

Invisible man

Level: Intermediate upwards

Timing: 90 minutes plus

Material needed: One copy of the worksheet per student; one copy of the vocabulary record per student

Group size: Any

Overview

This lesson plan for both pre-experience and in-work business students is based around an original article first published in *Business Spotlight* Issue 4/2014. The article is about Sir Jonathan Ive, Apple's head of design, a man who could be famous, but isn't. In the article, we read about what he does, where he came from, what kind of man he is, what well-known products he has designed and his work philosophy.

The tasks in the student worksheet ensure that the students understand the content of the article and the language used, and also provide extra questions for discussion.

The teacher's notes provide suggestions for teaching and learning strategies, as well as ideas on how to present the tasks in the classroom, any necessary answer keys, and follow-on extension tasks and lesson plans.

A picture is worth a thousand words

Hand out the worksheet. Students describe the men in the photo and answer the questions. After they have done this, they should read the article and see how closely their description fits with what is written about Jonny Ive.

Key words

Students read the definitions and find the matching key words in the article. This task can be divided up among the students so that half of them look for key words 1 to 10 and the other half 11 to 20. Then, they can share their answers with students who looked at the other section, giving them the opportunity to talk through the words and complete the exercise.

Key:

paragraphs 1–9

1. thug; 2. knighted; 3. enterprise; 4. authorship; 5. labs; 6. consultant; 7. tombstone; 8. consummate; 9. refinement; 10. conceived

paragraphs 10–19

11. principles; 12. intuitive; 13. honour; 14. shaping; 15. prototypes; 16. temper; 17. permeated; 18. successor; 19. eulogy; 20. touching

Find the information

Before reading the article properly, students should scan the article to find the answers to these key questions.

Key:

1. Apple; 2. head of design; 3. Sir Jonathan Ive; 4. British; 5. Yes. He has a wife and twin sons.

Two-word expressions

First, students match words to make expressions from the article. Then, they use the expressions to complete the sentences.

Key:

1. softly spoken (para 1); 2. product launches (para 4); 3. low profile (para 5); 4. broadly accessible (para 8); 5. cranking out (para 13); 6. engineering-driven (para 14); 7. healthy ego (para 16)

Extension task

To extend this task, look at the words more closely. Get the students to talk about them by asking:

Which expression forms a phrasal verb? (*cranking out*)

Which words describe a person? (*softly spoken; healthy ego; low profile*)

'Which expressions describe products and processes? (*broadly accessible; engineering-driven; cranking out; product launches*)

Which is the most informal term? (*cranking out*)

Understanding the article

The students decide whether the statements are true or false according to what they read in the article. They should correct any statements that are false and add any further information they can to those that are true.

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Key:

1. T – He designed the iMac, iPod, iPhone, iPad and MacBook.
2. F – First, he became a consultant for Apple in 1992. After that, he joined the company as a full-time designer. There is no mention of the logo.
3. F – His personal fortune is estimated at over £80 million.
4. T
5. F – He is still a British citizen. He was knighted in 2012.
6. T – He is usually only present via video.
7. F – He says it's because people are interested in the product and not the designer.
8. F – He was hired by Robert Brunner, Apple's former head of industrial design.
9. T
10. T – He likens it to finishing the back of a drawer.
11. F – I've did not escape the legendary Steve Jobs temper.
12. F – His partnership with Steve Jobs was one of the most successful in the history of technology. He did not work at Braun with Rams. I've wrote a foreword in a book that was a tribute to Rams.
13. F – Apple's success is attributed to the products being design driven rather than engineering driven.
14. F – He says he will leave Apple if it stops innovating.

Good design, great design

Tell students to think about an electronic or manual device that they use at work or at home. It doesn't matter whether the device is used every day or infrequently. It can be large or small, new or old, cheap or expensive.

Get them to describe their device and talk about it in small groups. Tell them to make use of the question prompts on the worksheet.

Teaching and learning strategy: encouraging and kick-starting creativity

Teachers sometimes fall into the trap of asking their students to do unrealistic tasks such as "Think of an invention that will make a difference in the world, and market it". The student may be justified in thinking "Well, if I could do that, I wouldn't be here in this room; I'd be a rich entrepreneur."

So, how do we get *all* students to be creative and contribute to free discussion tasks?

One way is to ask guiding questions such as those in task 6. These encourage students to talk about specific aspects in a more focused way.

The wording of the questions is also important. A question that is too open may put the student under pressure to 'perform', to be interesting or funny. Note the difference between these two questions and decide which one is easier for students to answer:

What's the best thing you've ever watched on TV?

After a hard day at work, what do you like to watch on TV?

If students are still struggling, take them through steps that will help them engage with the task. In task 6, for example, you could ask them to close their eyes and picture their work space / desk / factory floor / kitchen / garden shed / car. Ask them to mentally find a device in one of those places. Once they have done this, they should continue the task in the usual way, describing the device by answering the questions. Using this method limits the choice and allows them to focus on the task, rather than taking all of the allotted time just to choose an interesting device to talk about.

Vocabulary record

Here, students should be encouraged to record all of the new and useful vocabulary they have learned during the lesson, not only in the form presented in the article but also in related forms.

Related topics on onestopenglish

Follow the link for a Guardian news lesson on a related topic:

Music streaming breaks through \$1bn sales barrier
<http://www.onestopenglish.com/skills/news-lessons/weekly-topical-news-lessons/2014-weekly-news-lessons-archive/weekly-news-lesson-383-10th-april-2014-music-streaming-breaks-through-1bn-sales-barrier/553535.article>

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1 A picture is worth a thousand words

Look at the photo. Do you know who any of these men are? What do you know about them? What do you think they are doing? What are they looking at? Why?



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2 Key words

Match key words from the article to the definitions.
paragraphs 1–9

consultant
conceived

enterprise
authorship

tombstone
labs

refinement
thug

consummate
knighted

1. a man who is violent, especially a criminal _____
2. given the title 'Sir' by a king or queen _____
3. the activity of creating businesses and managing them _____
4. the fact of being the person who has created, written or designed something

5. buildings or large rooms where people do experiments or research (this is the short form of the word)

6. an expert or a professional person whose job is to give help and advice on a particular subject

7. a large stone with someone's name and their birth date and death date on it that is put over the place where they are buried _____
8. showing great skill at doing something _____
9. a small change that is made to something in order to improve it _____
10. thought out and designed _____

paragraphs 10–19

shaping
prototypes

temper
successor

eulogy
permeated

intuitive
honour

touching
principles

11. basic beliefs _____
12. easy to use because the process of operating it is very obvious _____
13. show your respect for something _____
14. forming something _____
15. the first forms of something new, made before it is produced in large quantities

16. a tendency to get angry very quickly _____
17. made its influence felt in part of something _____
18. someone who holds an important position in a company after someone else

19. a speech at a funeral about the person who has died _____
20. making you feel emotional or sympathetic, for example by being sad _____

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3 Find the information

Scan the article to find the answers to the questions below.

1. What company does Jonathan Ive work for?
2. What is his position there?
3. What is his full name and title?
4. What is his nationality?
5. Does he have a family?

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by Margaret Davis



Everyone knows what a Mac and an iPhone look like. But who recognizes the man behind them? Margaret Davis tells us about Apple's chief designer, who works from behind the scenes.

Yet, despite the knighthood and a personal fortune estimated at over £80 million, Ive is rarely recognized in public. That is partly because, apart from a love of expensive cars, Ive does not display his wealth. He makes few public appearances and is seldom seen wearing anything other than a T-shirt and jeans. Even during Apple's famous product launches, Ive is normally present only via video. "People's interest is in the product, not in its authorship," he told the *Daily Telegraph*.

The chief designer's low profile probably also reflects Apple's policy of keeping anything to do with design highly secret. Access to Ive's design labs at the company headquarters in Cupertino, near San Francisco, is restricted. The laboratory has tinted windows so that people cannot see inside; most Apple employees have never entered it.

Ive attended Walton High School in Stafford, where he played rugby and was the drummer in a rock band. After finishing school, he studied industrial design at Newcastle Polytechnic (now Northumbria University) and joined a London design company. He became a consultant for Apple in 1992 and soon joined the company as a full-time designer.

"I often joke that my tombstone will say: 'The Guy Who Hired Jonathan Ive'," Apple's former head of industrial design, Robert Brunner, told the *Daily Mail*. "He was a consummate designer on all levels, especially around form, detail, materials and refinement, and how that extends into manufacturing."

Ive, whose first major project was the iMac, says that his work was influenced by that of Dieter Rams, chief designer

- 1 Steve Jobs described him as his "spiritual partner at Apple". The BBC compares him to Armani. His biographer says: "He looks like a big skinhead thug but he's the nicest, politest guy you ever met and very softly spoken."
- 2 "He" is Sir Jonathan Ive (pronounced /arv/), head of design at Apple and the man behind such classic Apple products as the iMac, iPod, iPhone, iPad and MacBook. The 47 year old, who was born in London, has worked for Apple in California since 1992.
- 3 Known as Jony (pronounced *Johnny*) to his friends and colleagues, Ive remains a British citizen. He was knighted in 2012 "for services to design and enterprise".

4
5
6
7
8

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at Braun from 1961 to 1995. In the foreword to *As Little Design as Possible*, a tribute to Rams, Ive wrote, "what Dieter Rams and his team at Braun did was to produce hundreds of wonderfully conceived and designed objects: products that were beautifully made in high volumes and that were broadly accessible".

9 Rams returned the compliment in *The Daily Telegraph*: "I have always regarded Apple products – and the kind words Jony Ive has said about me and my work – as a compliment," he wrote. "Without doubt, there are few companies in the world that genuinely understand and practise the power of good design in their products and their businesses."

10 One of Rams's principles is that products must not only look good but they must also be useful. Ive agrees. He likes to tell the story of his first encounter with Mac computers as a student. Until then, he had found computers difficult to work with. The Mac changed that. "I remember it really clearly, the moment when I realized that technology could be accessible and intuitive," he told *The Independent*.

11 Ive describes himself as "fanatical in terms of care and attention to things people don't see immediately. It's like finishing the back of a drawer. Nobody's going to see it, but you do it anyway," he told *Vanity Fair*.

12 "We are in an unusual time, in which objects are designed graphically, on a computer. Now, we have people graduating from college who don't know how to make something themselves," he comments. "It's only then that you understand the characteristics of a material and how you honour that in the shaping."

13 Although he loves London, Ive was excited about moving to California and working full time for Apple, a company he admired. But his early years there were disappointing, according to his biographer, Leander Kahney. "He ended up working on his own in a basement office. He was cranking out weird stuff and filled the space with hundreds of prototypes. None of them were getting made and no one was paying attention to him or to his work. He was very frustrated." All of this changed in 1997, when Steve Jobs returned to Apple after a 12-year absence. Jobs was impressed with Ive's prototypes and invested in the design team. This doesn't mean Ive escaped the legendary Steve Jobs temper, however.

14 Still, it was the beginning of one of the most successful partnerships in the history of technology, according to Kahney. "Together, they reset Apple's engineering-driven culture and created a much more tightly integrated design-driven approach, where 'design' (meaning creative engineering, whether it's hardware, software or advertising) permeated everything the company does."

15 Ive has managed to keep his family life almost completely private. He and his wife, Heather, whom he met in high school, were married in 1987. They have twin sons. Although other Apple designers bring their families to the studio, Ive does not, according to his biographer. "Some of the designers who live in San Francisco know his family, but, to the others, they are a mystery," Kahney writes.

16 Ive may be gentlemanly, but he has a healthy ego. And one thing he disliked was Steve Jobs stealing his ideas. Ive once complained to Walter Isaacson: "Jobs will go through a process of looking at my ideas and say, 'That's no good. That's not very good. I like that one.' And, later, I will be sitting in the audience and he will be talking about it as if it was his idea," Ive said.

17 When Steve Jobs died on 5 October 2011, Ive was mentioned as a potential successor, but he has often said he is not interested in the business side of the company. At the staff memorial service, Ive's eulogy to his "best and most loyal friend" was humorous and touching: "We worked together for nearly 15 years – and he still laughed at the way I said 'aluminium'."

18 So, if Ive does not succeed Steve Jobs, what will he do next? "Apple has gone from being the alternative to the mainstream," says Alex Milton, head of the faculty of design at Ireland's National College of Art and Design.

19 Although Ive recently told *The Sunday Times* that he would leave Apple if it stopped innovating, he added, "I don't think that will happen. We are at the beginning of a remarkable time. When you think about technology and what it has enabled us to do so far and what it will enable us to do in the future, we're not even close to any kind of limit. It's still so, so new."

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4 Two-word expressions

- a. Match the words from the first box with the words from the second box to make two-word expressions from the article.

broadly	out
cranking	ego
healthy	profile
product	driven
softly	accessible
engineering	spoken
low	launches

- b. Write the two-word expressions into the sentences below.

- Someone who is _____ has a quiet and gentle voice.
- When Apple have developed a new product, they hold one of their famous _____.
- Someone who does not want to attract public attention keeps a _____.
- Something that is _____ can be obtained or used by almost anyone.
- If you are _____ things, you are producing them in large numbers often without caring much about their quality.
- Something that is technology oriented and designed can be called _____.
- If you have a _____, you have a good opinion of yourself and your own importance, but you are not arrogant.

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5 Understanding the article

Are these sentences true (T) or false (F) according to the article? Correct any that are false and add any further information you have to those that are true.

1. Jony Ive designed many of Apple's most famous products.
2. He joined Apple in 1992 and designed their famous logo.
3. Despite his successes, he is not very rich.
4. He was born in London.
5. He became a US citizen in 2012.
6. He usually does not attend Apple's product launches in person.
7. He says this is because he doesn't want to be recognized.
8. He was hired by Steve Jobs.
9. When Steve Jobs died, some thought that Ive might become the new CEO of Apple.
10. Ive likes to pay attention to details, even those people cannot see.
11. Steve Jobs never shouted at Ive, his 'spiritual partner' at Apple.
12. Ive's working partnership with Dieter Rams at Braun was one of the most successful in the history of technology.
13. Apple's success is attributed to the products being engineering driven rather than design driven.
14. Ive now wants to leave Apple as he says it has stopped innovating.

6 Good design, great design

Think of a device (electronic or manual) that you like to use at work or at home.

Talk about it by answering these questions.

- What does it do? How does it do it?
- Who made it? Are there any similar devices made by other companies? Why did you decide to buy / use this one?
- What aspect of the design makes it pleasant or easy to use?
- Was the device available a few years ago or is it brand new?
- Is the device necessary for your work or home life, or just nice to have?
- How would you improve it?

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Vocabulary record: Invisible man

verb	noun	adjective (+ opposite)	adverb (+ opposite)
influence			
	innovation		
		healthy	
			rarely