

THESE KIDS MEAN BUSINESS

Get it right

We say:

✓He was only 11 years old.
✗He had only 11 years old.

In times gone by, success used to arrive later in life than it does today. Rich businessmen would often be too old to really enjoy their wealth. The situation could be **summed up** in the saying, 'When you've made it, you've had it.' Well, not any more. There is a new generation of rich young entrepreneurs. In fact, some of the new **whizz-kids** on the business block are literally that – kids.

One well-known youth success story is that of Mark Zuckerberg, who by the age of 20 had already launched an early version of his social networking website *Facebook*. *Facebook* now has **clocked up** over a billion users worldwide. Today, Zuckerberg is listed by *Time* magazine as one of the 100 wealthiest and most influential people in the world. He's made it.

What is the secret of the success of this new generation of entrepreneurs? Well, it seems clear that it's linked with the digital revolution. Because the technology is so new, the greater experience which comes with age is no longer an advantage. On the contrary, the younger generation has an instinctive understanding of the digital world which their elders lack.

Never underestimate a **tech-savvy** kid with a good head for business – it's a recipe for success. A good example of this is 15-year-old Thomas Suarez from California. He formed his first company, *CarrotCorp*, when he was only 11 years old, after he **came up with** a popular new app for smartphones. Today, Thomas is **putting together** the design for a **patent-pending** 3D printer, which he says will be much faster than the 3D printers currently on the market. In his parents' generation, children of his age used to climb trees or play football, but these activities hold no interest for Thomas, who is a self-taught coding **prodigy** like Zuckerberg before him.

An instinct for business may come naturally to some kids, but for parents who don't want to leave it to chance, there is The Incubator School in Los Angeles. At this school, **starting up** a business is not only encouraged, it is a mandatory part of the curriculum. The school has the atmosphere of a Silicon Valley start-up, with motivational posters on the walls and tablets and laptops on the desks. But here the people who are using and creating this technology are children aged 11 to 13. When you ask the kids what they want to do when they **grow up**, nearly all of them say they want to run their own business.

Kids like Thomas Suarez or the pupils of The Incubator School are not likely to grow up with regrets like, 'I wish I'd started my career sooner' or 'If only I'd made the most of my opportunities.' But will they perhaps grow up with other regrets like 'I wish I'd had a proper childhood' or 'If only I'd learnt how to socialise with other kids.'? Will they be too hard on themselves and think they've failed if they don't make a million before they're 20? Will they regret their misspent youth? Only time will tell. But right now these kids mean business!

Streetwise

to make it

We can use the idiom *to make it*, when someone is very successful.
He's made it!

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Tip

Think about both parts of a compound word and the context to guess its meaning.

2 Read the words highlighted in green in the text. Match them with the definitions in the box. Then read the sentences containing the words. Are your answers correct?

1 proficient in the use of modern technology (adj)
2 waiting to be acknowledged as the owner of an invention (adj)
3 young and talented individual (n)
4 very clever and successful young people (n)

5 2.14 Read the text again and listen. Put the topics in the order they appear in the text.

1 c	a youth and technology
2 ___	b reflection and regret
3 ___	c the times are changing
4 ___	d starting very young
5 ___	e a famous young entrepreneur
6 ___	f school and business

Exam focus: multiple-choice questions

6 Follow stages 1 – 4 for answering multiple-choice questions.

1 Read the question carefully and try to answer it without looking at the options.
2 Read all the choices and think about the differences between them.
3 Eliminate any you feel are definitely incorrect.
4 Read the text again to check.

What problem did many successful business people have?

a They had to wait until they were old to make money.
b They were too old to get the benefits from their success.
c Younger people were taking over their businesses.
d They couldn't succeed when they were young.

7 Choose the best answer according to the text. Only one answer is possible. Follow stages 1 – 4 in Exercise 6.

1 Why is Mark Zuckerberg a success?
   a *Time* Magazine reports that he is.
   b *Facebook* has history.
   c So many people use *Facebook*.
   d He started his business early.
2 Why doesn't being older necessarily mean being successful in business any more?
   a Younger people understand technology better.
   b Greater experience isn't necessary now.
   c Your age has nothing to do with technology.
   d There are only jobs for younger people today.
3 How is Thomas Suarez improving his business?
   a He's teaching himself computer coding.
   b He's marketing apps for smartphones.
   c He's starting a new company.
   d He's developing a new product.
4 What might pupils of The Incubator School be unhappy about later on in life?
   a Not starting work earlier.
   b Not making more of their chances.
   c Not making enough money.
   d Not doing things differently in their youth.

8 Answer the questions according to the information in the text. Use your own words.

1 What do children need, in addition to knowing about technology, to have a good chance of business success?
2 How does the writer feel about young people who think they've failed if they don't make a million before they are 20?

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