



Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: _____

Jensen Huang & The AI Revolution

AAPI Heritage Month Spotlight

If you have ever played a modern 3D video game, used a self-driving car, or asked a question to an Artificial Intelligence (AI) like ChatGPT, you have relied on the visionary work of Jensen Huang. Born in Tainan, Taiwan, in 1963, Huang's childhood was shaped by global movement. After briefly living in Thailand, his parents sent nine-year-old Jensen and his brother to the United States to escape political unrest. He ended up at a reform boarding school in Kentucky where he faced bullying and was assigned a daily chore to clean the bathrooms. Rather than feeling defeated, Huang later credited these difficult early immigrant experiences with teaching him profound resilience and an unbreakable work ethic.

Huang went on to study electrical engineering at Oregon State University and earned a master's degree from Stanford. In 1993, while eating at a Denny's diner in California, Huang and two friends came up with a wild idea. They wanted to build a company that specialized in making complex 3D graphics for video games—a market that barely existed at the time. They named the company NVIDIA. In 1999, NVIDIA invented a revolutionary piece of hardware: the GPU (Graphics Processing Unit).

Unlike standard computer brains (CPUs) which do tasks one by one very quickly, a GPU can do thousands of smaller mathematical tasks all at the same time. This is called "parallel processing," and it was exactly what was needed to render beautiful, fast-moving 3D video games. However, Huang noticed something incredible. Decades later, researchers realized that the complex math required to train Artificial Intelligence networks was identical to the math used to render 3D pixels. A GPU wasn't just a gaming chip; it was the ultimate brain for AI.

In a massive, risky bet, Huang directed his company to completely rethink their technology, creating a software platform called CUDA in 2006 that allowed anyone to program GPUs for things other than graphics. The gamble paid off tremendously. Today, NVIDIA's chips power the vast majority of the world's AI development, making it one of the most valuable companies in history. Famous for always wearing a signature black leather jacket, Jensen Huang's story is a quintessential Asian American success story—proving that with vision, resilience, and a willingness to take huge risks, you can literally invent the future.

PART 1: MULTIPLE CHOICE

Circle the letter of the best answer.

1. Where did Jensen Huang and his co-founders originally come up with the idea to start NVIDIA?

- A. In a Stanford University science lab.
- B. At a Denny's diner in California.
- C. During a video game tournament in Taiwan.
- D. While working at the United States Patent Office.

2. What revolutionary piece of hardware did NVIDIA invent in 1999?

- A. The CPU (Central Processing Unit)
- B. The first virtual reality headset
- C. The GPU (Graphics Processing Unit)
- D. The lithium-ion battery

3. Why is a GPU better suited for Artificial Intelligence than a traditional computer processor (CPU)?

- A. It uses parallel processing to do thousands of mathematical tasks at the same time.
- B. It never overheats and uses zero electricity.
- C. It is the only computer chip that understands the English language.
- D. It was originally built specifically for AI chatbots.

PART 2: SHORT ANSWER

Write your answers in complete sentences based on the reading passage.

4. How did Jensen Huang's early experiences as an immigrant arriving in the United States help shape his character?

5. Explain the "massive, risky bet" that Jensen Huang made in 2006. How did it change NVIDIA's future?

PART 3: CRITICAL THINKING

6. NVIDIA was founded to build chips for video games, but it eventually became the most important company for Artificial Intelligence. What does this tell us about the nature of technology and innovation? Why is it important for a leader like Huang to be adaptable and willing to change the original purpose of his company?
