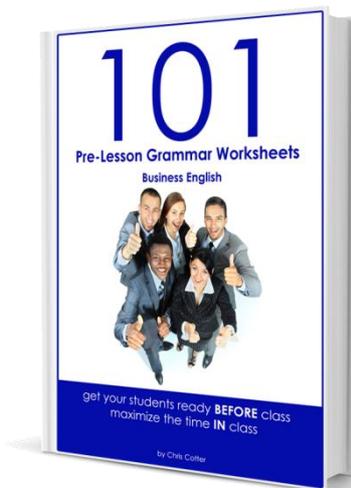# HEADS UP ENGLISH's store
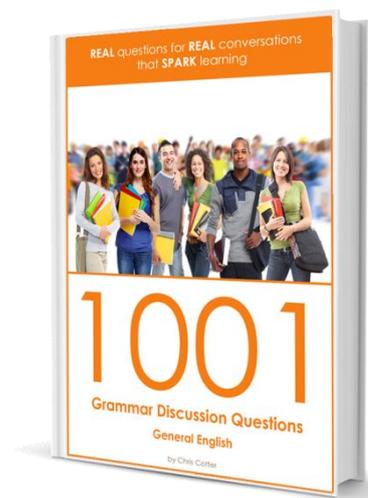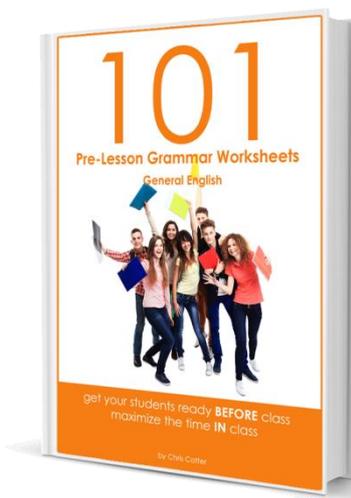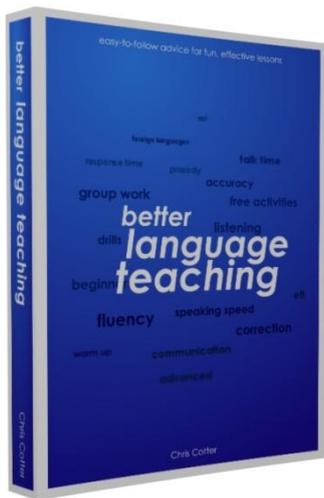
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the ARTICLE (for teachers)

Are We Living in a Computer?

As strange as it may sound, a number of <u>prominent</u> physicists and philosophers have suggested that all people and things in our universe are nothing more than a computer simulation. In other words, although <u>somewhat</u> seemingly far-fetched, nothing and no one is real. We are simply computer code in a virtual reality.

The <u>legitimate</u> theory suggests that an advanced civilization, perhaps our future descendants thousands of years <u>hence</u>, is running computer simulations for research purposes to gain insight into 21st century humans. It's equally possible that these beings may be running simulations for enjoyment, much as we run video games and virtual worlds for our entertainment. And with access to <u>enormous</u> computing power, such would be possible.

Of course, not everyone agrees, and <u>skepticism</u> exists. Thinking that somehow we are <u>unique</u> and interesting enough to research seems exceedingly self-centered. It <u>harks back</u> to the idea that Earth is at the center of the universe. In reality, humankind is not terribly special.

However, some tech billionaires have begun to fund research in an attempt to <u>confirm</u> whether humankind does indeed live in a computer, even if the evidence will prove difficult to find. And in fact, additional money is being thrown at scientists to find a way to free humankind from the simulation.

Whatever the truth, if we are merely computer simulations on a future descendant's computer, let's hope that a bug doesn't crash the program and he/she remains interested in our <u>antics</u>.

Teacher's Notes:

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* <u>Underlined</u> words in red typeface are the recommended vocabulary for this lesson.

Select one or all of the following warm-up activities.

1: Define: What does "virtual reality" mean? Can you use it in a sentence? Can you give examples?

2: Brainstorm: Brainstorm with a partner(s) words and ideas associated with "virtual reality" for 2 minutes. Spend another 5 minutes or less discussing the words and ideas together.

3: Speculate: Write in the missing words for today's article title: "Are We (   ) in a (   )." Why did you choose these words for the blanks?

4: Title: Speculate and/or discuss the contents of today's article from its title: "Are We Living in a Computer?"

5: Do you agree or disagree? Why?

a.	I'm very interested in computers and technology.
b.	I think computers are dangerous.
c.	We currently live in interesting and exciting times.
d.	The future will be an interesting and exciting place to live.
e.	I enjoy playing video games.

VOCABULARY

Select one of the following vocabulary acquisition activities.

1: Vocabulary match: Individually or in pairs/groups, match the words in column A (from the article) with the best choice in column B.

a.	**prominent**	q.	rare
b.	**somewhat**	r.	from now
c.	**legitimate**	s.	prove
d.	**hence**	t.	to some extent
e.	**enormous**	u.	doubt
f.	**skepticism**	v.	important
g.	**unique**	w.	look back
h.	**hark back**	x.	very large
i.	**confirm**	y.	funny behavior
j.	**antic**	z.	real

2: Fill in the Blanks: Fill in the blank with the correct word.

legitimate	enormous	harks back	skepticism	somewhat
confirm	**prominent**	**hence**	**antics**	**unique**

a.	A number of (　　　　) physicists have suggested that our universe is a computer simulation.
b.	Although (　　　　) seemingly far-fetched, nothing and no one is real.
c.	The (　　　　) theory suggests that an advanced civilization is running computer simulations.
d.	Perhaps our descendants thousands of years (　　　　) to gain insight into 21st century humans.
e.	With access to (　　　　) computing power, such would be possible.
f.	Not everyone agrees, and (　　　　) exists.
g.	Thinking that somehow we are (　　　　) enough to research seems exceedingly self-centered.
h.	It (　　　　) to the idea that Earth is at the center of the universe.
i.	Tech billionaires have begun to fund research to (　　　　) whether humankind lives in a computer.
j.	Let's hope that a bug doesn't crash the program and he/she remains interested in our (　　　　).

3: Define: Define each word, correctly pronounce it, explain the meaning and/or usage, and offer an example sentence to the class.

a.	**prominent**	c.	**legitimate**	e.	**enormous**	g.	**unique**	i.	**confirm**
b.	**somewhat**	d.	**hence**	f.	**skepticism**	h.	**hark back**	j.	**antic**

WORD RECOGNITION

1: Word Search: Find the target words (in bold). Time yourself, and see how many words you can find in three minutes. In five minutes. In ten minutes.

legitimate	enormous	harks back	skepticism	somewhat
confirm	prominent	hence	antics	unique

```
L D S Z Z U D T N L S A B D V
B E Y K N I A Y E A K N N O Q
T X G I R H C G L M E T F Z P
Y N Q I W A I N G H P I J V V
O U E E T T H D B N T C F A B
E W M N I I L V M P I S M F S
F O X M I C M K A Y C M R M U
S Z E F G M O A Z J I U K U O
D T Y U L Z O N T K S O E W M
E U E Q I N U R F E M K C A R
E N O R M U O S P I C T N R O
G U X X T V H O U A R A E A N
S J M O U Q R G B B X M H S E
O U U A G K L Z U T K D J C J
N R X G H M S I C I T P E C S
```

2: Target Word Pool: Find the target words (in bold) with their exact match. Time yourself, and see how many words you can find in three minutes. In five minutes. In ten minutes.

legitimate	enormous	harks back	skepticism	somewhat
confirm	prominent	hence	antics	unique

skepticism   attics   permanent   someone   skeptic   skeptically

enormousness   confirm   harks   confirmed   unique

something   illegitimate   antic   unctuous   hark back   fence   frantic

harks back   hence with   enormously   legitimately

promenade   henceforth   prominent

antics   uniquely   confirmation   skeptical   respect   prominence   arctic

confirming   enormity   legitimate   uniqueness   confirms

hackens back

somewhat   legit   hearse   normal   somewhere   skeptics

enormous   prominently   hence   enough   legitimates   harken back

unicorn   sometime

pre- or post-COMPREHENSION

1: Word Association: Brainstorm words associated with today's topic for two minutes. Present to the class.

2: Brainstorm Questions: Brainstorm questions that you would like to ask about today's topic. Answer the questions without looking at the article.

3: True or False?: Guess (before the article) or answer (after the article) whether the sentence is true or false. If false, correct the sentence.

a.	Physicists and philosophers are building a computer simulation of the universe.	T / F
b.	The computer simulation from the article is for research and entertainment purposes.	T / F
c.	Everyone thinks we are unique and interesting enough to research.	T / F
d.	Some tech billionaires want to find a way out of the simulation.	T / F
e.	According to the article, a computer bug will definitely crash the computer simulation.	T / F

4: Questions: Answer the questions to check comprehension.

a.	According to the article, what have physicists and philosophers suggested?
b.	Who might be running the simulation?
c.	Why might someone be running the simulation?
d.	Why do some people disagree with the suggestion?
e.	What are tech billionaires doing about the simulation?

5: Vocabulary: In pairs/groups, remember how the words were used in today's article.

a.	**prominent**	c.	**legitimate**	e.	**enormous**	g.	**unique**	i.	**confirm**
b.	**somewhat**	d.	**hence**	f.	**skepticism**	h.	**harks back**	j.	**antics**

6: Fragments: Remember how the fragments were used, and complete the sentence from today's article.

a.	**We are simply computer...**
b.	**It's equally possible that these beings may be running simulations for enjoyment, much...**
c.	**It harks back to the idea that...**
d.	**And in fact, additional money is being thrown at scientists to...**
e.	**Whatever the truth, if we are merely computer simulations on a future descendant's computer...**

post-COMPREHENSION

1: Vocabulary: Circle any additional unknown words/phrases in the article. In pairs/groups, use your dictionaries to understand the meanings. Present to the class.

2: Class Questions: Read through the article once more, and write down any questions that you would like to discuss in pairs/groups or as a class. Discuss.

3: Summarize: Work with a partner to summarize the article in your own words.

4: Discuss: Talk about the following questions in pairs/groups. Remember to support your answers!

a.	Did you like this article?
b.	What was your general impression after reading this article?
c.	Do you think we live in a computer simulation? Please explain.
d.	If we really were in a simulation, would you want to know? Why/not?
e.	If we really were in a simulation, would you make any changes to your life? Please explain.
f.	If we really were in a simulation, how would most people react? Why do you think so?
g.	Would you want to visit a virtual world from history? If yes, what time period(s) would you want to visit?
h.	Would you want to visit a virtual world based on the future? Why/not?
i.	If you created a virtual world, what kind of place would it be?
j.	If you created a virtual world, would you be considered a god? Why do/don't you think so?

5: Discuss: What might be some other reasons for a computer simulation? Why do you think so? Brainstorm three possible ideas and share them with a group of students. Decide which are the most likely and interesting.

Idea #1:
Idea #2:
Idea #3:

6: Google Search: Type "computer simulation" into Google news and read additional articles on this topic. Discuss or write an essay about your findings.

STUDENT HANDOUT (the article)

Are We Living in a Computer?

As strange as it may sound, a number of prominent physicists and philosophers have suggested that all people and things in our universe are nothing more than a computer simulation. In other words, although somewhat seemingly far-fetched, nothing and no one is real. We are simply computer code in a virtual reality.

The legitimate theory suggests that an advanced civilization, perhaps our future descendants thousands of years hence, is running computer simulations for research purposes to gain insight into 21st century humans. It's equally possible that these beings may be running simulations for enjoyment, much as we run video games and virtual worlds for our entertainment. And with access to enormous computing power, such would be possible.

Of course, not everyone agrees, and skepticism exists. Thinking that somehow we are unique and interesting enough to research seems exceedingly self-centered. It harks back to the idea that Earth is at the center of the universe. In reality, humankind is not terribly special.

However, some tech billionaires have begun to fund research in an attempt to confirm whether humankind does indeed live in a computer, even if the evidence will prove difficult to find. And in fact, additional money is being thrown at scientists to find a way to free humankind from the simulation.

Whatever the truth, if we are merely computer simulations on a future descendant's computer, let's hope that a bug doesn't crash the program and he/she remains interested in our antics.

> **Notes:**
>
>
>
>
>
>
>
>

STUDENT HANDOUT (fill in the blank)

Fill in the blank with the correct word.

harks back	somewhat	enormous	antics	billionaires
hence	crash	confirm	prominent	unique
far-fetched	skepticism	simulations	universe	legitimate

Are We Living in a Computer?

As strange as it may sound, a number of (a. _____) physicists and philosophers have suggested that all people and things in our (b. _____) are nothing more than a computer simulation. In other words, although (c. _____) seemingly (d. _____), nothing and no one is real. We are simply computer code in a virtual reality.

The (e. _____) theory suggests that an advanced civilization, perhaps our future descendants thousands of years (f. _____), is running computer simulations for research purposes to gain insight into 21st century humans. It's equally possible that these beings may be running (g. _____) for enjoyment, much as we run video games and virtual worlds for our entertainment. And with access to (h. _____) computing power, such would be possible.

Of course, not everyone agrees, and (i. _____) exists. Thinking that somehow we are (j. _____) and interesting enough to research seems exceedingly self-centered. It (k. _____) to the idea that Earth is at the center of the universe. In reality, humankind is not terribly special.

However, some tech (l. _____) have begun to fund research in an attempt to (m. _____) whether humankind does indeed live in a computer, even if the evidence will prove difficult to find. And in fact, additional money is being thrown at scientists to find a way to free humankind from the simulation.

Whatever the truth, if we are merely computer simulations on a future descendant's computer, let's hope that a bug doesn't (n. _____) the program and he/she remains interested in our (o. _____).

Listen and fill in the missing sentences. Compare your answers with a partner, and then listen once more.

Are We Living in a Computer?

As strange as it may sound, a number of prominent physicists and philosophers have suggested that all people and things in our universe are nothing more than a computer simulation. In other words, a) _____ _____, nothing and no one is real. We are simply computer code in a virtual reality.

The legitimate theory suggests that an advanced civilization, b) _____ _____, is running computer simulations for research purposes to gain insight into 21st century humans. It's equally possible that these beings may be running simulations for enjoyment, much as we run video games and virtual worlds for our entertainment. And with access to enormous computing power, such would be possible.

Of course, not everyone agrees, and skepticism exists. c) _____ _____. It harks back to the idea that Earth is at the center of the universe. In reality, humankind is not terribly special.

However, some tech billionaires d) _____, even if the evidence will prove difficult to find. And in fact, additional money is being thrown at scientists to find a way to free humankind from the simulation.

Whatever the truth, e) _____, let's hope that a bug doesn't crash the program and he/she remains interested in our antics.

STUDENT HANDOUT (notes)

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary

1. Vocabulary Match:

a.	v	f.	u
b.	t	g.	q
c.	z	h.	w
d.	r	i.	v
e.	x	j.	y

2. Fill in the Blanks:

a.	prominent	f.	skepticism
b.	somewhat	g.	unique
c.	legitimate	h.	harks back
d.	hence	i.	confirm
e.	enormous	j.	antics

pre- or post-Comprehension

1. True or False:

a.	F
b.	T
c.	F
d.	T
e.	F

2. Fragments:

a.	code in a virtual reality.
b.	as we run video games and virtual worlds for our entertainment.
c.	Earth is at the center of the universe.
d.	find a way to free humankind from the simulation.
e.	let's hope that a bug doesn't crash the program and he/she remains interested in our antics.

Student Handout

1. Fill in the Blanks

a.	prominent	i.	skepticism
b.	universe	j.	unique
c.	somewhat	k.	harks back
d.	far-fetched	l.	billionaires
e.	legitimate	m.	confirm
f.	hence	n.	crash
g.	simulations	o.	antics
h.	enormous		

2. Extended Listening

a.	although somewhat seemingly far-fetched
b.	perhaps our future descendants thousands of years hence
c.	Thinking that somehow we are unique and interesting enough to research seems exceedingly self-centered
d.	have begun to fund research in an attempt to confirm whether humankind does indeed live in a computer
e.	if we are merely computer simulations on a future descendant's computer