A Skim the article. What is the sharing economy? What three examples does the article give?

THE SHARING ECONOMY – GOOD FOR EVERYBODY?

Modern technology has made it easier for ordinary people to rent things or services to others. With the click of an app, we can find almost anything. It could be a new dress to wear on the weekend, or someone to clean your house. This is the sharing economy, and it is now a profitable $20 billion-a-year business. But some people are now asking: Just how good is it for society in general?

Not long ago, when people went on vacation, they usually stayed in a hotel. Today they have the choice of staying in someone's private house. They pay less, but what effect does this have on the hotel industry and the wider economy? Hotels receive fewer guests, but they still have to pay salaries to their employees and taxes to the government. Many people who rent out rooms do not. So the government gets less money, and some hotels might even close down.

Then there are car-sharing sites. Instead of using your own car for a long trip you can get a ride with someone for a small fee. Some people argue this is better for the environment, since fewer cars on the roads means less pollution. But how many people choose to use these sites rather than taking the bus or the train? Public transportation is, after all, much kinder to the environment than cars.

Many sites offer cooking services. Instead of going to a restaurant, you can use an app to order dishes from people in your neighborhood.

There is even a site where you can buy leftover food that people haven't eaten! This is sure to save you time and money. But is it risky? Can you trust the people cooking your food? Restaurants have to follow strict regulations to make sure their food is safe to eat.

There is no doubt that the sharing economy is growing. Some economists think it will be worth $335 billion by 2025. As new technology makes sharing food, accommodation, and transportation easier all the time, the question of "Is it fair?" will remain.

B Read the article. Find the words in *italics* below. Then circle the meaning of each word.

1. When a business is *profitable*, it **makes / loses** money.
2. *Taxes* are money that people **give to / receive from** the government.
3. If something is *risky*, it's **dangerous / safe**.
4. *Regulations* are **rules / people** that control how we do things.
5. When something is *fair*, everybody has **equal / different** opportunities.

C Answer the questions.

1. How much is the sharing economy worth nowadays?
2. What is the advantage of staying in a private house instead of a hotel?
3. Why is car sharing less damaging to the environment?
4. What is better for the environment than car sharing?
5. How can buying food from non-professionals be risky?

D Do you use any of these sharing-economy services? Are they ever risky? Do you think they are fair?

LIVEWORKSHEETS