Hello and welcome to Spotlight. I’m Marina Santee. And I am Steve Myersco. This programme uses a special English method of broadcasting. It is easier for people to understand, no matter where in the world they live. This sound is well known to millions of people around the world. It is the sound of Windows XP. All computers need an operating system - a basic set of programs that all other programs depend on. And Windows is the most common operating system in the world. All together about 90 percent of the computers in the world use a Windows operating system. This has helped to make the creator of Windows a very rich man. This programme is one of several about business leaders of the world. Today’s Spotlight looks at the life of Bill Gates. His computer and business skills have helped make him one of the richest men in the world. However today he has a very different job. Bill Gates’ interest in computers began at an early age. When he was 13, his school decided it would give its students the chance to learn about computers. However, the school could not buy a computer. In 1968 computers were still big and costly. Instead, the school paid for some time on a local company’s computer. The chance to use a computer was a special gift. Bill Gates and his friends made full use of it. They learned how to make the computer do what they wanted to. Soon Bill Gates was offered a job by a local computer company. They paid him to find things that were wrong with their computer’s program and to fix it. Bill Gates also did very well at many other subjects at school. He got one of the best ever results on the national school test. His mark was 1590 out of 1600 - almost a perfect score. Later he got a place at one of the United States’ best universities - Harvard. However, he never finished his studies there. He left the university to start work. He was asked to create some computer programs for a company. To do this, Gates and his friend Paul Allen created Microsoft. That was in 1975. Today this company is famous around the world. One of the reasons for Bill Gates’ great success is that he thought about the future. He correctly thought that one day millions of people would own computers. He said that he wanted to help put a computer in every home and in every work place. Gates knew that if millions of people owned computers, then he could make a lot of money. This was a strange idea 30 years ago. At that time, computers were difficult to use and very costly. Much of Bill Gates’ great wealth comes from the computer system ‘Windows’. Most of the home computers in the world use this operating system. It was first created by Microsoft in 1985. Since then Microsoft has developed Windows to do more and more things. Other companies find it very hard to compete with Bill Gates’ company. However, in the late 1990s Microsoft faced trouble. Bill Gates had to go to court to defend his business. Many people said that the company was unfair in the way it worked. They said that it stopped other companies from having any chance of success. At first, the judge ruled against Microsoft. However the case continued for years in the US courts, and finally Microsoft escaped any serious punishment. At this time, Bill Gates was the richest man in the world. He had more money than many people could even imagine. He earned about 250 dollars every second. If he was a country he would have been the 37th richest country on earth. But Gates found that being the richest man on earth did create problems. Many people thought that it was wrong for one man to have so much money. People thought that he should give more of his money away. Gates read about important business leaders before him. He learned about Andrew Carnegie. Carnegie had been one of the richest men in the world, but had given much of his money away. And so in the year 2000, Gates created a new organisation with his wife. The organisation is called the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. It gives away over a billion dollars every year. Most of the money goes towards fighting health problems around the world. In particular, the Foundation gives money towards fighting diseases such as malaria, AIDS, polio and pneumonia. Bill Gates said, ‘We started our foundation because we believe that all lives have equal value. The poorest child in the poorest country is just as important as your child, and ours. We wanted to do our part to give every person the chance to live a healthy and productive life.’ The organisation also gives money to help with education in the United States. Some of this money helps poorer children learn better at school and give them the chance to go to university. In 2008 Bill Gates stopped working for Microsoft. Now he spends all his time working for the Gates Foundation. Bill Gates says his new job is very different to the job that brought him success. But he finds it just as satisfying. ‘I love the work at the Foundation. There are many differences to my work at Microsoft. But it has the same three amazing elements. First, there are the opportunities to make great advances. These may be anything from discovering a new medicine to developing new seeds for better crops. Second I feel like my experience in building teams of intelligent people with different skills can be a real help. The common sense of the business world can be used in the work of helping needy people. Finally, I find that the intelligence and hardworking nature of the people involved in these issues is just as great as I have seen in the business world.’ Bill Gates is this generation’s most famous business person. To many, he is an example of how unbalanced the world’s economy is. He is still hugely wealthy. But over the next few decades his money will be spent on trying to solve some of the world’s most important problems. Even after his death, Bill Gates’ money will continue doing good. He may yet be remembered for his generosity more than for his wealth. The writer and producer of this programme was Steve Myersco. The voices you heard were from the United Kingdom and the United States. You can hear this programme again and read the script on our website at www.radioenglish.net. The programme is called ‘World Business Leaders: Bill Gates’. Thank you for join us for today’s Spotlight. Until next time, goodbye.