_\_\_\_ (choose) a subject that really interests you.
- I \_\_\_\_\_ (probably / be) a practising doctor now, if I \_\_\_\_\_ (not / drop) out of medical school. But I was young and I wanted to see the world. I guess if I \_\_\_\_\_ (be) a more patient person, I \_\_\_\_\_ (stick) it out.
- By all means, \_\_\_\_\_ (do) an MA if you \_\_\_\_\_ (want) to. But don't expect it to affect your career prospects. If I \_\_\_\_\_ (not / do) an MA after my first degree, I don't think the course of my career \_\_\_\_\_ (be) very different.

## 5 Rewrite the conditional sentences. Use inversion.

- 1 If the places were not so limited, more people would apply to do the course.
- 2 If any places come up, we will inform you straightaway.
- 3 If a large number of students failed to find employment after leaving, it would reflect badly on the college.
- 4 If she had studied a science subject, she would definitely be in a job now.
- 5 I would have gone to the UK if the visa had not been so expensive.
- 6 You can ask the college for financial assistance if the need arises.

## CONDITIONALS

## Review of conditionals

- 1 If you **think** that your university degree will guarantee you a job, you **might be** disappointed.
- 2 Half of US graduates think that if they **had studied** a different subject at university, they **would be** better off.
- 3 If I **wasn't studying** medicine, I **would probably feel** more uncertain about my career path.
- 4 If I **had gone** to university later in life, I **would have thought** more carefully about my subject choice.
- 5 If graduates **are to** further their careers, they **will have** to keep learning.

## a Which sentence(s) refer to something that:

- 1 the speaker thinks is likely to happen in the future?
- 2 is the opposite of the real / present situation?
- 3 is an imaginary situation and result in the past?
- 4 is a past condition with a present result?

## b Which verb in bold means 'want to' or 'be going to'?

## Inversion in conditionals

- 6 **Should** you **choose** a science or engineering degree, you **will probably end up** in a better-paid job.
  - 7 **Were** you **to ask** media studies graduates whether their degree had helped them find a job, most **would say** 'no'.
  - 8 The statistics don't tell us what **would have happened** to these graduates **had they not gone** to university.
- c In sentences 6–8, if + subject + verb has been replaced by a subject-verb inversion. Rewrite the sentences using *if*.

Check your answers on page 163 and do Exercises 1–4.

## LANGUAGE FOCUS Conditional conjunctions

6 Rewrite the clause with the underlined phrases with an *if*-clause that has the same meaning.

- 1 You should at least try to get good grades. **Otherwise**, why bother doing the course at all?
- 2 You may borrow items from the tool store **on condition that you return each tool to the place you found it**.
- 3 **In case of doubt**, attempt the easier question first and then come back to the trickier ones later.
- 4 There are several factors to consider when deciding **whether or not to go to university**.
- 5 **Provided that a child is well looked after and read to at home**, there's no reason why they shouldn't do well at school.
- 6 **But for the ridiculously high tuition fees**, she would have accepted the college's offer of a place.
- 7 **As long as** you keep learning through your career, new opportunities will keep appearing.
- 8 **Supposing they had refused**: what would you have done?
- 9 I couldn't go back to college **unless my employer agreed to fund it**.
- 10 **Assuming that everything goes according to plan**, I will graduate in four years' time.

See page 164 for more information about conditional conjunctions, and do Exercises 5–6.

## 7 Work in pairs. Compare your answers from Exercise 6. Which conditional conjunctions have the same meaning?

## SPEAKING The great education debate

## 8 21st CENTURY OUTCOMES

Look at the four statements and consider what your opinion is on the subject. Then work in small groups and discuss your views. Did you have similar opinions?

- 1 **The school curriculum:** 'Schools concentrate too much on the 'core' subjects, like maths and science, at the expense of creative subjects like drama and art.'
- 2 **Goals:** 'The purpose of education is to prepare people for employment. Employers want skills – social skills, problem-solving skills, etc. – not knowledge. We need to focus more on vocational and skills training and less on academic study.'
- 3 **Tuition fees:** 'If students pay to go to university, it helps them to focus on why they are studying and how hard they need to study. You can offer grants or scholarships to students from poorer backgrounds.'
- 4 **Access to higher education:** 'There is nothing wrong with a strict selective system. It reflects the reality that some children are academically more able than others. Those who don't make the grade can get apprenticeships and do more on-the-job training.'