Taking root and reaping rewards

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
UPPER-INTERMEDIATE | B2

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Match each precise term with its definition.

1 dividends ____	**a** the benefits or profits gained from an investment of time, effort or money
2 incremental progress ____	**b** small, steady steps of improvement over time
3 tenacity ____	**c** firm persistence despite difficulty
4 fledgling ____	**d** new and inexperienced, still in an early stage of development
5 sow the seeds ____	**e** to lay the groundwork for a future outcome
6 vested interest ____	**f** a personal stake or benefit in a particular outcome
7 return on investment ____	**g** the measurable benefit gained relative to what was invested
8 momentum ____	**h** the driving force that keeps progress moving forward
9 consolidate ____	**i** to strengthen and secure a position already achieved
10 sustainable growth ____	**j** expansion that can be maintained over the long term without depleting resources

2 Choose the word with the most suitable connotation.

1 For the benefits gained from an investment: dividends / losses.

2 For small, steady steps forward: incremental progress / sudden leaps.

3 For firm persistence despite difficulty: tenacity / apathy.

4 For a new, inexperienced venture: fledgling / established.

5 For laying groundwork for a future outcome: sow the seeds / abandon the plan.

6 For the force keeping progress moving: momentum / stagnation.

7 For strengthening a position already achieved: consolidate / undermine.

8 For growth that can be maintained long term: sustainable growth / short-lived boom.

3 Complete the growth collocations with one word.

1 reap the _____ (= gain the benefits of an investment)

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2 _____ progress (= small, steady steps forward)

3 a _____ enterprise (= a new, inexperienced venture)

4 _____ the seeds of success (= lay the groundwork)

5 gain _____ (= build the driving force for progress)

6 _____ one's position (= strengthen what has been achieved)

7 a _____ interest (= a personal stake in an outcome)

8 _____ growth (= expansion maintained long term)

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4 Complete the case notes with words and phrases from the box.

consolidate | dividends | fledgling | incremental progress | momentum | return on investment | sow the seeds | sustainable growth | tenacity | vested interest

Case A: The founder's early 1 _____ helped 2 _____ of future success, even as the 3 _____ business struggled financially in its first year.
Case B: Investors carefully calculated the expected 4 _____ before committing further funds.
Case C: After years of 5 _____, the company finally began to see real 6 _____ from its earlier investments.
Case D: Once the product gained real 7 _____, the team worked hard to 8 _____ their market position rather than expanding too quickly.
Case E: Critics questioned whether certain advisers had a 9 _____ in recommending rapid expansion rather than genuinely 10 _____.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

Why slow growth often outperforms fast growth

Business researchers increasingly caution against prioritising rapid expansion over sustainable growth, noting that companies scaling too quickly often struggle to consolidate their gains before the next challenge arrives. Incremental progress, though less dramatic, tends to build genuine organisational capacity, allowing a fledgling business to develop the operational resilience needed to withstand inevitable setbacks. Momentum gained through steady, disciplined execution appears more durable than momentum gained through aggressive short-term tactics, which can generate impressive early dividends while leaving the underlying business poorly prepared for sustained success.

1 What do business researchers increasingly caution against? _____
2 What do companies scaling too quickly often struggle to do? _____
3 What does incremental progress tend to build? _____
4 What does this allow a fledgling business to develop? _____
5 How does momentum from steady execution compare with momentum from aggressive tactics? ___
6 What can aggressive short-term tactics leave a business poorly prepared for? _____

6 Rewrite each sentence using the word in capitals. Do not change the meaning.

1 The early investment eventually produced good returns. DIVIDENDS _____

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2 She kept trying despite constant setbacks. TENACITY _____

3 The new business was still small and inexperienced. FLEDGLING _____

4 They worked to strengthen the position they had gained. CONSOLIDATE _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a 120-150 word account analysing why patience and steady progress often outperform rapid, short-term success, distinguishing observation from argument.

[ ] Use at least twelve target expressions. [ ] Control connotation carefully. [ ] Avoid unsupported assumptions.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Precise terms

1 a 2 b 3 c 4 d 5 e 6 f 7 g 8 h... note reassign 9 i 10 j

2 Connotation

1 dividends 2 incremental progress 3 tenacity 4 fledgling 5 sow the seeds 6 momentum 7 consolidate 8 sustainable growth

3 Collocations

1 dividends 2 incremental 3 fledgling 4 sow 5 momentum 6 consolidate 7 vested 8 sustainable

4 Case notes

1 tenacity 2 sow the seeds 3 fledgling 4 return on investment 5 incremental progress
6 dividends 7 momentum 8 consolidate 9 vested interest 10 sustainable growth

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 Prioritising rapid expansion over sustainable growth.
2 Consolidate their gains before the next challenge arrives.
3 Genuine organisational capacity.
4 Operational resilience needed to withstand inevitable setbacks.
5 It appears more durable.
6 Sustained success.

6 Rewriting - possible answers

1 The investment produced good dividends. 2 She showed real tenacity.
3 The new business was fledgling. 4 They worked to consolidate their position.

Over to you

Answers will vary. Check lexical precision, appropriate connotation and separation of fact from inference.