UNIT 4 READING QUIZ

PART A: KEY SKILLS

1 SCANNING Scan the article and indicate whether it is likely to include the information in the chart below.

information desired	yes	no
1 reviews of Airbnb locations		
2 modern alternatives to office jobs		
3 a listing of available temporary jobs		
4 industries embracing "the gig economy"		
5 advantages and disadvantages of freelance work		
6 the tax consequences of being a freelancer		
7 the growth of independent contractors in the workforce		

2 Read the article and answer the questions that follow.

The Gig Economy

1 Technically, the word *gig* means job, but these days it has a special flavor of its own. As linguist Geoff Nunberg states in a National Public Radio commentary, in the 1950s it referred to "any job you took to keep body and soul together while your real life was elsewhere." In other words, a gig was not necessarily part of a career, nor was it work that defined you. In recent years, however, it has come to mean any kind of temporary job. It makes sense, then, that the word is now part of a new work-related term: the *gig economy*. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) defines *gig* in this context as "a single project or task for which a worker is hired, often through a digital marketplace, to work on demand." This might include working on one project at a time until each is finished, writing for publications or websites, or having a catering business that operates only when a job is offered. Common fields that employ freelancers include graphic design, information technology, technical writing, and construction. In the U.S., there has been a noticeable rise in this type of work arrangement over the past decade, with the car-sharing companies Uber and Lyft and the home-sharing company Airbnb as some of the most famous new brands of the gig economy.

2 The benefits of this system make it appealing, particularly to young single people. It enables them to choose their own schedules, to limit their work to interesting projects (as long as they earn enough to pay their bills), and to accumulate experience in different kinds of work. Nowadays we often hear about people working for a period and then traveling for a period, and so on. This kind of lifestyle would be impossible for someone working for a company in a fixed full-time position, which usually includes only two or three weeks' vacation per year. Such permanent employees are otherwise expected to be present to make decisions and fulfill ongoing responsibilities. On the other hand, the drawbacks of freelance work are clear: there is much less security than in traditional careers, and there are generally no traditional employee benefits such as private health insurance plans and paid sick days. Furthermore, freelance

LIVEWORKSHEETS

incomes tend to fluctuate, which can be stressful. Unfortunately, many people who would prefer a more traditional working life have been forced to take on a collection of lower-paying part-time jobs out of necessity rather than out of a desire for professional freedom. For them, a series of gigs is a minus instead of a plus.

3 It is difficult for the U.S. government to track the number of freelance workers accurately, or the rate of increase in the gig sector. However, data from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the government's tax administration, does offer some clues. Most people operating very small, unincorporated businesses with no employees can be classified as members of the gig economy, and between 2003 and 2013 there was notable growth in such "nonemployer businesses" in all industry sectors. In the category not associated with any one industry, called the "other services" sector, there was an increase of nearly 1 million nonemployer businesses during that same period. As the BLS notes on its website, many of the jobs reflected in this last sector would be considered gig employment, such as repair work and individual babysitting jobs. And with the rapid growth of companies like Uber, Lyft, and Airbnb, it appears this business trend will continue to increase on a large scale as the labor force and economy adjust.

PART B: ADDITIONAL SKILLS

3 Choose the best answer to each question.

1 Why might the gig economy appeal more to single people than to married people?
   a Freelance work is better for people who have no dependents and fewer responsibilities.
   b Married people don't usually like to travel, and freelance work is best for those who like to travel.
   c Single people can meet other single people more easily doing freelance work.

2 What increased by about 1 million workers between 2003 and 2013 in the U.S.?
   a nonemployer businesses
   b other services
   c all of the above

3 Why does the data from the IRS offer clues rather than clear facts about the gig economy?
   a We can only infer that the increases cited are related to gig work.
   b The reading suggests that much of this data is hidden from the IRS.
   c The gig economy is a mysterious topic which has more clues than facts.

4 Why might it be stressful to have a fluctuating income?
   a Not ever being able to predict your income could cause worry about savings and bills.
   b Not having the same boss or co-workers all the time could make a worker feel stressed.
   c It could be stressful if some projects pay better but are less interesting than others.

5 How would you characterize the overall point of view of this article?
   a It is a balanced view of the gig economy trend.
   b It celebrates the gig economy as a necessary and beneficial trend.
   c It is skeptical of the gig economy as a new system.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

UNIT 4 LANGUAGE QUIZ

PART A: KEY VOCABULARY

1 Complete the sentences with the correct form of the words in the box.

aspiring	component	fluctuate	follow suit	outweigh	pioneer	retention	transition

1 The _____ from being in high school to being in college is huge: there are so many new challenges and experiences to be faced in higher education.
2 After six months, we realized that the costs of running the mobile business _____ the profits, so we shut it down.
3 Bates College made standardized test scores optional for applicants in 1984, and soon other schools _____ and implemented the same policy.
4 The Young People's Writing Workshop offered during the summer is a great opportunity for any _____ authors to gain experience and work with established writers.
5 Last year, the price of oil _____ greatly, but this year it has become more stable.
6 Alexander Fleming was a medical _____ who discovered the use of penicillin to fight bacterial infections.
7 Physical fitness consists of three _____ : strength, endurance, and flexibility.
8 Certain medications can cause water _____ , which means too much water is kept in your body.

2 Complete the sentences with the correct form of the words in the box.

accumulate	attainable	break even	incentive	ongoing	proposition	revenue	shrewdly

1 The government uses the _____ from taxes to pay for the maintenance of roads, bridges, and tunnels.
2 After a difficult start to the semester, I've improved my grades, and I think that a final grade of B in this course is _____ .
3 I started collecting stamps when I was ten years old, and since then I have _____ over 5,000 stamps.
4 She invested _____ in alternative energy companies when everyone else was still putting their money into traditional oil businesses, so now she has earned a great deal of money.
5 Because of the _____ conflict in that part of the world, tourism has decreased enormously during the past decade.
6 We had hoped to make a small profit in the first year of our startup, but we only managed to _____ .
7 We are still considering the _____ from a competitor to purchase our company for $500,000.
8 Her father said he would buy her a car if her grades improved, which gave her a powerful _____ to study more.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

PART B: LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

3 EXPRESSING CONTRAST Complete the sentences with the contrast signals in the box.

despite	in fact	instead	on the other hand	unlike

1 Although they are similar in appearance, crows like to be around humans, _____ ravens, which prefer the wilderness.
2 _____ their name, Arabic numerals did not originate from the Arabian Peninsula. They were invented in India.
3 It is not true that all mobile businesses earn small profits. _____ , some are very profitable.
4 The flights to Australia were much more expensive than we expected. _____ , we planned a trip to Canada.
5 Studying abroad is a wonderful life experience. _____ , it can also cause homesickness.

4 BUSINESS AND MARKETING VOCABULARY Complete the sentences with the contrast signals in the box.

break even	brick-and-mortar	generate revenue	start-up costs	turn a profit

If you are thinking about starting a mobile business, there are several steps to follow. First, think of goods or services traditionally sold at a (1) _____ business, like food or haircuts, but which could also be provided from a vehicle. You will also need to save or borrow enough money in the beginning to cover your (2) _____ . Then, once your business is up and running, work hard and maintain realistic expectations. For example, don't expect to (3) _____ right away; most companies lose money or are lucky to (4) _____ their first year of business. You should be happy if you are able to (5) _____ enough _____ to pay your gas, electricity, and supply costs. Then, as your reputation and customer base grow, you will start to make money in your second year.

LIVEWORKSHEETS