

4 READING

- a Read the first paragraph of an article about the TV show *Shark Tank*. Answer the questions.
- 1 Who are the “Sharks?”
 - 2 What is their “Tank?”
 - 3 How does the show work?
 - 4 Is there a similar TV show in your country? How does it work?

- b Look at the photos and read about three products that were presented on the show, a device for a guitar (A), baby bibs (B), and shrimp burgers (C). Which product...?
- 1 has been very successful although the Sharks didn't invest in it
 - 2 was presented by a musician
 - 3 was presented by a female
 - 4 has a celebrity representing the product
 - 5 is practical for moms and kids
 - 6 is now sold in many US states

SHARK TANK



Daymond John and Barbara Corcoran have been Sharks on the show since it started. Mark Cuban appeared on the show since the beginning, but became a regular Shark in 2012.

Shark Tank is a US TV show, with similar versions in many different countries. On the US show, contestants have about ten minutes to present their business ideas to five very successful businesspeople. These people are nicknamed the “Sharks,” and the intimidating room where they meet the contestants is the “Tank” (the sharks’ home). The Sharks, who are often multimillionaires, are prepared to invest money in any business that they believe might be a success. In return, they take a share of the profits. The contestants are usually entrepreneurs, product designers, or people with a new idea for a service. After the contestants have made their presentations, the Sharks ask them questions about the product and its possible market, and then say if they are prepared to invest or not. If they are not convinced by the presentation, they say the dreaded words “I’m out.”

So far, the Sharks have agreed to invest over \$6.2 million in products, companies, and ideas presented on *Shark Tank*. They were very happy with their investment in Travis Perry, a guitar player from Alabama who had the idea for Chord Buddy – a device that helps people learn to play the guitar. He came into the Tank with some guitars that had the device attached to them. Shark, Robert Herjavec immediately sensed an opportunity in the charismatic Travis and agreed to invest \$125,000 in his product. A year later, Chord Buddy has made over \$1.5 million in sales and has John Rich – a famous country singer – representing the product. Travis is now running an impressive and profitable company.



Susie Taylor wanted the Sharks to invest in her high-tech baby bib company. The bibs are made from high-quality materials that don't stain. Nobody was enthusiastic, and the Sharks rejected her idea. But Susie hasn't given up. Since appearing on the TV show, orders for Susie's bibs increased and she has been contacted by other investors. And that is what makes a real entrepreneur—he or she never gives up. If the Sharks invest in him or her, there is a chance he or she will be successful. But if they leave the Tank empty-handed, the determination to make it on their own is as great as ever.



And of course, the Sharks don't always get it right. Cook Shawn Davis's product, gourmet shrimp burgers, was rejected. One Shark said, “I'll buy the product, but I don't really know the food business well enough to make the product successful.” Another Shark said, “I just don't like shrimp at all, so based on that, I'm out.” A third shark said getting shrimp and keeping it cold makes the product too expensive for the public to buy. Today, Davis's company is worth \$6 million, and his shrimp burgers are sold in supermarkets across the US!



- c Which (if any) of the three products would you be interested / definitely not interested in buying? Why?
- d Look at the **highlighted** words and phrases which are all related to business. Try to figure out their meaning from the context.

Words with different meanings
 Sometimes the same word can have two completely different meanings, e.g., *I **work** in a store.* (= it's my job) and *My **laptop** **doesn't work**.* (= it's broken).

- e With a partner, say what the difference in meaning is between the pairs of sentences.
 - 1 He's **running** a business. *and* He's **running** a marathon.
 - 2 Marion **was fired** last week. *and* When the man **fired** the gun, everyone screamed.
 - 3 There's a **market** for this product. *and* There's a **market** where you can buy vegetables.
 - 4 He's set up a **company**. *and* He's very good **company**.

5 LISTENING

- a (4 49)) Look at the photos of two more products that were presented on *Shark Tank*. Now listen and find out exactly what makes them special.



- b Listen again. Do you think the Sharks invested in...? Why?
 - a both of them
 - b neither of them
 - c one of them (which?)
- c (4 50)) Now listen to what happened. Were you right? What influenced the Sharks' choice?
- d Do you think either of these products would be successful in your country? Why (not)?

6 SPEAKING

- a Work with a partner. Imagine you are going to appear on the program. You can choose one of the products below, or you can invent your own.

a watch a sandwich an app a chair
 a dessert a pen a lamp a drink a gadget



Think about the following aspects of your product.

- What is the product?
- What is its name?
- Who is it for?
- How much will it cost?
- Why is it different from other similar products?
- Do you have an advertising slogan for it?

- b Present your product to the class together. Spend a few minutes preparing your presentation. Take turns giving the information, and use language from the box to help you.

Presenting a product
 Good morning. We're going to tell you about our new product.
 It's a... and it's called...
 We think it will be very popular with...
 It is completely different from / better than anything else on the market because...

- c You also have money to invest in one of the products your classmates present, so listen to their presentations and decide which one to vote for.

7 WRITING

► **p.120 Writing** A cover email with your *résumé*. Write an accompanying email to send with your *résumé* to apply for a job.

8 (4 51)) SONG Piano Man 🎵