

## 2005 – the year ahead

Will 2005 be a good year for businesses? Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the year ahead?

1 What was the highlight of last year? Have you made any New Year's resolutions? If so, what are they?

2 Match the items from the news in 2004 (1–8) to the predictions for 2005 (a–h) below.

The news in 2004			
<b>(1) – (f)</b> The number of broadband subscribers in the UK passes the 4 million mark. The total number of people online in Europe breaks the 100 million mark.	<b>(2) – (...)</b> Band Aid 20, the group of musicians assembled by Sir Bob Geldof, reach the number one slot in the UK. All proceeds go to help reduce poverty in Africa.	<b>(3) – (...)</b> Greece hosts the Olympic Games in August. Five cities are now short-listed to host the 2012 games: London, Paris, Madrid, Moscow and New York.	<b>(4) – (...)</b> Storms, typhoons and earthquakes make 2004 the most expensive year on record for property insurers, according to Swiss Re.
<b>(5) – (...)</b> Russia ratifies the Kyoto protocol, the treaty which aims to curb the growth in greenhouse gases.	<b>(6) – (...)</b> November sees the dollar continue to fall against the Euro, due to the continuing US trade deficits.	<b>(7) – (...)</b> 2004 sees a significant rise in oil prices, reaching an all-time high in October.	<b>(8) – (...)</b> December 2004: IBM sells its computer-making business to Chinese manufacturer, Lenovo.

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**(a)** 'Cutting emissions by 60% globally? It can't be done without major action from developing countries!'

**(b)** 'The long-term position of the dollar? I think it'll remain weak – and might even lose its dominance as a world currency.'

**(c)** 'Yes – the insurance industry is still worried that new climate-related risks are emerging. It could be another difficult year.'

**(d)** 'The WTO meet in Hong Kong in November – that would be a great chance to liberalise trade and really help the developing countries. But I don't think that'll happen.'

**(f)** 'Greater use of broadband will change many people's habits – like watching less TV! Small businesses will benefit from faster connections.'

**(e)** 'I think oil prices will level off. There'll be a petrol war – so we may see price cuts in fuel.'

**(g)** 'China has finally become a force to reckon with. I believe the economy will just keep getting stronger – but I don't think it'll overheat.'

**(h)** 'Paris! It's the favourite and I think the IOC will vote for the French capital in July.'

3 Read the predictions again. Which ones do you agree / disagree with?

4 Complete the words below with the missing vowels. Create sentences with these words.

(a) to c \_ rb    (b) d \_ f \_ c \_ t    (c) to r \_ sk    (d) to l \_ v \_ l \_ ff    (e) to \_ v \_ rh \_ \_ t

5 In groups, make three more predictions for 2005. Present your ideas to the class.