

TEACHER'S NOTES

**Bitcoin**

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**Overview:** Suggestions for using the **Macmillan Dictionary BuzzWord** article on *Bitcoin* and the associated worksheet.

**Total time for worksheet activities:** 45 minutes

**Suggested level:** Upper intermediate and above

1. If you intend to use the worksheet in class, go to the *BuzzWord* article at the web address given at the beginning of the worksheet and print off a copy of the article. Make a copy of the worksheet and the *BuzzWord* article for each student. You might find it helpful not to print a copy of the Key for each student but to check the answers as a class.
2. If the members of your class all have computer access, ask them to open the worksheet before they go to the *BuzzWord* article link. Make sure they do not scroll down to the Key until they have completed each exercise.
3. Encourage students to read through the questions in Exercise 1 before they look at the *BuzzWord* article. Ask them to read through the whole article carefully and answer the questions. Tell them to compare their answers with a partner. Then check the answers as a class.
4. Ask students to complete Exercise 2 independently. They should identify the option that has a different meaning to the others. Encourage them to look up any of the alternatives they don't understand in the [Macmillan Dictionary](#). Check the answers as a class.
5. Exercise 3 focuses on some higher-level nouns used in the Background section of the article. Ask students to complete the exercise in pairs, without the aid of a dictionary, and remind them to look for any clues in the Background text. If they already know any of the words, suggest that they complete these answers first, which may help them to work out the others by a process of elimination. Give help where necessary and check the answers as a class.
6. Revisit the definition of the noun *prefix* in Exercise 3. Highlight the contrast between very common prefixes in English such as *un-* ('not') and *re-* ('again') – you could ask students to suggest example words – and those with more lexical content such as the example *crypt(o)-* in the Background section of the article. Explain that in Exercise 4 they'll be looking at the meaning of some other prefixes ending in 'o' in English and some examples of their use. The *crypto-* prefix is given in an example question. Complete the first part of the exercise as a class activity. Then ask students to complete the second part individually (i.e. write a definition and give an example for prefixes *eco-* and *geo-*). Less confident students could be allowed to look these prefixes up in the [Macmillan Dictionary](#).

**Tip:** As an extension activity, students could do their own research on English prefixes using the Internet or other resources. Ask them to find six other interesting prefixes and provide a definition for each and at least one example word in which they feature.

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7. Revisit the definition of the word *compound* in Exercise 3. Explain that noun compounds can either be 'closed' (i.e. have no space between the words that form them, like the new compound *Bitcoin* – such examples are sometimes also described as 'solid' compounds) or 'open' (i.e. written as a series of words, e.g. *car park*, *peanut butter*). Exercise 5 highlights eight closed compounds which are common in everyday English. Ask students to complete the exercise in pairs, then check the answers as a class.
8. If you wanted to develop the discussion further, you could point out that all the compounds featured in Exercise 5 are 'compositional', i.e. their meaning is predictable from the words that they are made of. However, there are many compounds whose meanings are not directly related to the meanings of the words they feature (e.g. *heavy metal*, which is a type of rock music). Get students to think of further examples of compositional and / or non-compositional compounds in English.

WORKSHEET

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Go to the **Macmillan Dictionary BuzzWord** article at:  
<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/buzzword/entries/bitcoin.html>

**1 Find the information**

Read the *BuzzWord* article on *Bitcoin* and answer these questions.

1. Where can you use *Bitcoins*?
2. How does *Bitcoin* differ from conventional currencies?
3. How many new *Bitcoins* are released every ten minutes?
4. What is the currency code for *Bitcoin*?
5. What is a *digital wallet*?
6. Give one advantage and one disadvantage of *Bitcoins*.

**2 Find the odd one out**

Cross out the alternative that has a different meaning to the others.

1. *Bitcoin* is an electronic currency created *specifically* / *especially* / *generally* for use on the internet.
2. *Bitcoin* doesn't operate like *conventional* / *traditional* / *commercial* currencies.
3. *Bitcoins* are not *circulated* / *controlled* / *regulated* by a central bank.
4. *Bitcoins* are *released* / *created* / *produced* by a network of computers.
5. *Bitcoins* can be *converted* / *added* / *changed* into conventional currency.
6. Using *Bitcoins* avoids the *wages* / *charges* / *fees* imposed by banks.

**3 Define the noun**

Match the nouns in the left-hand column with the definitions in the right-hand column. The nouns can all be found in the **Background** section of the *BuzzWord* article.

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| 1. compound    | a. a group of letters that is added to the beginning of a word to change its meaning |
| 2. scenario    | b. a large or important new project  |
| 3. orthography | c. a situation that could possibly happen  |
| 4. pseudonym   | d. a name that someone uses that is not their real name                              |
| 5. enterprise  | e. the system of spelling that a language uses                                       |
| 6. prefix      | f. a combination of two or more words used as a single word                          |

WORKSHEET

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**4 Common prefixes**

Read the dictionary definitions and complete the examples with the prefixes in the box. There are two prefixes you don't need.

aero-	anglo-	astro-	auto-	crypto-
eco-	geo-	micro-	mono-	psycho-

- secret or hidden: \_\_\_\_\_ **crypto**gram, \_\_\_\_\_ **crypto**graphy
- relating to England: \_\_\_\_\_centric, \_\_\_\_\_catholic
- relating to yourself, or working alone: \_\_\_\_\_biography, \_\_\_\_\_matic
- relating to planes or the air: \_\_\_\_\_plane, \_\_\_\_\_dynamic
- extremely small: \_\_\_\_\_scopic, \_\_\_\_\_chip
- single or one: \_\_\_\_\_syllabic, \_\_\_\_\_chrome
- connected with your mind: \_\_\_\_\_logy, \_\_\_\_\_analyse
- relating to planets and stars: \_\_\_\_\_naut, \_\_\_\_\_nomer

**5 Compound nouns**

**Bitcoin** is a new compound noun. Use the words in the box to form eight common compound nouns and use them to complete the sentences below.

bag	board	book	book	birth	cakes	cloth	coat
day	dish	hand	key	note	pan	shops	waist

- I can't seem to find my keys. I thought they were in my \_\_\_\_\_.
- He was looking very smart in a grey suit with a patterned \_\_\_\_\_.
- Please use a separate \_\_\_\_\_ to clean the kitchen surfaces.
- We had a huge breakfast of \_\_\_\_\_ with maple syrup.
- You should write any new vocabulary in your \_\_\_\_\_.
- When is Jayne's \_\_\_\_\_? I'd like to send her a card.
- You need good typing skills if you want a job as a \_\_\_\_\_ operator.
- \_\_\_\_\_ are finding it increasingly difficult to compete with online retailers.

KEY

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KEY

**1 Find the word**

1. online / on the internet
2. It is not regulated by a central bank.
3. 25
4. *BTC*
5. an account in which electronic cash can be stored
6. advantages: can be used anywhere in the world, can avoid high bank fees  
disadvantages: possible to steal from *digital wallets*, anonymous and so often used in illegal transactions

**2 Find the odd one out**

1. generally
2. commercial
3. circulated
4. released
5. added
6. wages

**3 Define the noun**

1. f
2. c
3. e
4. d
5. b
6. a

**4 Common prefixes**

2. anglo-
3. auto-
4. aero-
5. micro-
6. mono-
7. psycho-
8. astro-

*eco-* = 'relating to the environment',  
e.g.: *ecological, eco-friendly*  
*geo-* = 'relating to the earth',  
e.g.: *geography, geological*

**5 Compound nouns**

1. handbag
2. waistcoat
3. dishcloth
4. pancakes
5. notebook
6. birthday
7. keyboard
8. bookshops