ZUMBA – reading lesson

There's no doubt that for many of us 21st century lifestyles are obesogenic, predisposing us to become a size or two larger than we should be. We're therefore continually finding new ways to motivate ourselves into shedding a few pounds, and one of the latest additions to the various activities aimed at pumping and sweating our way to improved fitness is Zumba.
If on the one hand you're the sort of person who could never see yourself at a gym, or simply finds other, conventional ways of taking exercise rather unappealing, but, at the same time, you're one of those types who can always be lured onto the dance floor at a party, then Zumba might be just the thing to get your legs moving.

Zumba is a form of fitness class in which you burn off calories by dancing to different kinds of lively tunes, often Latin-American inspired such as salsa, merengue and samba, but also other types of modern music like hip-hop and Bollywood (music from the Indian film industry).

Zumba is truly eclectic in its approach, even sometimes incorporating moves from belly dancing and martial arts. Classes typically last for about an hour and include exercises to both fast and slow rhythms. There's even a water-based alternative performed in a swimming pool, referred to as Aqua Zumba.

Zumba is proving to more than 100 countries across the globe. The key to its popularity seems to lie in the way it combines internationally recognised music with simple but addictive dance steps, in doing so creating a kind of 'fitness party'. It's this concept on which Zumba classes are promoted, often by taglines such as 'ditch the workout, join the party'.

Background – Zumba

The concept of Zumba was invented in the mid-nineties by Colombian fitness instructor Alberto Perez. Perez had gone to teach an aerobics class and, realising that he'd forgotten to bring traditional aerobics music, improvised by using his own mix of music (salsa and merengue) from tapes he happened to have in his bag. This proved instantly popular with the class, spontaneously creating a novel kind of dance-fitness programme focussed on letting the music naturally 'move' participants. In 2001, Perez took this new dance-fitness concept to the USA and joined forces with entrepreneurs and fellow Latin Americans Alberto Perlman and Alberto Aghion, the three launching a business they named Zumba Fitness LLC. Use of the term Zumba was an arbitrary, creative coinage, trademarked as a catchy brand name. Since then both the concept and the brand have become a globally successful phenomenon, spawning the launch of Zumba academies to train approved instructors, Zumba music Cds, Zumba video games on various gaming platforms, and even clothes and accessories branded Zumbawear.

The popularity of the activity has even taken it into the realm of fundraising events, so that, following in the wake of dance-a-thons, swimathons, telethons etc, the Zumbathon has now become a popular way to raise money for charitable causes.

1. Read the article on *Zumba* and answer these questions.

1. Look at the third sentence of the first paragraph. What unusual adjective does the author use to describe 21st century lifestyles? Can you explain what it means?
2. What does Zumba help people to do?
3. What is *Aqua Zumba*?

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4. What is the key to Zumba's popularity?
5. Look at the Background section of the article. What was Alberto Perez's job and what accidental event led to the creation of Zumba?
6. What word has been coined to describe a fundraising activity involving Zumba?

2. Are these statements true (T) or false (F) according to the text?

1. People are becoming thinner in the 21st century.
2. Zumba is a good fitness activity for people who enjoy dancing.
3. Zumba is always performed to Latin American music.
4. Zumba is only popular with young people.
5. *Zumba Fitness LLC* was launched in Colombia.
6. Zumba is an invented word.

3. Adjectives:

Match these adjectives from the text with their meanings.

1. addictive	a. involving a lot of sitting and not much exercise
2. arbitrary	b. consisting of many different types
3. calorific	c. attracting attention and easy to remember
4. catchy	d. new or unusual
5. novel	e. not done for any particular reason
6. eclectic	f. likely to make you fat
7. sedentary	g. so enjoyable that you want to do it very often

4. The words in red have a similar meaning to the words *in italics* in the sentences below. Replace the words *in italics* with the correct form of the words in the box.

start up / option / idea / unattractive / create / traditional / area / cause

1. 21st century lifestyles *predispose* _____ us to become a size or two larger than we should be.
2. You might be the sort of person who finds *conventional* _____ ways of taking exercise rather *unappealing* _____.
3. There's even a water-based *alternative* _____ performed in a swimming pool.
4. The concept of Zumba was *invented* _____ in the mid-nineties by Colombian fitness instructor Alberto Perez.
5. Perez took this new dance-fitness *concept* _____ to the USA.
6. The three Latin Americans *launched* _____ a business named Zumba Fitness LLC.
7. The popularity of the activity has even taken it into the *realm* _____ of fundraising.

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5. Zumba is a trademark. Below are some other examples of trademarks which are regularly seen in English. Can you match them with the correct dictionary definitions?

Thermos - Astro - Turf - Velcro - Hoover - Post-it - Jacuzzi - Tabasco - Lycra

1. a red sauce used for adding a strong flavour to foods _____

2. a container that keeps liquids hot or cold _____

3. a vacuum cleaner _____

4. a type of hot bath with bubbly water, in which people sit to relax _____

5. a type of artificial surface that looks like grass and is used to cover the ground where sports are played _____

6. two narrow bands of cloth with special surfaces that stick together, used for fastening clothes, shoes, etc. _____

7. light cloth made from artificial fibres that stretches and keeps its shape _____

8. a small piece of coloured paper that is used for writing notes and temporarily sticking them on other papers and surfaces _____

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