Radio Programme about brand names. Listen and then do the exercise after the interview.

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Interviewer Good afternoon. This is *Uncommon Knowledge*, the programme that looks at everyday things from unusual angles. Today we're talking to the Creative Director of a company that names companies and products. Welcome, John.

John Hello, Sarah.

Interviewer Now, tell us. How do companies choose their names? Are they usually named after the people who start them?

John Well, sometimes. Many companies are named after their founders, for example the Swedish furniture company IKEA. The first two letters in IKEA – the I and the K – are the initials of Ingvar Kamprad, the company's founder.

Interviewer And what about the last two letters, the E and the A? What do they stand for?

John The E is for Elmtaryd, which is the name of the farm where Ingvar Kamprad grew up.

Interviewer And the A?

John The A is for the name of a village near his hometown, called Agunnaryd. I'm not quite sure exactly why this village was important to him, but obviously it was.

Interviewer I always assumed that 'ikea' was a Swedish word with some sort of special meaning.

John Ah, I'm afraid not. But many other companies choose names which have specific meanings. For example, Samsung, the big Korean electronics company.

company.

Interviewer What does Samsung mean?

John In Korean, Samsung means 'three stars'. The name was chosen back in the year 1938, and at that time three stars was the most impressive rating that people could imagine for hotels and things like that.

Interviewer So if they'd started the company today they would probably have called it 'five stars' – whatever that is in Korean.

John Absolutely. In any case the company was very different in its early days. For instance, in the beginning, in 1938, Samsung wasn't an electronics company. It was a company which sold fish, vegetables, and fruit to China. It didn't start selling electronics until the 1970s.

Interviewer Oh really? I didn't know that.

John And another brand name with a special meaning is Nike, the American company which is famous for its trainers and sports clothes.

Interviewer I think I know this one. Nike is the Greek goddess of victory. Is that right?

John Yes, that's right. What's interesting is that 'Nike' wasn't the company's original name. When it started in 1964, its original name was Blue Ribbon Sports. They changed their name to Nike a few years later in 1971.

Interviewer Very interesting.

John Yes. And another company with an interesting name is Sony, the Japanese electronics company. Sony is a combination of 'sonus', the Latin word for sound, and 'sonny', an American slang term that means 'boy'.

Interviewer 'Sound' plus 'boy'.

John That's right. They chose it because it has an interesting meaning and it's easy for people all over the world to pronounce. Obviously that's a important thing for a business name.

Interviewer One more question, this time about the American internet company, Google. The name has something to do with numbers, I thin

John That's right. 'Googol' is a word for a very large number: a one followed by 100 zeroes.

Interviewer Really? That's quite hard to visuali

John The name shows that there is a huge amoun of information online, and you can find it all by Googling it.

Interviewer Yes. It's a really good name for a search engine.

John Yes, indeed. Now, of course, the spelling is different. 'Google' the company is G-O-O-G-L-E, but the number is spelled G-O-O-G-O-L. But that's where the name comes from.

Interviewer Fascinating. Thanks very much for speaking with us this afternoon.

John You're very welcome.

Drag the answers to the right place

Samsung   Nike   Sonny   Ikea   Google

Which of the brands…?

1) Is named after a Greek goddes ? _____

2) Is named after the company's founder ? _____

3) Has a name which means "three stars " ? _____

4) Is named after a very large number ? _____

5) Has a name which means "sound" plus "boy" ? _____