



3.4

1 Keeping fit doesn't come easy to all of us and if you're one of those people struggling to be more physically active and **accomplish** the ten thousand steps a day now recommended by health professionals, it helps to have some **incentive** to walk just 5 that little bit further. If this rings true for you, then The Walk, a pedometer app with a difference, could be just the thing to encourage you to get up off the sofa and put one foot in front of the other. Created by developers Six to Start, in collaboration with the UK National Health Service, The Walk is a fitness app 10 for imaginative people who want a less intense workout than hitting the gym, but who still want to get active. Though not as **strenuous** as some other forms of exercise, regular walking has been shown to reduce the risk of heart disease and diabetes, as well as aiding weight-loss and, somewhat paradoxically, increasing 15 energy levels by boosting circulation and increasing oxygen supply to every cell in the body.

2 The **premise** behind The Walk is that, through a case of mistaken identity, you are given a vital package to deliver to a distant destination in the UK, but as you are about to board a train 20 to take you there, terrorists blow it up and set off an electromagnetic pulse rendering cars and trains unusable. Walking is your only option, and now the terrorists are on your trail because they want the device you're carrying.

3 The underlying concept is to encourage players to perambulate 25 in the real world as part of the aforementioned apocalyptic game narrative. Players' phones' accelerometers track the distance they cover on foot, unlocking levels and hours of storytelling narrated by talented voice actors. The further you walk, the further the plot progresses. **Straightforward**, engaging and effective, The Walk uses similar 30 mechanics to its predecessor Six to Start's *Zombies, Run!*, a popular fantasy/running app which encourages users to escape **pursuing** zombies whenever they go for a jog. By lowering the requirement to walking, and focusing on increasing general daily movement rather than dedicated, prescribed and sometimes prohibitive 35 training routines, it is hoped that almost everyone can reap the benefits this time.

4 There's no question that the wider theory is an interesting one: apps and games that encourage activity have the potential to cut down on healthcare requirements through prevention, 40 **negating** the need to cure illnesses resulting from sedentary lifestyles. If broadly adopted, such products could take a bite out of the billions of pounds that obesity-related diseases cost the taxpayer each year. Even more intriguing is that the Department of Health is funding external mobile start-ups and indie developers 45 at all. When asked to explain, the department **disclosed** that such investment is not only about encouraging lifestyle change, but also **nurturing** innovative ideas. So while the initial motivation might be the potential savings gained through a healthier public, there appears also to be the **subsidiary** goal of encouraging jobs and 50 economic growth. With government support, apps like The Walk, which otherwise might not have the resources that state backing can allow, stand a better chance of gaining traction with the public and ultimately making a significant contribution to both the health of the nation and the economy.

- 4 **SPEAKING** Discuss whether you would be interested in trying one of the fitness apps mentioned in the article.

FOCUS ON WORDS | Phrases

- 5 **3.5** In your notebook, complete the phrases in **bold** with the correct form of the verbs in the box. Refer to the article for help if necessary. Then listen and check.

(come gain put reap ring take)

- 1 If sb **puts** one foot in front of the other, they walk deliberately or carefully.
- 2 If an idea or a product, etc. **?** **traction**, it begins to become more popular, widespread or better-known.
- 3 If sth **?** **easy** (or easily) to someone, they are good at it with little effort or have a natural talent for it.
- 4 If a bite is **?** **out of** sth (e.g. an amount of money), it is reduced by a significant amount.
- 5 If sb **?** the **benefit(s)**, they get sth good as a result of their efforts.
- 6 If sth **?** **true**, it seems likely or accurate.

- 6 **SPEAKING** In your notebook, replace the words underlined below with the correct form of their synonyms in blue in the text. Then ask and answer in pairs.

- 1 Which basic plot do you think is better; the one for The Walk or the one for *Zombies, Run!*? **premise**
- 2 To what extent do you think mobile phone apps and games can really help people achieve their fitness goals?
- 3 Do you prefer light exercise or something more physically demanding?
- 4 What is the best motivator for you personally to do more exercise?
- 5 How far does a healthy diet cancel out the need to exercise?
- 6 Would you describe keeping fit as an uncomplicated process?
- 7 How important do you think it is to chase your dreams and ambitions in life? What if they seem unrealistic?
- 8 Have you ever revealed a secret to someone then regretted it?
- 9 If the main benefit of going to university is a qualification, what secondary benefits are there?
- 10 Do you think universities should focus on producing broadly educated citizens or developing the unique talents of individuals?

- 7 **SPEAKING** Discuss the questions.

- 1 Which of the following types of video games and apps do/would you play or use?
 - role-playing/strategy
 - sports
 - shooter
 - other (explain)
 - action/adventure
- 2 Which particular games or apps do you find the most useful or fun?
- 3 Have you been disappointed by any games or apps you've tried?