

The Apprentice: you're fired!

One of Britain's most popular **reality TV** programmes has returned to our screens for a fifth series. The Apprentice sees 16 **ambitious** individuals competing for a job with electronics **tycoon** Sir Alan Sugar.

With endless talk of credit-crunches, redundancies and cut-backs, it may come as no surprise that thousands of **plucky** hopefuls applied for the show. The chosen 16 will compete in a series of business tasks and do their best **to escape elimination**. Not one of them wants to hear the **fateful** words: you're fired.

It should also be noted that this year's **budding** apprentices are not going to be allowed to forget the grim economic climate quite so easily. At the launch of this year's TV show, Sir Alan announced that some episodes have been "specifically made towards recognition of what difficult times we are in". The tasks will as usual be **gruelling** tests of **business acumen**, team-working and leadership skill. They will also make for some hilarious viewing. British viewers will be shaking their heads in disbelief at the crazy decisions of the **wannabe** apprentices.

But perhaps the most entertaining feature of the show will be watching the hopefuls **squirm and squabble** in the boardroom. It is here they will have to explain just why they have failed each task so badly.

What drives people to take part in the show is difficult to say. Some are clearly motivated by the promise of a **six-figure salary** and some claim they want the experience of working with a successful businessman such as Sir Alan. One thing is for sure, the contestants will all gain some level of celebrity. The show **is a regular ratings winner**.

And to date, there has been one big winner and that is the show's creator, Mark Burnett. Originating in the US, The Apprentice's winning format has been copied all over the world and with the **hype** surrounding this latest series, it looks as though the show will have success for many years to come.

Glossary

reality TV – television programmes which don't use scripts and show what's actually happening to the people taking part; a reality TV show usually features a competition	ambitious – having strong desire for success
tycoon – someone who has succeeded in business or industry and has become very wealthy and powerful	plucky – brave (informal)
to escape elimination – here, to stay in the show, not to get rejected	fateful – that have serious consequences (here, hearing these words means for a contestant that he or she is no longer in the show)
budding – beginning to develop or show signs of future success	gruelling – extremely tiring and difficult, demanding great effort and determination
business acumen – a person's knowledge and ability to make profitable business decisions	wannabe – somebody who tries to be like somebody else (informal)
squirm and squabble – move and argue nervously	a six-figure salary – money that you get for the work you've done that is at least £100,000
is a regular ratings winner – is seen by many people every time it's shown; is always very popular	hype – a lot of publicity intended to excite public interest

Read and listen to the story online:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/newsaboutbritain/2009/04/090421_nab_apprentice.shtml

1. Reading Quiz

Are these sentences true or false? Or is the answer not given in the text? Circle the correct answer.

1. The Apprentice is a TV game show. **True / False / Not given**
2. Sir Alan Sugar is a successful businessman in the UK. **True / False / Not given**
3. The weekly tasks test how well the potential apprentices work together. **True / False / Not given**
4. The winner of The Apprentice will get a job with an annual salary of at least £100,000. **True / False / Not given**
5. The winner of The Apprentice will get Sir Alan Sugar's job. **True / False / Not given**

2. Business idioms

Look at the idioms below. Each one is connected to business.
Try to match the idiom to its definition.

a. get off the ground	1. to be serious about something
b. get a break	2. to successfully start something
c. make a go of	3. to give someone a job
d. mean business	4. to get a good opportunity
e. take on	5. to do something well

Now complete the sentences below by using one of the idioms above:

1. I really think I deserve a promotion. When will I _____?
2. We are going to outsell all of our competitors this month. I _____.
3. We are understaffed. I think we need to _____ another administrator.
4. We have a great team and excellent products. I think we can really _____ this business.
5. Starting a new business is very difficult. You need a lot of support to _____.

3. Wordsearch

Try to find the words associated with business in the puzzle below.

There are ten words to find. Words can be written horizontally (g), vertically (i) or diagonally (m)

a	m	a	r	k	e	t	i	n	g	a	g	o
d	a	e	r	e	s	e	a	r	c	h	f	p
m	x	v	p	e	r	s	o	n	n	e	l	e
i	p	r	o	d	u	c	t	i	o	n	f	r
n	o	f	h	f	s	a	l	e	s	a	g	a
i	g	f	m	a	r	k	e	t	u	g	h	t
s	d	i	a	d	m	i	n	i	s	t	r	i
t	e	n	p	u	r	c	h	a	s	i	n	o
r	f	a	c	i	l	i	t	i	e	s	s	n
a	e	n	o	f	f	e	f	s	o	s	f	s
t	t	c	a	a	e	i	c	e	e	n	b	s
i	j	e	s	a	s	t	h	u	r	s	e	e
o	d	p	u	r	c	h	a	s	i	n	g	s
n	n	h	e	f	u	h	p	u	r	c	h	a

marketing	sales	finance
personnel	operations	administration
production	facilities	purchasing
research		

Answers

1. Reading Quiz

1. The Apprentice is a TV game show. **True**
2. Sir Alan Sugar is a successful businessman in the UK. **True**
3. The weekly tasks test how well the potential apprentices work together. **True**
4. The winner of the Apprentice will get a job with an annual salary of at least £100,000. **True**
5. The winner of the Apprentice will get Sir Alan Sugar's job. **False**

2. Business Idioms

a. get off the ground	2. to successfully start something
b. get a break	4. to get a good opportunity
c. make a go of	5. to do something well
d. mean business	1. to be serious about something
e. take on	3. to give someone a job

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3. Wordsearch

a	m	a	r	k	e	t	i	n	g			o
d			r	e	s	e	a	r	c	h		p
m			p	e	r	s	o	n	n	e	l	e
i	p	r	o	d	u	c	t	i	o	n		r
n				s	a	l	e	s				a
i		f										t
s		i										i
t		n										o
r	f	a	c	i	l	i	t	i	e	s		n
a		n										s
t		c										
i		e										
o		p	u	r	c	h	a	s	i	n	g	
n												