



925English – Lesson 13: Talking about your Education

Hi, Tim here with another 925 English Lesson! In today's lesson we're going to learn how to talk about your education.

Your education is an important part of your background. And there are lots of situations where you might talk about where you went to school and what you studied. A job interview is an obvious one, but you might also talk about your education in casual conversation.

The first thing you might mention is where you went to school. More specifically, people might be interested in which university you attended. And there are several ways we can tell them about that. Firstly, you might just use that verb "attend." Similarly, you could say you "went to" or "graduated from" a certain university.

Another way to talk about your university is to say that you're an "alumn" of a certain school. "Alum" is short for "alumnus," which is a word that means a person who attended a school. So, for example, I might say "I'm an alum of Columbia University."

Let's try practicing some of this language. We're going to give you some examples. After each example, try repeating it yourself. Ready? Let's give it a go!

- I graduated from Yale in 2008.
- For my undergrad I went to the London School of Economics.
- I attended a small technical college in Colorado.
- I'm an alum of Washington University.

Okay, we've practiced some different ways of talking about our university. But another important aspect of your education is *what* you studied. In English we call your area of study your "major." This word can be used in a few different ways.

So, for example, if you studied biology, you could say that your major was biology. But you can also say that you were a "biology major." So the noun means both an area of study and a person who studies that area. We can also use "major" as a verb, such as "I majored in biology."

After you tell someone your major, you might also mention an area of focus. For example, within business, you might have focused on finance. Or you might mention your "minor," which is like your secondary area of study. And just as we say we "majored *in*" a subject, we can say we "minored *in*" a subject.

There's another, much simpler way to talk about your major, and that's just to say something like "I studied biology." Of course that's not the only course you took, but people understand that was your major.

Now, there's one more way to tell people what you studied, and that's by saying you have a degree *in* a certain field. Your degree might be a master's degree or a bachelor's degree. And you can use the short form of these such as an MA or a BS, which means bachelor of science and is used for degrees in technical fields such as engineering or computers.

Let's practice some of these expressions for talking about your major. Once again, you can repeat the examples after you hear them.

- I studied international business, with a focus on finance.
- I majored in French, with a minor in political science.
- I started out as a science major but switched to education.
- I have a bachelor of science in mechanical engineering.

So we've learned some different ways of talking about your university and your major. But how do these expressions sound in a real conversation? Let's listen to a short dialog between Tania and Jose. Tania is asking Jose about his education.

Tania: So did you go to university around here?

Jose: Yeah, I graduated from Iowa State University in 2010.

Tania: Oh yeah? Great school. What did you study?

Jose: I majored in business, with a minor in statistics.

As you just heard, Jose says he "graduated from" Iowa State University. And when asked about what he studied, he says he "majored in" business. He also adds that he had a minor in statistics.

Now it's your turn to practice. We'll repeat the dialog, but this time we'll beep out the second speaker's words. You will have to say those parts yourself. Remember to start by saying that you graduated from Iowa State University. Then you can say that you majored in business and minored in statistics.

Tania: So did you go to university around here?

Jose: Yeah, I graduated from Iowa State University in 2010.

Tania: Oh yeah? Great school. What did you study?

Jose: I majored in business, with a minor in statistics.

All right, we've learned some great ways to talk about your education, including what university you attended and what you studied. Be sure to tune in next time, when we'll learn how to talk about your career.

Until then, so long and happy learning!

Language Review

A. Prepositions

Learning English involves learning the right combinations of words. Choose the correct preposition for each of the sentences:

- a. in
- b. from
- c. to
- d. *no preposition*

1. I went _____ a small college in California.
2. I graduated _____ Columbia in 2010.
3. I attended _____ the Sauder School of Business.
4. I majored _____ international finance.

B. Review Quiz

1. If you attended Pacific Rim University, you can say you are _____ of that university.
 - a) a major
 - b) an alum
 - c) a student
 - d) a degree
2. Which of the following two expressions have the same meaning? [choose 2]
 - a) I studied accounting.
 - b) I'm an accountant.
 - c) I minored in accounting.
 - d) I majored in accounting.

3. Fill in the blanks to make a meaningful and correct sentence.

I studied _____, with a _____ on television and radio.

- a) sales ... minor
- b) politics ... major
- c) advertising ... focus
- d) business ... degree

4. Which of the following verbs can we use to tell someone which university we studied at? [Select all that apply]

- a) to attend
- b) to have
- c) to minor in
- d) to go to
- e) to focus on
- f) to graduate from

5. Which of the following sentences is correct? [choose 2]

- a) I was major in psychology.
- b) I was a psychology major.
- c) I have a major of psychology.
- d) Psychology was my major.

Language Review Answers

A. Prepositions

1. c; 2. b; 3. d; 4. a

B. Review Quiz

1. b; 2. a, d; 3. c; 4. a, d, f; 5. b, d