

TANKANG ENGLISH

專題報導

Campus English

The topic here today is, again, campus English. "Campus English" means English that is useful in daily life in the uni-versity. Several weeks ago in this column, we described how to talk to people about what you are studying (that is, your major) and how long you have been in the university (that is, what year you are, for example, a freshman in your first year, a sophomore in your second year, a junior, or a senior). Today we are going to describe how to talk about "classes". This word "class" has at least two important and different meanings in university life. Let's look at each of these meanings one by one.

One meaning of the word "class" is related to the words we just mentioned above: freshman, sophomore, junior, and se-nior. Remember that students in their first year at the uni-versity are freshmen; those in their second year are sopho-mores, third year students are juniors, seniors are those in their fourth year. Now, at least in American universities, the word "class" can be used to refer to all of the students in one year, say, all of the freshman. For example, all of the freshman can be called "the freshman class," all of the sophomores "the sophomore class," and so on. Similarly, the students in the same "class" or same "year" are sometimes referred to by the year they will graduate. For example, the students who are right now freshman expect to graduate in the year 2006. So they are "the class of 2006." Notice that next year that group will be sophomores, but they will still be "the class of 2006." This is one of the main meanings of the word "class." Here are some typical ways to use these words:

●The junior class is already planning their graduation trip.

●She was just elected president of the senior class.

●The class of 2005 will have good luck in finding jobs, they say.

It is important to notice a cultural difference here. In American universities, classes (for example, the freshman class or the sophomore class) are not divided into smaller groups in their departments such as A, B, C, and D. In Taiwan, this smaller group is called a "ban" in Chinese, and "ban" is usually translated into English as "class." But when you are talking to foreigners, you should not expect them to understand this concept of a class as a "ban." The meaning of "ban" is closer to "section" than "class," but they still will probably not be familiar with this idea. You may need to explain what you mean.

A second meaning of the word "class" is quite different from the first one. It refers to courses that you take, such as Freshman English, or Introduction to Information Technology. These are also called "classes," the same as the Chinese word "ke"(課). One frequent question we ask friends is "How many classes are you taking this semester?" or "Do you have any more classes this afternoon?" Two major types of classes are "required classes" and "elective classes." Required classes are the ones that everyone in your department must take to graduate. You have no

choice. That's what required classes are. Can you guess, then, what elective classes are?

本文黑體字即為生字，但在文章中已加以界定，故無須特別注釋。

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