

Scanning

Scan the reading to find and circle the company names. Find out the original names of these companies. Then read the whole text.

- 1 What is a six-letter word that immediately comes to mind when you need some information on the Internet? You probably thought of Google. But Google wasn't always the name of the famous search engine. In fact, the original name was BackRub!
- 2 BackRub was the name two graduate students gave to the new search engine they developed in 1996. They called it BackRub because the engine used backlinks¹ to measure the popularity of Web sites. Later, they wanted a better name – a name that suggests huge quantities of data. They thought of the word *googol*. (A googol is a number followed by 100 zeros.) When they checked the Internet registry of names to see if *googol* was already taken, one of the students misspelled the word by mistake, and that's how Google was born.

¹ **backlink:** If you publish a Web page, other people's links to your site are called backlinks.

Google is just one example of a name change in the business world. Many other companies have decided to change their names or the names of their products. Their reasons are usually different, but the goal is always the same: to find a name that is unique, easy to pronounce, and easy to remember.

Here are some more examples:

Jerry Yang and David Filo, two young computer specialists, developed a guide to Internet content in 1994. They called it "Jerry and David's Guide to the World Wide Web." But they soon realized that this wasn't a very catchy name, so they searched through a dictionary and found a better one: "Yahoo."

Sometimes companies change their names because of the popularity of one of their products. The Xerox Corporation is a good example. Xerox has been a familiar name in workplaces and schools for many years, but the company wasn't always called Xerox. Its original name was the Haloid Company, and it produced photographic paper. In 1947, the company developed a photocopy machine based on a technique known as xerography. The photocopiers became so well known that Haloid decided to change its name to Xerox in 1961.

A similar situation occurred in the world of athletic sportswear. In 1962, a young runner named Phil Knight started a company called Blue Ribbon Sports. He wanted to distribute Japanese running shoes, called Tigers, to the United States. In 1971, Knight decided to design and manufacture his own brand of shoes. He named the shoes after the Greek goddess of victory – Nike. Nike shoes became so well known that Knight changed the name of the whole company to Nike.

Name changes in business go back many years. Consider "Brad's Drink." This was the name of a soft drink invented by an American pharmacist, Caleb Bradham, in 1893. Bradham discovered a new way to make a sweet, fizzy cola drink. He decided that a better name would help sell the product worldwide. He called both the drink and his company Pepsi-Cola. Some people believe that this name was based on two ingredients in the drink – pepsin and cola nuts. Today Pepsi-Cola is one of the most popular soft drinks, and the company's current name, PepsiCo, is famous around the world.

A Comprehension Check

Complete the statements with *Google, Yahoo, Xerox, Nike, or PepsiCo*.

1. Before it became the official name of a company, the name _____ was well-known in offices and schools.
2. The name _____ is not related to its product, and it's much shorter than the original name.
3. The original company name of _____ came from two ingredients in a drink.
4. Both _____ and _____ changed the names of their companies to the names of their most popular products.
5. _____ got its name from a word for a number.

B Vocabulary Study

Find the words and phrases in *italics* in the reading. Then circle the correct meanings.

1. If a name *suggests* something, it **makes you think of / describes** something. (par. 2)
2. If you *misspelled* a word, you **didn't spell / spelled** it correctly. (par. 2)
3. If you do something *by mistake*, you do it **accidentally / without any errors**. (par. 2)
4. When you *distribute* a product, you **make it available / stop selling it**. (par. 6)
5. When you are *named after* someone, you have **a different / a similar or the same** name. (par. 6)
6. A fizzy drink has **bubbles / sugar**. (par. 7)

C Organizing Information into a Chart

Organizing information into a chart can help you deepen your understanding of a reading and see how different parts of the reading relate to each other.

Complete the chart with information about each company.

Name of company	Person(s) who started company	Original name of company	Origin of current name of company
Google			
Yahoo			<i>a catchy word in the dictionary</i>
Xerox			
Nike			
PepsiCo			