

Who wants to be a.....billionaire?

Forbes, the US business magazine, has just released its latest list of the 400 richest Americans, the **Forbes 400**. Who are the highest earners?

1 Match the entrepreneurs on the left with the companies on the right.

Sergey Brin and Larry Page	Bill Gates
Richard Branson	Philip Knight
Jeff Bezos	Michael Dell

Amazon	Dell Computers
Nike	Virgin
Microsoft	Google

2 Scan the article on billionaires to check your answer.

Billionaires Forbes 400. It comes as no surprise that after ten years at the top, *Microsoft* CEO Bill Gates again heads the latest Forbes 400 list of the US super-rich. No surprise, since the Windows operating system now runs 94% of the world's desktop computers. Gates, whose fortune now stands at US\$48 billion, is well-known for his acts of philanthropy – donating much of his wealth to good causes. Technology accounts for many in the list. Michael Dell, founder of *Dell Computers*, moves down a place to number nine. Jeff Bezos of *Amazon*, who survived the dot-com bust, stands at 38. The youngest billionaires on the list are Sergey Brin and Larry Page, co-founders of *Google*. This year, there are more billionaires than ever – 313 in total. The top 400 includes 51 women, an increase of one from last year.

The world's richest. Forbes' list of the world's richest includes British entrepreneur, Richard Branson, who has just announced that his *Virgin* company plans to launch

commercial space flights from 2007-8. He aims to back the SpaceShipOne with fares starting at US\$208,000 (€169,000) per flight, including three days' training. *Harry Potter* author J.K. Rowling joins the rich list at number 552. Also on the list is Philip Knight, who helped steer *Nike* to a 36% share of the US athletic shoe market.

Celebrity 100 List. Last year's favourites may be completely missing from this year's celebrity list, so quickly does fame come and go! The current number one is Mel Gibson. He made a fortune with his film *The Passion of Christ* which was rejected by Hollywood, and is set to continue earning from sales of the DVD. The top-earning sportsmen are golfer Tiger Woods and racing driver Michael Schumacher. Around \$70 million of Tiger Woods' \$80 million income actually comes from product endorsements. The world's richest rock and roll group? The Rolling Stones, of course.

3 Read the whole article. Who else is on the Forbes' list of the world's richest people and the Celebrity 100?

4 Who is the most famous / richest business person in your country? Use the following words to talk about them.

entrepreneur CEO founder philanthropy product endorsements

5 If you were a billionaire, which of the following would you do? Which would you definitely *not* do? Compare your answers with a partner.

Book a ride on SpaceShipOne	Buy a car (e.g. Ferrari Enzo: \$625,000)	Invest in a film which Hollywood has rejected	Create your own company (product?)
Retire and write a book (about?)	Stay a night at an expensive hotel (e.g. President Wilson Hotel, Geneva: \$33,343)	Buy property (where?)	Be philanthropic (e.g. start a charity)