Teacher's Key

Gen Z and the Startup Dream: Starting a Business Today (Level C1)

Vocabulary Matching

1 gravitate = **N**
2 precarious = **A**
3 cushion = **H**
4 shoestring = **L**
5 monetize = **G**
6 gatekeepers = **M**
7 dubious = **I**
8 hailed = **E**
9 bootstrapped = **D**
10 fledgling = **O**
11 seasoned = **J**
12 livelihood = **K**
13 viable = **B**
14 runway = **C**
15 validate = **F**

Fill in the Blank

1 gravitate
2 precarious
3 cushion
4 shoestring
5 monetize
6 gatekeepers
7 dubious
8 hailed
9 bootstrapped
10 fledgling
11 seasoned
12 livelihood
13 viable
14 validate

True or False

1 **True.** The reading says that in some polls a majority say they have at least considered it.
2 **True.** For more than four in ten of them the main reason was financial necessity.
3 **True.** As gatekeepers, platforms can change the rules overnight.
4 **False.** It puts the share at about 4 percent.
5 **False.** They were less likely, according to the US government analysis.
6 **True.** This is the average found in the large study of US business records.
7 **False.** The owner's own or family savings are the most common source.
8 **True.** The reading gives roughly half, and notes that closing is not always failing.
9 **False.** The writer says a shortage of formal jobs pushes many young people toward self-employment.
10 **False.** The writer advises keeping your income while you test the idea.

Language Focus: Conditional Connectors: Unless, As Long As, Provided That

Example answer: You should not quit your job **unless** you have saved enough to live on for six months. (A good alternative: You can quit your job **provided that** you have saved enough to live on for six months.)

Comprehension Questions: Model Answers

1 Polls by banks, software firms, and lending websites in several countries suggest that many members of Gen Z are drawn to working for themselves, and in some polls a majority say they have considered starting a business. The writer cautions that wanting to start and actually starting are not the same thing.

2 Many young people face a high cost of living and a job market that feels unstable, so extra income from a side business can protect them when money is tight. In the survey, nearly three in ten Gen Z workers had a second job, and for more than four in ten of them the main reason was financial necessity.

3 Online stores, payment apps, and AI tools let one person build a brand cheaply, and social media works as both classroom and shop window. The catch is that platforms are gatekeepers: they are generous only as long as your content keeps people watching, and they can change the rules overnight.

4 The estimate suggests that only about 4 percent of the world's creators earn more than 100,000 dollars a year, so a high income is rare. The writer adds that the same feeds advertise dubious courses, and that US regulators have acted against companies accused of selling "AI-powered" online stores with false promises of passive income.

5 Starting used to mean renting premises and buying stock before the first sale. Today an idea can be tested over a weekend, in public, for almost nothing. The writer adds that different does not necessarily mean more successful.

6 Both weaken the idea. Millennials were once hailed as founders, yet a US government analysis found they were less likely to be self-employed at 30 than Generation X or the boomers had been. The study of US business records found that the founders of the fastest-growing start-ups were 45 on average, and that industry experience strongly predicted success.

7 Familiar: new firms are mostly paid for with the owner's or family savings, many close early (roughly half of new US establishments are still operating after five years), and experience still counts. Closing is not always failing because some owners simply sell up.

8 Necessity entrepreneurs start because they need a livelihood; opportunity entrepreneurs have spotted a gap in the market. The line is not always clear, since a necessity business can become viable. It matters because, in many places, a shortage of formal jobs pushes young people into self-employment, which is often informal and low paid, so starting a business is less a lifestyle choice than a way to pay the bills.

9 Open answer. A strong answer notes that the reading begins with a relatable scene, shows why the idea appeals (polls, economy, tools), then tests it against evidence (history, age, survival, global conditions) before giving advice, so the cautious advice rests on the earlier evidence. Some students may argue that the long build-up delays the practical advice.

10 False. The study found that the founders of the fastest-growing start-ups were 45 years old on average.

11 Yes. The writer advises keeping your income while you test the idea and calls quitting first, without savings that can cover your costs for months, a gamble, not a strategy.

12 Best answer: to shift attention from age and tools to usefulness. The question asks the reader what they know that others would pay to have solved. It does not discourage starting a business, since the writer has offered a cautious route. Accept a reasoned alternative.

Notes on the Evidence

- No source text was supplied, so the reading is original and was built from the claims below. Gen Z is defined differently by different sources: Pew Research Center uses birth years 1997 to 2012, and Deloitte's 2026 survey uses 1995 to 2007. The reading says only "roughly the people born between the late 1990s and the early 2010s."
- Paragraph 1 (polls). Figures vary widely and mostly come from companies with an interest in entrepreneurship. Reported examples: 43 percent of Gen Z adults planned to start a business in 2026 (Intuit survey, as reported by secondary sites; not opened directly); 51 percent had seriously considered it (LendingTree, secondary report); about two thirds of Gen Z Canadians had considered it (RBC Small Business Poll, 2026, reported by Wealth Professional); about 38 percent of recent and soon-to-be graduates were considering it (ZipRecruiter, reported by Allwork.Space). These are stated intentions, not businesses started, so the reading gives no single figure. The Millennial example in paragraph 4 shows why intentions overstate action. A 2011 poll cited by CNBC (2014) reported 27 percent of Millennials as self-employed, while the SBA Office of Advocacy found far lower rates in Census data.
- Paragraph 2 (Deloitte Global 2026 Gen Z and Millennial Survey, 22,595 respondents in 44 countries, online, fieldwork 24 November 2025 to 15 January 2026; page opened). Cost of living was the top concern for the fifth consecutive year (38 percent of Gen Z). Nearly 30 percent of Gen Z had a part- or full-time side job, and 44 percent of those cited financial necessity. A side job in this survey is not necessarily a business. The same release says 55 percent of Gen Z had delayed major life decisions for financial reasons, which includes launching a business. The AI remark is general. A secondary source citing the Deloitte 2026 survey says 74 percent of Gen Z expect generative AI to affect their work within a year; this was not checked in the primary report. Dated: this is the 2026 edition.
- Paragraph 3. The Goldman Sachs Research estimate (2023) says about 4 percent of an estimated 50 million global creators earn more than 100,000 dollars a year. Other estimates of the number of creators range from about 50 million to over 300 million, so only the share is used. The reading presents the 4 percent as one estimate. The FTC has brought cases against online business-opportunity schemes that advertised AI-powered online stores and passive income, including Click Profit, Ascend Ecom, FBA Machine, and Ecommerce Empire Builders. The reading says "accused of" and "alleged" because the claims are the FTC's allegations; some cases ended in settlements or bans. Sources: FTC business-opportunity case listings and an American Bar Association summary (seen in search results, not opened individually). Platform dependence ("can change the rules overnight") is a general, well-documented risk, not a single study.
- Paragraph 4. SBA Office of Advocacy, The Missing Millennial Entrepreneurs (Wilmoth, 2016, using 2014 data): at age 30, fewer than 4 percent of Millennials reported self-employment in their primary job, compared with 5.4 percent for Generation X and 6.7 percent for Baby Boomers (seen in the abstract and several summaries). The report notes much of the gap reflects age, and the data are old. Azoulay, Jones, Kim, and Miranda, Age and High-Growth Entrepreneurship (NBER 2018; American Economic Review: Insights 2020; US Census Bureau data): mean founder age 45.0 for the 1 in 1,000 fastest-growing new ventures, and 41.9 across all founders in their data (NBER digest says 42); prior industry experience predicts much greater success (digest page opened). The sentence about earlier generations renting premises and buying stock first is general background, not a statistic.
- Paragraph 5. Survival: BLS Business Employment Dynamics, establishments born in March 2013: 50.6 percent still operating in 2018 and 34.7 percent in 2023 (page opened). Other cohorts differ somewhat. Establishments are not the same as firms, and closure is not the same as failure. Savings: Census Bureau entrepreneur and business surveys list personal or family savings as the most common source of startup capital (seen in secondary summaries of the 2014 Annual Survey of Entrepreneurs and the 2018 Annual Business Survey; not opened directly). Paragraph 6: RBC poll (2026) says high cost of living was the most cited barrier, including for 42 percent of Gen Z (secondary report). Brookings Foresight Africa 2024, essay by Ada Osakwe (opened): lack of formal jobs pushes youth into entrepreneurship, mostly informal self-employment (the essay cites 95 percent of working youth in vulnerable employment, which the reading does not repeat). The necessity and opportunity distinction is standard in the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor.
- Paragraph 7 gives mainstream cautions (test cheaply, keep income, check claims of guaranteed income) that follow the pattern of the FTC cases and general small-business guidance. It is not individual financial advice. Figures that may date: Deloitte 2026 results, BLS cohort figures, Goldman 2023 estimate, and the status of the FTC cases.