

10 Bill Gates

Before you read

1. Are computers very important to you?
2. What do you use computers for?
3. Who do you think has been the most important person in the history of computers?

Reading

- 1 In 1975 Bill Gates was a student at Harvard, one of the top universities in the United States. At that time computers were large, expensive and difficult to use. Not many people had one at home. But Gates realised that computers would become smaller, cheaper and simpler in the future. He also realised that people would need software for their computers. Gates formed a company and later dropped out of Harvard so he could develop the new software. Today Gates is the richest man in the world. He has a fortune of US\$54 billion and his company, Microsoft, employs over 88,000 people in ninety-nine countries.
- 2 Bill Gates has helped change the world. Gates developed software that was cheap and easy to use. Without him, computers could not have become so popular. Microsoft programs such as Outlook and Internet Explorer have helped the Internet and e-mail to grow quickly. As a result, it has never been easier for people around the world to communicate with each other and find useful information fast. Gates has also given more than US\$22 billion to develop health and education around the world.
- 3 However Gates also has some critics. The critics say that Gates's success is only because of good marketing. Even though there are often problems with Microsoft software, it is sold with almost every new computer we buy. So there is very little competition for Microsoft. But, no matter what the critics say, Gates continues to be successful. He has done very well for a university drop-out!

Vocabulary

A. Complete each sentence with the correct word.

software competition realised marketing develop

1. When I grow up, I want to work in _____. I have lots of good ideas to help companies sell their products.
2. I bought some new _____ to help me learn English. Now I can play grammar and spelling games on my computer.
3. My brother works for a computer game company. His job is to _____ new computer games.
4. My father owns a shoe shop, but there is a lot of _____. There are six other shoe shops in the same street!
5. My dog was very unhappy yesterday. At first I didn't know why, but then I _____ that I had forgotten to feed him!

B. Choose the correct phrase with the same meaning as the blue words in each sentence.

a lot of money speak or write to each other thousand million
person who disagrees with something left before I had finished

1. My uncle started saving money when he was a boy. Now he has a **fortune** in the bank!
2. Karen and I don't **communicate** very much now that she has moved away.
3. Jason has been a **critic** of the government for a long time. He really doesn't think they are doing a good job.
4. There are more than six **billion** people in the world!
5. I didn't like high school, so I **dropped out** and got a job.

In other words

A. What is the main purpose of the passage? Circle 1, 2 or 3.

1. To describe how Bill Gates helped change the world.
2. To explain why the Internet has grown so quickly.
3. To criticise Bill Gates.

B. Match each heading to the correct paragraph in the passage.

1. Paragraph ____ Bill Gates's critics.
2. Paragraph ____ Bill Gates starts Microsoft.
3. Paragraph ____ Bill Gates has changed the world.

General understanding

Circle T for true or F for false for each of the following statements.

1. Everybody had computers when Bill Gates was at Harvard. T / F
2. Many people work for Microsoft. T / F
3. Bill Gates has helped computers to become very popular. T / F
4. Not everybody thinks that Microsoft software is good. T / F

In detail

Write short answers to the following questions.

1. Which university did Bill Gates study at? _____
2. What did he think people would need for their computers?

3. How much money does Bill Gates have? _____
4. How many people work for Microsoft? _____
5. What has Bill Gates given over US\$22 billion for? _____

In focus

Choose the correct ending for each sentence.

1. Gates dropped out of university...
 2. Computers quickly became popular...
 3. People can communicate more easily...
 4. Critics say that good marketing...
 5. Microsoft software is sold with nearly every new computer...
- a. ...because of the Internet and e-mail.
 - b. ...even though there are often problems with it.
 - c. ...because he wanted to develop software.
 - d. ...due to Gates's software.
 - e. ...is the reason for Microsoft's success.

Discussion

Discuss the following questions with a partner or in a group.

1. What else do you know about Bill Gates?
2. Why do you think he has been so successful?
3. How would you spend your money if you were as rich as Bill Gates?
4. How do you think computers will change in the future?
5. Have you got a good business idea? Describe it.

Taking you further

Computer facts

Read these sentences about computers. Do you think they are true or false? Tick the boxes.

TRUE FALSE

1. Bill Gates started programming computers at thirteen years old.

☐ ☐

2. The first multi-purpose computer weighed over 25 tonnes.

☐ ☐

3. The 'QWERTY' keyboard layout that many of us are familiar with was designed in 1974.

☐ ☐

4. When you empty the 'Trash' on your computer, any files in there are no longer stored in your computer.

☐ ☐

5. Computers first became commercially available in 1952.

☐ ☐
