

## Topics: Business by Adrian Tennant

**LEVEL:** Pre-intermediate  
**AGE:** Teenagers / Adults  
**TIME NEEDED:** 90 minutes + project  
**LANGUAGE FOCUS:** Comparatives and superlatives, understanding vocabulary in context, topic words

### LEAD-IN

Ask students to look at the pictures and match the words in the box to the correct one. Then put students in pairs and ask them to answer the questions. Monitor and help where necessary, then check the answers together.

**Key** \_\_\_\_\_  
*A. New York financial district (Wall Street); B. business newspaper; C. business meeting; D. stock exchange*

### READING 1: HEADLINES

Ask students to read the headlines and circle all the words connected to business. Next, ask the pairs to discuss what they think happened in each of the situations. Monitor and help where necessary. Elicit ideas from students as a whole-class discussion but only check the answers to the circled words.

**Key** \_\_\_\_\_  
*economy; banks; job(s); shares*

### READING 2: NEWS IN BRIEF

Ask students to read through the stories and match the headlines to the correct one. Tell them they don't need to understand every word (if you want you can give a short time limit, e.g. two minutes). Get students to check their answers in pairs before checking as a class.

**Key a** \_\_\_\_\_  
*1. More problems for the banks; 2. Shares down again;  
 3. Economy growing at last; 4. Young people can't get jobs;  
 5. New job for inside man*

Next, ask students to read the five statements and decide if each one is true (T), false (F) or not given (NG).

**Note:** You might want to point out that *not given* means that there is no direct information proving the sentence is either true or false. Again, get pairs to check their answers together before checking as a class.

**Key b** \_\_\_\_\_  
*1. T (third time such a crisis has happened); 2. NG; 3. T;  
 4. F; 5. NG*

### WORKING WITH THE LANGUAGE

Ask students to look at the extracts from the newspaper stories. Point out that these are words and phrases used when you compare two or more things. Next, ask the students to try and complete the five sentences with the words in the box (these are the same words as shown in the examples). Monitor and help where necessary. Put the students in pairs and get them to check their answers together before checking as a class.

**Key** \_\_\_\_\_  
*1. the biggest; 2. more than; 3. not as bad as; 4. higher;  
 5. the lowest*

### WORKING WITH VOCABULARY

#### Focus 1: Meaning

Ask students to look back at the newspaper stories, from the Reading 2: News in brief exercise, and find words that match the definitions. Encourage them to work in pairs and discuss their ideas as they look at the texts. The story numbers are given to help them.

**Key** \_\_\_\_\_  
*1. collapse; 2. unauthorized; 3. succession; 4. claim;  
 5. figure(s); 6. reduce(d); 7. workforce; 8. similar;  
 9. internally; 10. base(d)*

#### Focus 2: Topic-related words

Ask students to work together and complete the sentences with the correct words, *a*, *b* or *c*. Again, encourage them to look back at the newspaper stories as these might help them. Monitor and help where necessary. Check the answers as a class.

**Key** \_\_\_\_\_  
*1. c; 2. b; 3. c; 4. a; 5. c; 6. c*

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### LISTENING

Ask students to listen to a short radio news report. Play the report and ask students which of the newspaper stories, from the Reading 2: News in brief exercise, it is about (number 5). Ask students to read the newspaper story again and circle any differences they can remember between it and the radio report. Put students in pairs and ask them to discuss their answers together. Monitor and help where necessary. Play the recording again, if necessary, and check the answers as a class.

#### Transcript:

And in business news, IGM, the international bank based in Hong Kong, is looking for a new chief executive after the resignation of Marcus Liebermann. Mr Liebermann had worked for the company for the past three years after joining from its closest rivals.

#### Key

*IGM is a bank / details of IGM not given; IGM is based in Hong Kong / the Asian division is in Hong Kong; Marcus Liebermann has resigned as / has become chief executive; he worked for IGM for three years / has worked for IGM for thirty years; he had worked for a rival company / has only worked at IGM*

### SPEAKING

Put students in small groups and ask them to discuss the questions together.

Afterwards, ask a few groups to report back on their discussion. You might want to open this out to the whole class.

### PROJECT

Ask students to carry out the project for homework, either individually or in pairs, and give their presentations in the next lesson.

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LEAD-IN

Match the words in the box to the photos.  
Be careful! There are two extra words.

- |                    |                             |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| business meeting   | job interview               |
| business newspaper | stock exchange              |
| business portfolio | New York financial district |

A.



B.



C.



D.



READING 1: HEADLINES

Read the headlines and circle all the words connected to business.

ECONOMY GROWING AT LAST

MORE PROBLEMS FOR THE BANKS

NEW JOB FOR INSIDE MAN

YOUNG PEOPLE CAN'T GET JOBS

SHARES DOWN AGAIN

What do you think happened in each of the situations?

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### READING 2: NEWS IN BRIEF

a. Read the newspaper stories below and match the headlines from the previous exercise to the correct story.

1.

A European Bank faces collapse after losing more than \$1 billion. Unfortunately, this is the third time a crisis like this has happened in the last two years. The losses were caused by unauthorized trading. Financial analysts say that this kind of trading should be impossible and that there should be an investigation.

2.

The value of shares has fallen for the third day in succession. Earlier today the FTSE 100 was below the 5,000 mark but it closed at just over 5,000, the lowest this year. The latest crisis is because of uncertainty in the Middle East and fears about oil supplies.

3.

Results from three of the biggest high street retailers show sales were up by 5% and profits were 8% higher. Analysts claim these figures show that the recession has ended and the economy is healthy. One reason for the 3% gap between sales and profits is that many retailers reduced the number of staff they employed earlier this year.

4.

The latest unemployment figures were released today and show an increase in the number of unemployed. The figures show that 12% of the workforce is unemployed. 18- to 24-year-olds have been badly affected with around 25% looking for a job. The government was quick to say that this latest rise was not as bad as was feared and that other countries have also had similar increases.

5.

Yesterday, IGM announced the appointment of a new chief executive – Marcus Liebermann. Mr Liebermann has worked for the company for more than 30 years after joining straight from Harvard University. It is the first time the company has appointed someone internally. Until recently, he was the regional manager in IGM's Asian division, based in Hong Kong.

b. Read the texts again. Are these sentences true (T), false (F) or not given (NG)?

1. It isn't the first time a European Bank has lost money.
2. The FTSE is not the only market where the value of shares has fallen.
3. The profits of three high street retailers are better than last year.
4. The percentage of unemployed 18- to 24-year-olds is less than half the average number of people who are unemployed.
5. Marcus Liebermann will have to move because of his new job.

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### WORKING WITH THE LANGUAGE

Look at these extracts from the newspaper reports.

- ... more than \$1 billion.
- ... the biggest ...
- ... 8% higher.
- ... not as bad as ...
- ... the lowest this year.

These phrases compare two or more things. Now complete these sentences with the phrases in the box.

more than	the biggest	the lowest
not as bad as	higher	

- My wife works for one of \_\_\_\_\_ companies in the area.
- \_\_\_\_\_ twice as many people are unemployed now than a year ago.
- The losses are \_\_\_\_\_ first feared and the banks are confident in recovering the money.
- Interest rates are \_\_\_\_\_ than at any other time this year.
- He started at \_\_\_\_\_ position in the company but now he's the chief executive.

### WORKING WITH VOCABULARY

#### Focus 1: Meaning

Find words and phrases in the newspaper stories that match the definitions below.

- a situation in which something fails or stops existing (story 1)
- not officially or legally allowed (story 1)
- in a series, one after another (story 2)
- to say something is true (story 3)
- a number that has been counted or calculated (story 3)
- to make something smaller or less in size or amount (story 3)
- the total number of people who work in a particular company, industry or area (story 4)

- like each other but not exactly the same (story 4)
- existing or happening inside an organization (story 5)
- to have somewhere as your main office or place of work, or the place where you live (passive; story 5)

#### Focus 2: Topic-related words

Choose the correct word to complete each sentence.

- I didn't know your brother worked as a \_\_\_\_\_ in the city.  
a. analyst      b. chief      c. trader
- My dad put all his money into \_\_\_\_\_ and now he's lost almost everything!  
a. profits      b. shares      c. markets
- Although sales were quite high, the \_\_\_\_\_ were lower as the costs were higher.  
a. figures      b. increases      c. profits
- Most businessmen are interested in \_\_\_\_\_ news.  
a. financial      b. profits      c. money
- Because of the \_\_\_\_\_, most families don't have money to spend on luxury goods.  
a. employment      b. increases      c. recession
- For the third month running, the number of \_\_\_\_\_ people fell.  
a. appointment      b. executive      c. unemployed

### LISTENING

Listen to the radio news report and answer the questions below.

- Which newspaper story is about the same topic?
- What are the differences between the newspaper story and the radio news report?

**Topics: Business  
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Discuss these questions in groups.

1. Do you ever read business news?
2. What kind of business news do you find interesting?
3. What is the current situation of the stock market in your country or region?
4. What is the unemployment situation in your country?
5. Do you think retailers should make large profits? Why? Why not?

**PROJECT**

**You are the chief executive of a company. Prepare a two-minute presentation about your company and include the following information:**

- what you provide / produce
- location
- sales figures
- profit figures
- your plan for the next five years