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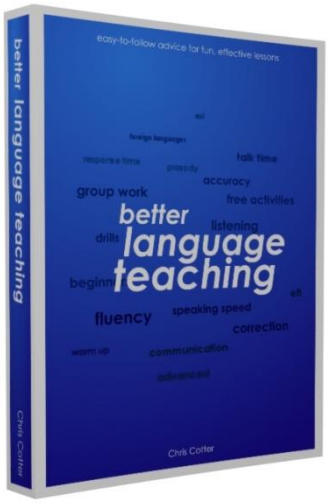

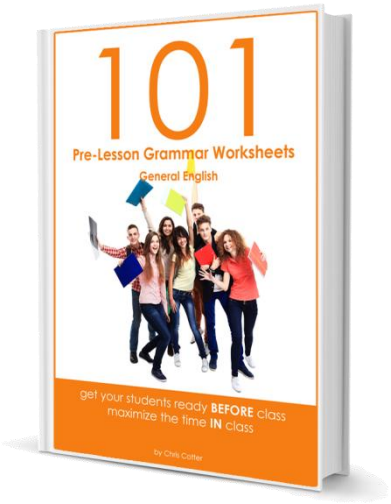

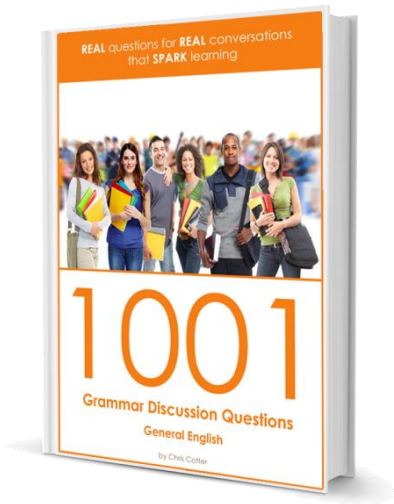

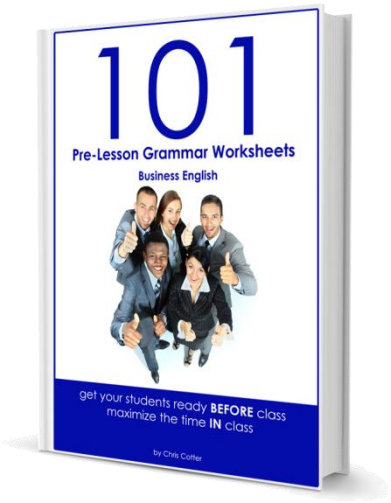

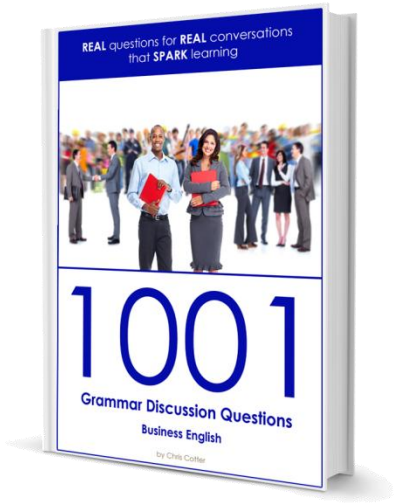

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INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1: You will listen to an article about the Internet, and how it has changed the world. The article is a little more than 4 1/2 minutes long. Listen only, and don't worry about understanding everything.
Step 2: Read and understand the questions, then listen again. As you are listening, try to answer the questions in your head. Don't write the answers yet. Next, listen again and write the answers this time. Check your answers with a partner.
Step 3: Read the article. Check in your dictionary any unknown words. Now listen again. Can you understand more?
Step 4: Listen! Listen! Listen! Listen to the article on the train or in your free time. Each time you listen, you will slowly improve!

QUESTIONS

Answer the questions to check your comprehension. If you don't know an answer, don't worry. Skip it, then try to answer it when after you listen again.

1: According to the article, how many people use the Internet?

2: What can be said of the Internet during the 1990s?

3: Why does it seem like so much more time has passed since the Internet became popular?

4: How long is the history of the Internet?

5: What was the early Internet like?

6: Who pushed the development of the Internet?

7: Why did these developers want to create a new system of communication?

8: When was the Internet explosion?

9: Perhaps unrealistically, what is one possible future possibility?

10: What does the future realistically have in store for us?

the ARTICLE

Here's a question: How has the Internet changed the world?

As of March 2008, over 1.4 billion people use the Internet to communicate via e-mail, live chat, and web video; they post information, exchange ideas, and meet people on bulletin boards and social networks like My Space and Facebook; they research information on hot topics with news services, Wikipedia, and university-based virtual libraries; and they even study for advanced degrees, career-enhancing certificates and qualifications, and foreign languages! Internet commerce has much more than a subtle effect on brick-and-mortar establishments. Video rental services have popped up, as has illegal file sharing. People participate in online computer games and world simulations, too.

But just cast your thoughts back to the early 90s, back when the Internet wasn't a household word yet. In fact, the Internet barely existed. The idea of Google had yet to be conceived, as also the online retailer, Amazon.com. So granted do we now take the availability and convenience of information at our fingertips, not to mention entertainment and all sorts of services just a button click away, it seems like much more than a decade has raced past.

The history of the Internet is quite short, though. Early precursors to the Internet of today came about in the 1950s, and were nothing more than computer terminals connected with cables. There was definitely no Wi-Fi, nor dial-up, nor connection between far away users. These systems gradually evolved through the subsequent decades, however, primarily at the insistence of universities and the military. The former wanted to trade information with ease between institutions, in particular science departments championed the idea. The latter wanted to be able to maintain contact with the various branches of the armed forces in the event of nuclear Armageddon. Those beginnings led to experimentation, refinement, tweaks, dead ends, and finally the Internet explosion of the 1990s. Just think: Lycos, Yahoo!, Alta Vista, and Google search engines are only a decade and a bit in age.

Most people around the world continue to grow increasingly dependent on the Internet. They exchange and digest information from all four corners of the globe, and at rates never before imagined. For example, the average person can participate in a web conference with peers or colleagues as far away as overseas; read news updates by reporters still in the field; share movies with several dozen users, and then spend an hour updating a blog that thousands will read by morning.

So what's in store for the Internet? Some people believe we will live in an always-on society in the not-too-distant future, perhaps staying connected with a headset. Some even speculate that computer chips will one day be inserted into our brains and allow us to download data directly into our gray matter. More realistically, though, our watches, cell phones, and PDAs will stay connected everywhere. We will have even greater access to information which will mold and shape societies and cultures around the globe.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES (optional)

1: Which paragraph was the easiest to listen to? Which paragraph was the most difficult? Look at the vocabulary and sentence structure, then think why one paragraph was easy and another difficult.

2: Listen for these words, understand the context, then try to repeat the information from the sentence:

brick-and-mortar (paragraph 2)
precursors (paragraph 4)
former (paragraph 4)
digest information (paragraph 5)
in store (paragraph 6)

3: Listen and write the sentences:

So granted do we now take... (paragraph 3)

_____

The latter wanted to... (paragraph 4)

_____

More realistically, though... (paragraph 6)

_____

ANSWERS

QUESTIONS

1: As of March 2008, over 1.4 billion people use the Internet.
2: The Internet wasn't a household word yet. In fact, the Internet barely existed.
3: We now take for granted the availability and convenience of information at our fingertips, not to mention entertainment and all sorts of services just a button click away.
4: The history of the Internet is quite short, though.
5: There was definitely no Wi-Fi, nor dial-up, nor connection between far away users.
6: The Internet gradually evolved through the subsequent decades, primarily at the insistence of universities and the military.
7: The universities wanted to trade information with ease between institutions, in particular science departments championed the idea. The military wanted to be able to maintain contact with the various branches of the armed forces in the event of nuclear Armageddon.
8: The Internet explosion was in the 1990s.
9: Some even speculate that computer chips will one day be inserted into our brains and allow us to download data directly into our gray matter.
10: More realistically, though, our watches, cell phones, and PDAs will stay connected everywhere.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES - Listen and write the sentences.

...the availability and convenience of information at our fingertips, not to mention entertainment and all sorts of services just a button click away, it seems like much more than a decade has raced past.
...be able to maintain contact with the various branches of the armed forces in the event of nuclear Armageddon.
...our watches, cell phones, and PDAs will stay connected everywhere.