www.**Breaking News English**.com

Ready-to-use ESL / EFL Lessons

Bill Gates launches Microsoft OS Vista

URL: http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0701/070130-microsoft_vista.html

Contents

30 January, 2007

THE ARTICLE

Bill Gates launches Microsoft OS Vista

Microsoft finally released the latest Windows operating system around the world on Tuesday. Titled Vista, the long-awaited program was on shelves in 40,000 stores worldwide. It was more than five years in the making, created by 8,000 people and cost over $6US billion to develop. Microsoft founder Bill Gates flew to London for the unveiling. He said his new slogan - 'The "Wow" starts now' - would epitomize what consumers should expect from the product. Gates believes users will be wowed by what's on offer. He said: "There are chances for wows all over the product." These may come in the form of a slick new 3D interface, a digital media lifestyle focus, a quick search function, and beefed up security. Vista is "dramatically more secure than any other operating system released", Gates told the BBC News.

Despite the hype and fanfare, the new operating system does have quite a few hurdles to overcome. One is that it cannot be used on any PC that is over two years old, which will be too slow to run the applications. Another potential pitfall is that hackers have also been waiting five years to crack the software's code. There may well be a race to see who can find holes and start the first viruses. Many analysts have advised consumers to be cautious and wait to see how secure Vista really is before buying it. A further reason why customers may not dash to the stores to buy Vista is the confusing array of versions. Will people want Vista Starter, Vista Home Basic, Vista Home Premium, Vista Ultimate or Vista Business? And finally, Microsoft will need to deal with people calling Vista a copycat of Apple's Mac OSX.

WARM-UPS

1. MICROSOFT: Find out what other students know about what Microsoft (Windows, Hotmail, Bill Gates etc). Talk to as many students as you can. When you have finished, sit with your partner(s) and share your information.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

Microsoft / Windows operating system / slogans / wow / 3D / digital media / security / PC's / hackers / viruses / consumers / premium / ultimate / copycats

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

3. OPERATING SYSTEMS: Here are some operating system features. With your partners, rank them in order of most important. Explain your ranking.

- Looks beautiful
- Secure from viruses
- Lets you store photos and play music
- You can easily search for your files

- It's cheap
- It's quick to start
- It never freezes
- Other _____

After you have finished, decide which of the speeches you most agree with.

4. QUICK DEBATE: Students A believe Microsoft's Windows Vista operating system will wow the world. Students B believe a computer operating system is too boring to wow anyone but computer geeks. Debate this and change partners often.

5. BEING WOWED: In pairs / groups, discuss which of these new computer functions would wow you. How much money would you pay for them? (They will never be free.) When will they hit the shelves?

a) A computer that is totally operated by speech has no keyboard
b) Operating your computer from a mobile phone from anywhere in the world
c) 24-hour web cam surveillance of your home - data saves on your hard drive
d) Browser windows open and keyboard commands all happen in a split second
e) Instant whole-body health checks
f) A digital pal that talks to you, tells jokes that are funny, and gives you advice

6. WOW: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "wow". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

a.	Microsoft Vista was released in the USA only.	T / F
b.	Vista was developed by 8,000 people.	T / F
c.	Microsoft's slogan is "Open bigger vistas with Vista".	T / F
d.	Bill Gates said Vista was dramatically more secure than before.	T / F
e.	Vista can be used on any PC bought in the last ten years.	T / F
f.	Analysts caution consumers against buying now in case of viruses.	T / F
g.	There are five different versions of the operating system for sale.	T / F
h.	Many people think Apple Computer will copy Vista.	T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

a.	unveiling	publicity
b.	epitomize	polished
c.	wowed	imitator
d.	slick	strengthened
e.	beefed up	hazard
f.	hype	launch
g.	overcome	range
h.	pitfall	sum up
i.	array	get the better of
j.	copycat	astonished

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

a.	It was more than five years in	up security
b.	Gates believes users will be wowed	to the stores
c.	a slick	to overcome
d.	beefed	by what's on offer
e.	dramatically more secure	of Apple's Mac OSX
f.	Despite the hype	the making
g.	quite a few hurdles	is that hackers have also been waiting
h.	Another potential pitfall	than any other operating system
i.	customers may not dash	and fanfare…
j.	people calling Vista a copycat	new 3D interface

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Bill Gates launches Microsoft OS Vista

Microsoft finally released the _____ Windows operating system around the world on Tuesday. Titled Vista, the long-awaited program was on _____ in 40,000 stores worldwide. It was more than five years in the _____, created by 8,000 people and cost over $6US billion to develop. Microsoft founder Bill Gates flew to London for the _____. He said his new slogan - 'The "Wow" starts now' - would _____ what consumers should expect from the product. Gates believes users will be wowed by what's on offer. He said: "There are chances for _____ all over the product." These may come in the form of a _____ new 3D interface, a digital media lifestyle focus, a quick search function, and _____ up security. Vista is "dramatically more secure than any other operating system released", Gates told the BBC News.

wows
unveiling
shelves
beefed
epitomize
latest
slick
making

Despite the hype and _____, the new operating system does have quite a few _____ to overcome. One is that it cannot be used on any PC that is over two years old, which will be too slow to run the applications. Another potential _____ is that hackers have also been waiting five years to _____ the software's code. There may well be a race to see who can find holes and start the first viruses. Many analysts have advised consumers to be _____ and wait to see how secure Vista really is before buying it. A further reason why customers may not _____ to the stores to buy Vista is the confusing _____ of versions. Will people want Vista Starter, Vista Home Basic, Vista Home Premium, Vista Ultimate or Vista Business? And finally, Microsoft will need to _____ with people calling Vista a copycat of Apple's Mac OSX.

crack
array
pitfall
deal
cautious
fanfare
dash
hurdles

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Bill Gates launches Microsoft OS Vista

Microsoft finally released the latest Windows operating system around the world on Tuesday. _____ Vista, the _____ program was on shelves in 40,000 stores worldwide. It was more than five years _____, created by 8,000 people and cost over $6US billion to develop. Microsoft founder Bill Gates flew to London for the _____. He said his new slogan - 'The "Wow" starts now' - would _____ what consumers should expect from the product. Gates believes users will be wowed by what's on offer. He said: "There are chances for _____ the product." These may come in the form of a slick new 3D interface, a digital media lifestyle focus, a quick search function, and _____ security. Vista is "dramatically more secure than any other operating system released", Gates told the BBC News.

Despite the _____, the new operating system does have quite a few hurdles to overcome. One is that it cannot be used on any PC that is over two years old, which will be too slow to run the applications. Another _____ is that hackers have also been waiting five years to _____ the software's code. There _____ race to see who can find holes and start the first viruses. Many analysts have advised consumers to be cautious and wait to see how secure Vista really is before buying it. A further reason why customers may not dash to the stores to buy Vista is the _____ of versions. Will people want Vista Starter, Vista Home Basic, Vista Home Premium, Vista Ultimate or Vista Business? And finally, Microsoft will need _____ people calling Vista a copycat of Apple's Mac OSX.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms … for the words **'wow'** and **'slogan'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning…?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "MICROSOFT" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about Bill Gates, Microsoft and Vista.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- shelves
- making
- unveiling
- offer
- slick
- dramatically

- fanfare
- potential
- well
- cautious
- array
- copycat

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

    a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
    b. Did anything in the article surprise you?
    c. Do you think Vista will wow the world?
    d. When was the last time you were wowed by anything or anyone?
    e. Would you like to use Vista?
    f. What operating system problems annoy you?
    g. Why do you think a piece of computer software takes so much time and money to create?
    h. Do you now have a digital media lifestyle?
    i. Do you think beefed up security is important?
    j. Have you seen anything of the unveiling on TV, on the Internet or in newspapers?

✄---

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

    a. Did you like reading this article?
    b. What do you think about what you read?
    c. Do you believe the hype and fanfare when technology companies release new products?
    d. Do you admire Bill Gates and Microsoft?
    e. What potential pitfalls do you experience with using a computer?
    f. Are you worried hackers will crack Vista's code and spread computer viruses?
    g. Would you like to buy Vista Starter, Vista Home Basic, Vista Home Premium, Vista Ultimate or Vista Business?
    h. Is it OK for Microsoft to copy so much of what Apple Computers is doing, and then proclaim it as innovative?
    i. If you had to name the next big operating system, what would you call it and why?
    j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

    a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
    b. Was there a question you didn't like?
    c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
    d. What did you like talking about?
    e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

WOWS:

You work for Microsoft in the Department of Wows. With your wowing partner(s), develop a presentation that Bill Gates must give at the launch of the Vista operating system. Use the table below to help you.

	The biggest wow	Wow #2	Wow #3
Design and look			
Security			
Music			
Photos			
Studying English application			
Your secret wow _____			

After you give your presentation to the class / other wow teams, decide on which wowers were best. Vote on a Wow Factor score of 1 to 10 (10 is the wowest wow). Perhaps one student could operate the wowometer.

Change partner(s) and give help on making your presentations better. Tell each other what is needed for extra wow. Present again.

Discuss the things you heard. What ones would be most exciting or useful in your life?

LANGUAGE

CORRECT WORD: Choose the correct words from a–d below and write them in the article.

Bill Gates launches Microsoft OS Vista

Microsoft (1) _____ released the latest Windows operating system around the world on Tuesday. Titled Vista, the (2) _____ -awaited program was on shelves in 40,000 stores worldwide. It was more than five years (3) _____ the making, created by 8,000 people and cost over $6US billion to develop. Microsoft founder Bill Gates flew to London for the unveiling. He said his new slogan - 'The "Wow" starts now' - would (4) _____ what consumers should expect from the product. Gates believes users will be wowed by what's on offer. He said: "There are chances for wows all over the product." These may come in the form of a (5) _____ new 3D interface, a digital media lifestyle focus, a quick search function, and (6) _____ up security. Vista is "dramatically more secure than any other operating system released", Gates told the BBC News.

Despite the hype and (7) _____, the new operating system does have quite a few hurdles to overcome. One is that it cannot be used on any PC that is over two years old, which will be too slow to run the applications. Another potential pitfall is that hackers have also been waiting five years to (8) _____ the software's code. There (9) _____ well be a race to see who can find holes and start the first viruses. Many analysts have advised consumers to be (10) _____ and wait to see how secure Vista really is before buying it. A further reason why customers may not dash to the stores to buy Vista is the confusing (11) _____ of versions. Will people want Vista Starter, Vista Home Basic, Vista Home Premium, Vista Ultimate or Vista Business? And finally, Microsoft will need to deal with people calling Vista a (12) _____ of Apple's Mac OSX.

1.	(a)	finality	(b)	finalized	(c)	final	(d)	finally
2.	(a)	long	(b)	longish	(c)	lengthy	(d)	longing
3.	(a)	in	(b)	on	(c)	of	(d)	at
4.	(a)	essence	(b)	epitaph	(c)	epitome	(d)	epitomize
5.	(a)	licks	(b)	slacker	(c)	slick	(d)	slack
6.	(a)	beefy	(b)	beefed	(c)	beefcake	(d)	meaty
7.	(a)	fun fair	(b)	fanfare	(c)	fan belts	(d)	fan mail
8.	(a)	crack-up	(b)	crackdown	(c)	crack	(d)	click
9.	(a)	may	(b)	can	(c)	will	(d)	have to
10.	(a)	cautioned	(b)	cautious	(c)	caution	(d)	cautionary
11.	(a)	array	(b)	arrange	(c)	vary	(d)	various
12.	(a)	top dog	(b)	horseplay	(c)	fishbowl	(d)	copycat

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information about the history of Microsoft. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. WOW: You are tired of the technology you currently have. Make a list of it. Write some ideas about how to add more wow to your devices / products. Show your ideas to your classmates in your next lesson. Ask each other questions about your ideas.

4. LETTER: Write a letter to Microsoft CEO Bill Gates. Tell him what you think of him, his company and his products. Ask him three questions. Read your letter to your classmates in the next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions. Which letter did you like best and why?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. F   b. T   c. F   d. T   e. F   f. T   g. T   h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

a.   unveiling   launch
b.   epitomize   sum up
c.   wowed   astonished
d.   slick   polished
e.   beefed up   strengthened
f.   hype   publicity
g.   overcome   get the better of
h.   pitfall   hazard
i.   array   range
j.   copycat   imitator

PHRASE MATCH:

a.   It was more than five years in   the making
b.   Gates believes users will be wowed   by what's on offer
c.   a slick   new 3D interface
d.   beefed   up security
e.   dramatically more secure   than any other operating system
f.   Despite the hype   and fanfare…
g.   quite a few hurdles   to overcome
h.   Another potential pitfall   is that hackers have also been waiting
i.   customers may not dash   to the stores
j.   people calling Vista a copycat   of Apple's Mac OSX

GAP FILL:

Bill Gates launches Microsoft OS Vista

Microsoft finally released the **latest** Windows operating system around the world on Tuesday. Titled Vista, the long-awaited program was on **shelves** in 40,000 stores worldwide. It was more than five years in the **making**, created by 8,000 people and cost over $6US billion to develop. Microsoft founder Bill Gates flew to London for the **unveiling**. He said his new slogan - 'The "Wow" starts now' - would **epitomize** what consumers should expect from the product. Gates believes users will be wowed by what's on offer. He said: "There are chances for **wows** all over the product." These may come in the form of a **slick** new 3D interface, a digital media lifestyle focus, a quick search function, and **beefed** up security. Vista is "dramatically more secure than any other operating system released", Gates told the BBC News.

Despite the hype and **fanfare**, the new operating system does have quite a few **hurdles** to overcome. One is that it cannot be used on any PC that is over two years old, which will be too slow to run the applications. Another potential **pitfall** is that hackers have also been waiting five years to **crack** the software's code. There may well be a race to see who can find holes and start the first viruses. Many analysts have advised consumers to be **cautious** and wait to see how secure Vista really is before buying it. A further reason why customers may not **dash** to the stores to buy Vista is the confusing **array** of versions. Will people want Vista Starter, Vista Home Basic, Vista Home Premium, Vista Ultimate or Vista Business? And finally, Microsoft will need to **deal** with people calling Vista a copycat of Apple's Mac OSX.

LANGUAGE WORK

1 - d   2 - a   3 - a   4 - d   5 - c   6 - b   7 - b   8 - c   9 - a   10 - b   11 - a   12 - d