LESSON 02

TOPIC: HOW TO BUILD A STARTUP?

AGENDA: YOU WILL LEARN

Vocabulary:
Startup culture.

Grammar:
Past Simple vs Present Perfect.

Pronunciation:
Intonation.

Speaking & Soft Skills:
Sales pitch.

Writing:
Crafting your own sales pitch.

🎤 ❓ **WARM-UP**

Answer the question.

What are the advantages of working at a startup as opposed to working at a big company?

Look at the tweet and talk about the pros it mentions. Do you agree with what it says?

Jack Altman @jaltma · 4d
Advantages startups have over big companies:

- Tend to be much more focused
- Employees are more energized and inspired
- Less to lose = much higher risk tolerance
- Internal communication costs are near zero
- Employees' interest are more naturally aligned with company's

✓ **To be aligned** — to be in agreement with.
Risk tolerance — the amount of loss an investor is ready to handle.

READING

📚 🔤 EXERCISE 1A

Read the first three paragraphs of the text and find the words that mean:

a) Able to be seen through clearly

b) Adjusting

c) Start developing something successfully

d) Desire to take active part in something

e) With an optimal balance of value to price

f) Giving good results

g) Business founder

Did you ever dream of building your own startup? Even if you didn't, startup mentality and startup culture are very popular topics in the tech world. Steve Jobs even once said that Apple is the biggest startup on the planet. Today we'll talk about why startup culture is so influential and what it takes to build your own successful startup.

Many startups have values that even big businesses are trying to adopt such as:

- Quickly adapting to change

- Demanding high levels of involvement and engagement from all co-workers

- Having open, honest and transparent relationships between teams and management

- Thinking outside the box and finding innovative, cost-effective solutions to customers' problems.

Even if you're planning on creating your own business, thinking like an entrepreneur can be very beneficial for your personal development and career growth. So what qualities do you need to have to get your business off the ground?

📚 🎙️ EXERCISE 1B

Complete the text below with the right headline for each paragraph.

Can you think of any other steps that you'll have to plan when building a startup (in addition to these 4)?

- Prepare you pitch
- Develop a vision for your product
- Put together a great team
- Think about the logistics

1. _____

It all starts with a good idea. Ask yourself: What customer pain point can I solve? Which gaps in the market can our business fill? Is our solution elegant and scalable? Can we pivot if we have to?

2. _____

As a leader, you need to be in charge of people to hire. Very often new businesses are formed by a couple of friends who have known each other for years and share the same mindset. However, as your company grows you will have to bring new people on board. It is important that your new employees are the right match for the company. That means they not only have the right skill set for the job but also share the same motivation and passion for your common vision and goals.

3. _____

Where will you be located as a business? What expenses will you have to take into account? What annual budget will you need? A CEO is a bit of a jack-of-all-trades at least during the early stages of the startup. What can help you though is an incubator. Incubators are non-profit organizations or individuals which provide new businesses with a range of possibilities such as access to low-cost equipment, mentorship, help with marketing, PR and pitching, living accommodation, networking opportunities and helping the startup find prospective investors.

4. _____

If you ever come across someone important (say, a potential mentor or shareholder) you want to be able to deliver a concise informative speech about yourself / your product or your company. That's what pitching is all about. By getting your idea out there to people who can fund you and mentor you in the future can be scary because there's a lot at stake. However, it is important to pitch as many people as possible. Even if you don't get a partnership or a contract, every pitch can be a source of valuable learning for the future and the people you give it to may even suggest useful tips or make you see things from a different perspective.

In short, having an entrepreneurial spirit is beneficial for everyone and the 4 tips we've just discussed can be applied in other areas such as your job or personal life. In future segments, we will focus more on how to create and deliver your own pitch.

🔊 Listen to the audio recording (**track 2.1.**) of the text and check your pronunciation.

▶️ |ılıılıılıılıılıılıılıı|

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⬛ EXERCISE 1C

Match the highlighted words with their definitions.

1. Pain point	a) Having an ability to grow bigger
2. Scalable	b) Ask someone to join the team
3. Pivot	c) Change the course of the existing strategy
4. To be in charge	d) A problem that a business / service can solve
5. Bring (someone) on board	e) Encounter
6. Expenses	f) Likely to happen
7. Take into account	g) Short and informative
8. Annual	h) At risk
9. Jack of all trades	i) Yearly
10. Prospective	j) Consider
11. Come across	k) Someone who can handle many different responsibilities
12. Concise	i) Costs
13. At stake	m) To be the main person responsible for something
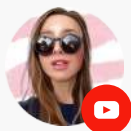
ANNGLISH TIP
English For IT

Who can I get help from?

*You're gonna need help from people that have industry experience and skills.That's where **incubators** and **accelerators** come in. Incubators help startups discover an idea and create a business plan for executing that idea. Accelerators, on the other hand, help startups with already existing MVPs to grow and develop quicker.*

Where can I get money from?

*You can choose to either raise **VC** funding (this will involve preparing lots of **pitch decks** for venture capitalists and trying to convince them to invest into your business) or **bootstrap** your startups (if you have enough startup capital)*

*Check the glossary of terms for a detailed explanation of the highlighted words

🔤 EXERCISE 2A

Answer the questions.

1. Are you currently in the market for anything? What is it?

2. Can you explain in your own words what marketers do?

3. Can you give examples of companies that managed to corner the market? How did they do it?

🔤 EXERCISE 2B

Complete the sentences with the following expressions.

Expressions with the word market.

Corner the market · On the market
Break into a market · Marketer
Beat (someone) to market
Market economy · In the market for
Go-to-market strategy

1. The United States is a _____ where the prices are determined by the rules of supply and demand.

2. They were planning to release their app next month but their competitors _____ them _____.

3. This is the best solution _____ right now.

4. A company always takes a risk when it tries to _____ a new _____.

5. We need to create a strong _____ if we want our product to be successful from the first day of the launch.

6. That company has _____ and become the leading desktop manufacturer in the industry.

7. I'm _____ for a new pair of headphones.

8. Have you considered hiring a _____ _____ to help you with promoting your services?

📷 @english_for_it

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GRAMMAR
Past Simple & Present Perfect

Me: just wrote 200 unsaved lines of code
My computer:
I have decided that I want to die.

📚 📖 EXERCISE 1

Read the text. Find the time markers that are used with Past Simple and Present Perfect.

Past Simple: _____ , _____ .

Present Perfect: _____ , _____ ,
_____ .

It's awkward. How many times have you caught yourself thinking aloud? Have you ever received this "are you crazy" look? Now, we have an excuse, Voice UI. "I was just talking to my smartphone." Just a few years ago people thought that a guy talking to his phone was crazy, but now hardly anyone would care.

At the same time a study by Creative Strategies shows that while 98% of iPhone users have used Siri, fewer than 10% are comfortable talking to Siri in public. Typical usage is either at home (39%) or while driving in their car (51%).

By the way, have you ever tried to write or dictate an email using Siri while you're driving? Not a great experience, right?

In fact, up until now, about 99% of VUI usage has been about asking very simple questions or giving easy instructions, like:

- "Alexa, Turn on my kitchen lights."
- "Okay Google, Play During Times of War by the Talking Heads"
- "Hey Siri, Does Santa Claus Exist?"

There are plenty of visual elements that are missing in VUI compared to GUI. Like visual text, structure, composition, underlining typos or grammatical mistakes or inserting links. VUI just hasn't evolved enough for the complex tasks yet.

In 2016, Apple and Google opened their voice API's to application developers. This means that you can use Siri / Google Voice services to create a companion VUI for your GUI inside your iOS and Android applications. Does it make sense to add voice commands to every single feature of every mobile app? Probably not, but in some cases, the voice could be an excellent alternative to GUI.

Past Simple

We use it when we speak about a finished period of time – When I was a student I worked in an electronics store.

Time markers: yesterday, the day before yesterday, the other day, last night/week/month/year, 2 days ago, in 1984.

FORM	
+ **Regular verbs:** add **–ed** to the base form of the verb. **Irregular verbs:** use the special past form.	start + ed => started *It started in the 1950s.* rise – rose – risen *When "television" rose to prominence in America's living rooms.*
- Use **didn't (did not)** before the base form of the verb.	*Time-shifting of television didn't exist.*
? Use **did** before the base form of the verb. With verb **to be (was/were)** just change the word order.	*Did you watch the new IPhone presentation last night?* *Was it interesting?*

Present Perfect

We use it when we speak about an unfinished period of time (from past until now) – I have worked as a software engineer at this company for 6 years..

📌 **Review the list of the most common irregular verbs if you need a refresher.**

VIEW LIST >>

FORM

+ have/has + past participle **Regular verbs:** add **–ed** to the base form of the verb. **Irregular verbs:** use the special form.	*I have worked at this company for 6 years.* *I have done all my tasks for today, I'm ready to go home.*
– Use **haven't/hasn't (have/has not)** before the base form of the verb.	*I haven't had breakfast today yet. I really need some coffee.*
? Use **have/has** at the beginning of the sentence, before the subject.	*Have you ever been to India?*

Time markers

already	*Have you already received the specifications?*	It has happened before this time, you don't need to wait for it now.
yet	*No, I haven't received them yet.*	It hasn't happened, you need to wait for it.
just	*Wait, I've just got an email.*	Right now, or very short time before.
ever	*Have you ever worked in this language?*	Any time before now.
never	*No, I have never used it.*	At no time before now.
for	*Yes, I've worked in it for two years now.*	For – a period of time.
since	*Yes, I've worked in it since 2017.*	Since – a point in time.

📖 EXERCISE 2A

Choose the correct form.

1. I haven't bought/didn't buy any new books recently.

2. Two of my teammates have left/left the company last week.

3. We have spent/spent a lot of time fixing this issue last night.

4. Have you ever won/Did you ever win a competition?

5. We have finished/finished the sprint on Friday.

6. Who is this guy? I have never met/never met him before.

7. I have never been/I never was to the USA.

8. Jeff isn't at the office this week. He has gone/went on a business trip.

9. We have lots of new ideas. We have been/were on a huge conference.

📖 EXERCISE 2B

Choose for or since.

1. I have been interested in technology _____ I was a child.

2. We can trust Jim with it, he has worked in this area _____ six years now.

3. They have been in this meeting room _____ 3 hours and they haven't finished yet.

4. He has lived in Ireland _____ over 5 years now _____ he started working at Google.

5. He's my best friend, I have known him _____ the school.

6. Tom hasn't been that much fun _____ he got married.

📖 EXERCISE 2C

Put the verbs in the correct tense.

1. — (you/ever/be) to California?
   — Yes, I (be) there two years ago.

2. — When (you/relocate) the headquarters?
   — Last year, as soon as we (finish) redecorating the new building.

3. — (you/already/meet) the new project manager?
   — Yes, I (see) him at lunch time yesterday. He seems nice.

4. — (you/ever/work) from home?
   — Yes, I (spend) a couple of years working as a freelancer in my twenties.

5. We (have) a lot of tasks last night. I (come) home at midnight.

6. I don't think he is a good fit for the job. He (never/work) in this position before.

7. Do you know what happened to Tom? He (send) me the report yet.

8. I (work) at this company for 3 years. (I still work here).

9. I (work) at this company for 3 years. (I don't work here anymore).

📖 🎤 EXERCISE 3

Complete the sentences so that they're true for you. Use Past Simple and Present Perfect.

1. I have _____ since _____

2. I haven't _____ since _____

3. I haven't _____ yet _____

4. I _____ when I was in school

5. Two years ago, I _____

6. I _____ yesterday

PRONUNCIATION

🔤 EXERCISE 1A

Read about the rules of English intonation.

Using proper intonation can make the biggest difference in how well your speech is perceived.

Correct information makes you sound more confident, professional and clear.

There are two types of intonation is English: **rising (↗) and falling (↘).**

We use rising intonation in the following cases:

> **Yes/No Question:**
>
> ↗ Did you HEAR this?
>
> ↗ Can you speak LOUDER?
>
> ↗ Are you tired?
>
> ↗ Do YOU work here?

We use falling intonation in:

> **Wh- Question:**
>
> ↘ WHEN did you start working here?
>
> ↘ HOW MUCH time do you spend in meeting?
>
> ↘ WHERE did you go to school?

In longer sentences, we'll need a mix of rising and falling intonation.

For example, when we have questions with several answer options:

> **Choice Questions?**
>
> Can you code in Python ↗ or C++ ↘ ?
>
> Can you code in Python ↗, Java ↗ or C++ ↘?

You should also use rising information after each break in a long sentence and use falling intonation to indicate the end of the sentence.

When I just started working on that project ↗, I wasn't sure where to start ↗ but, luckily ↗, my friends were able to help ↘.

I read a lot of articles ↗, booked sessions with industry experts ↗ and finally managed to come up with a solid business plan ↘.

🔊 EXERCISE 1B

Look at the sentences below. Use arrows (↗ and ↘) to indicate the types of intonation that should be used in each sentence. Listen to the recording (track 2.2) and check your answers.

- Can you make it to my birthday dinner?
- Do you wanna see a movie tonight?
- Did you have time to watch the final episode?
- Is it true that you lost your phone?
- Should we ask her to join us?
- What did you think of the project?
- Why are you so busy lately?
- Where should we go for lunch?
- Can you help me now or later?

- Is the best time to meet on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday?
- Would you like vanilla, caramel, strawberry or chocolate?
- Actually, we still have some time.
- In fact, I tried calling him the other day but he didn't pick up.
- A few years ago, I got a chance to work with a great graphic designer.

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WRITING & SOFT SKILLS
Presenting your company or product.

📚 EXERCISE 1A

Read the text and note down the key elements that make a good pitch.

"I have an idea I want to pitch". This is a sentence every English speaker says at least once in their career. Every time you have to introduce yourself, talk about what your company does or suggest a new idea, you are delivering a sales pitch.

Here's how you can go about it:

1. Who are you?
2. What does your company do?
3. What's the value proposition?
4. Attention-grabbing call to action statement.
5. Read and edit the pitch.

Also, remember about the 3 big Don'ts of a sales pitch:

- Don't use jargon (use simple words that people from outside of your professional sphere can understand).
- Don't make the pitch too long (1 minute is ideal. Remember that the end goal of such pitch is to earn you a second conversation where you can have a more in-depth discussion).
- Don't freestyle too much (make your pitch concise and to the point. Preparing your pitch helps you make a better impression than if you were just improvising it off the top of your head).

Let's have a look at how a pitch is structured:

1. WHO ARE YOU?

Write a sentence about who you are and what your role is at the company.

e.g., "I'm the CEO of Hiretool.

2. WHAT DOES YOUR COMPANY DO?

What's the company's mission and goals for its product or service?

"I'm the CEO of Hiretool. We help tech companies that outsource their workforce across the globe test potential candidates' English and communication skills prior to inviting them to a job interview with a foreign customer."

3. WHAT'S THE VALUE PROPOSITION?

What does your company do exceptionally well that sets its product or service apart from the rest? Write a brief, 1-2 sentence statement about the value the product or service provides to current customers.

"I'm the CEO of Hiretool. We help tech companies that outsource their workforce across the globe test potential candidates' English and communication skills prior to inviting them to a job interview with a foreign customer. A recruiter or a manager can assign a test to a candidate in just 2 clicks. No middleman, no additional registration that would scare the candidate away.The tests are predesigned by our specialists based on a client's request and checked with the help of AI technology."

4. GRAB THEIR ATTENTION.

Pull in your audience with an exciting story about a customer or the company founders. Or offer up a fascinating fact or statistic about the product.

"I'm the CEO of Hiretool. We help tech companies that outsource their workforce across the globe test potential candidates' English and communication skills prior to inviting them to a job interview with a foreign customer. A recruiter or a manager can assign a test to a candidate in just 2 clicks. No middleman, no additional registration that would scare the candidate away.The tests are predesigned by our specialists based on a client's request and checked with the help of AI technology.

According to Statistics Brain, 43 percent of U.S. companies are outsourcing jobs from the IT industry.Which means a lot of non-native English speakers are recruited".

✏️ EXERCISE 1B

Now, write your own pitch following the same 4 steps.

SPEAKING & SOFT SKILLS

🎤 EXERCISE 1

It's time for you to put all of your learnings from this lesson together! Look at the example of a pitch and complete it with your own information.

Hi! I'm here to tell you about our company and what we do.

I founded / joined this company in ... (2013) because I wanted to ....(work on bigger and more exciting projects).

We released ...(over 7) ... products which helped our customers...(communicate in English more effectively and feel at home in an English-speaking environment).

During my time in this company I ... (scaled our business, made new partnerships).
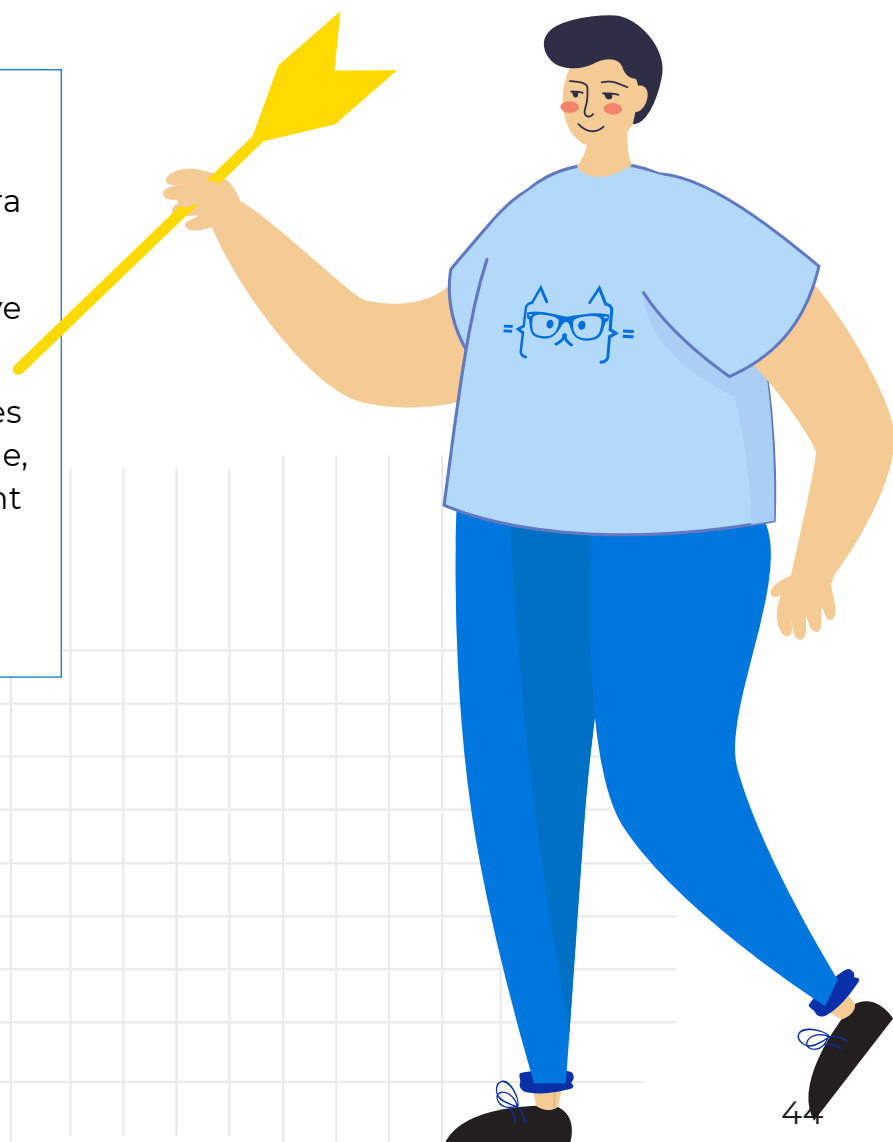
Currently, we have (over 30) clients and are working on ...(5) new projects.

We are hoping to launch them... (next year).

TIP

To make speaking tasks extra effective, make sure to:

- use new words you've learned from the lesson

- recall the grammar rules you've learned (for example, Past Simple and Present Perfect)

- use engaging intonation

📚 EXERCISE 2A

Read Anna's recap of a speech by Guy Kawasaki and match the heading to the paragraphs (1-6).

As a participant of GSV Ventures Bootcamp, I had the honor to attend an extremely motivational talk by Guy Kawasaki, Chief Evangelist of Canva.

Evangelist noun [C] (OPINIONS)

someone who often talks about how good they think something is, and tries to persuade you to have the same opinion.

Here are my takeaways from Guy Kawasaki's speech. I view them as a step-by-step guide on how to build your startup and ship your product right. Just follow the next steps:

Get your product into people's hands • Hire passionate people • Prioritize

Think about your mission • Start small • Say no to naysayers

1. _____

Build an MVVVP where M= minimal, V=viable, V=valuable, V=validating, P= product.

2. _____

Get your product out there! Ship it! As an entrepreneur your job is to DO IT.

3. _____

Canva's mantra is "democratize design". Guy's is "empower people". What's your and your product's mantra?

4. _____

Worry about big things. Designing business cards for your startup is a good idea but it shouldn't be your priority.

5. _____

They may not have a perfect background but they need to love what you do. Hire them.

6. _____

Don't let the bozos grind you down. Especially rich and powerful bozos who may not know better than you.

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bozo noun [C] mainly US slang

a stupid person:

Some bozo on a motorcycle almost ran me over.

🎙 EXERCISE 2B

Now, imagine you are building your own startup (if you're an entrepreneur already, you can rely on real-life experience).
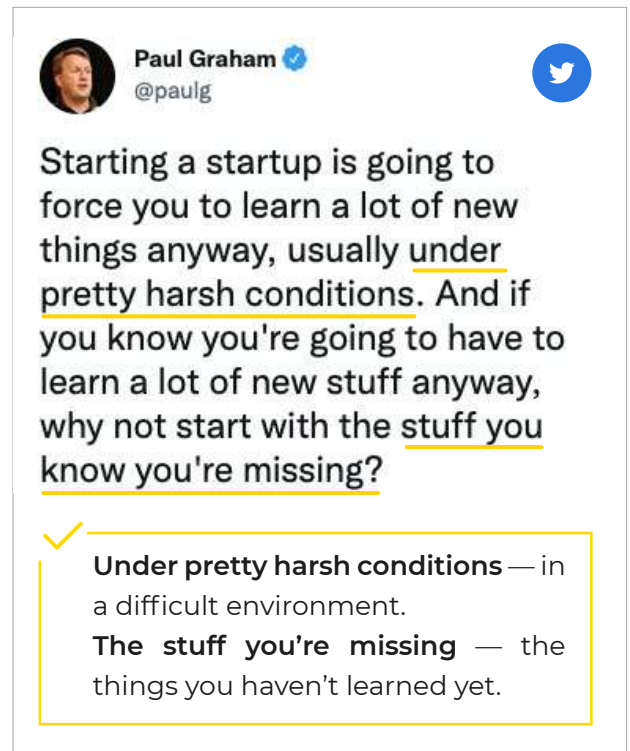
Talk about:

- What your startup is called.
- What your mantra (mission) is.
- What your product can do for its users.
- What sort of culture your are trying to create at your company and what people you like to work with.

🎙 📚 EXERCISE 3

Paul Graham is a co-founder of Y Combinator, one of the most prestigious accelerators in the world. Read his tweet below and answer the question:

In your opinion, what are some of the things a beginner CEO needs to learn in order to build a successful startup?

> **Paul Graham** ✓
> @paulg
>
> Starting a startup is going to force you to learn a lot of new things anyway, usually under pretty harsh conditions. And if you know you're going to have to learn a lot of new stuff anyway, why not start with the stuff you know you're missing?

✓ **Under pretty harsh conditions** — in a difficult environment.
The stuff you're missing — the things you haven't learned yet.

To read the full article and get an awesome podcast recommendation, check out Anna's Medium.

GO TO ARTICLE ››

10 Lessons To Do Your Startup Right from Guy Kawasaki

Anna Gandrabura Jul 17 · 2 min read

GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS

Startup — a newly established business. A software startup that's valued at more than a billion dollars is called a "unicorn", implying that such cases are extremely rare.

Shareholder — an owner of shares in a company.

Incubator — an organization engaged in the business of fostering early-stage companies.

Accelerator — an organization that offers a range of support services and funding opportunities for startups.

Pitch deck — a presentation deck that is used to pitch your idea or company to any number of audiences, generally investors.

API (Application Programming Interface) — a set of programming code that enables data transmission between one software product and another.

CEO (Chief Executive Officer) — the highest-ranking person in a company or other institution, ultimately responsible for taking managerial decisions.

MVP (Minimum Viable Product) — a version of a product with just enough features to be usable by early customers.

VC (Venture Capital) — a form of private equity and a type of financing that investors provide to startup companies and small businesses.

Bootstrap — start up (an internet-based business or other enterprise) with minimal financial resources.

Scale up — (of a company or system) increase production or capacity.

Middleman — a person who buys goods from producers and sells them to retailers or consumers, an intermediary.

If you'd like a little extra practice:

Reading

Read the article noting down new words and terms.

5 reasons startups fail.

SEE ARTICLE ››

Fun stuff

Let's go browsing AngelList — the most popular platforms for venture investing and finding jobs at startups. Just have a look and see if you can find any exciting startups!

FIND STARTUPS ››