READING COMPREHENSION

B2 | Adults / Teens | Reading + Vocabulary | 45-60 minutes
Topic: Steve Jobs and Innovation | Skills: Reading for Detail, Inference, Vocabulary

Read the article carefully. Then answer the questions on Page 2.

Steve Jobs: Connecting Technology and Creativity

An unusual path

Steve Jobs was born in San Francisco in 1955 and was adopted as a baby. As a teenager, he became interested in electronics and met Steve Wozniak, a talented engineer. Jobs later attended Reed College, but he left after only six months because he felt the cost was too high and the required classes did not interest him. However, he continued attending some classes informally. One of these was calligraphy. At the time, it seemed impractical, but years later it influenced the attractive typefaces used on the Macintosh computer.

Building Apple

In 1976, Jobs and Wozniak co-founded Apple and began working from Jobs's parents' home. Their skills complemented each other: Wozniak had deep technical knowledge, while Jobs recognized how computers could become useful and appealing to ordinary people. The Apple II became an early success. In 1984, Apple introduced the Macintosh, which helped popularize a graphical screen, icons and a mouse. Jobs believed that technology should not only work well; it should also feel simple and carefully designed.

A major setback

Jobs was persuasive and ambitious, but he could also be extremely demanding. Disagreements about Apple's direction led to his departure from the company in 1985. Being pushed out of the business he had helped create was a painful public failure. Instead of leaving the technology industry, however, he founded a new computer company called NeXT. He also became involved with Pixar, which grew into a highly successful animation studio. These experiences taught him about leadership, storytelling and long-term creative work.

Returning with new ideas

In 1996, Apple agreed to buy NeXT; the deal was completed in 1997. This brought Jobs back to the company. He later became CEO and simplified Apple's confusing range of products. Under his leadership, teams developed the iMac, iPod, iPhone and iPad. These products did not always contain entirely new technologies. Their importance often came from combining existing ideas in a clearer, more convenient form. Jobs focused on the complete user experience, from a device's appearance to its software and packaging.

A complicated legacy

In a famous 2005 speech at Stanford University, Jobs used the phrase 'connect the dots' to describe how people can understand the links between life experiences by looking backward. His calligraphy class, his removal from Apple and his work at other companies had seemed like separate events, yet each later influenced his achievements. Jobs died in 2011. He is remembered as a major figure in modern technology and design, although accounts of his management style are often critical. His story suggests that innovation depends not only on invention, but also on curiosity, judgment, persistence and the ability to connect ideas from different fields.

Key vocabulary	**impractical** - not useful for a particular purpose | **complement** - work well together **setback** - a problem that delays progress | **legacy** - the lasting influence of a person

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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

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Answer in complete sentences. Use evidence from the article where possible.

1. Why did Jobs leave Reed College, and what did he do after leaving?

2. How did the calligraphy class later influence his work?

3. How did Jobs's and Wozniak's different strengths complement each other?

4. Why was leaving Apple both a setback and an opportunity for Jobs?

5. What did Jobs do after leaving Apple in 1985? Give two examples.

6. According to the article, why were the iPod and iPhone important even though some of the technology they used already existed?

7. In the final paragraph, what does the phrase 'connect the dots' mean?

8. Which statement best summarizes the article's view of Steve Jobs? Explain your choice.
(a) He succeeded mainly because he invented every technology himself.
(b) His success came from combining creativity, persistence and different experiences.
(c) His career was successful because he never experienced serious failure.

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ANSWER KEY

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Suggested answers. Accept equivalent answers supported by the article.

1.	He left because college was expensive and the required classes did not interest him. He continued attending selected classes informally, including calligraphy.
2.	It influenced the attractive typefaces and attention to typography used on the Macintosh computer.
3.	Wozniak contributed deep technical knowledge, while Jobs saw how computers could be made useful and appealing to ordinary people.
4.	It was a painful failure because he lost his role at the company he had co-founded, but it gave him the chance to start NeXT, work with Pixar and gain new experience.
5.	He founded NeXT and became involved with Pixar, helping it grow into a successful animation studio.
6.	They combined existing technologies into products that were clearer, more convenient and carefully designed as a complete user experience.
7.	It means that the importance of separate experiences may only become clear later, when we look back and see how they influenced one another.
8.	(b). The article presents his achievements as the result of creativity, persistence and lessons from different experiences. It also notes his failures and demanding management style, so (a) and (c) are inaccurate.

Teacher sources: Stanford University (2005 speech); Apple (1997 Form 10-Q). Original educational summary.

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