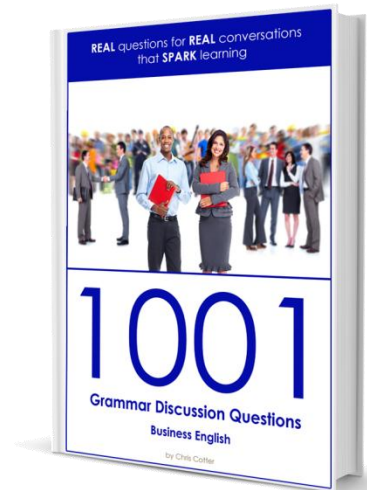
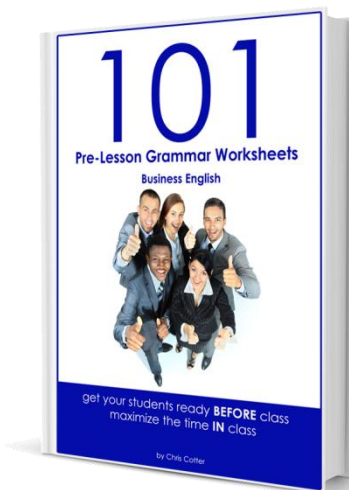
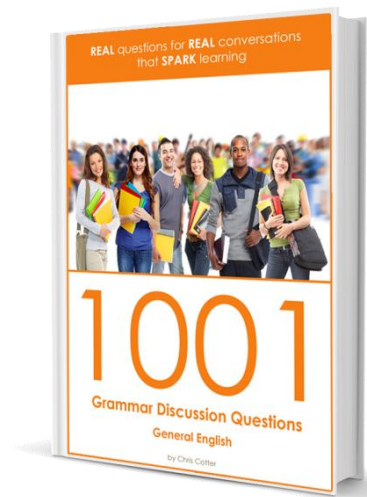
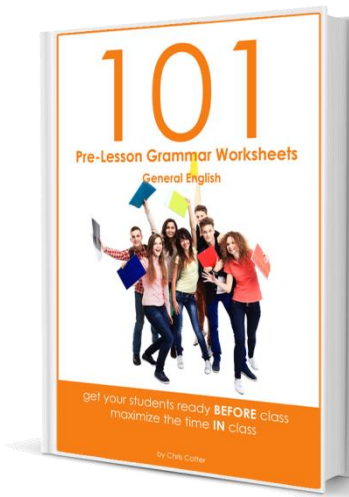
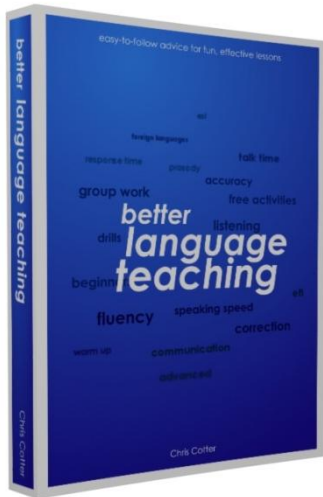


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## the ARTICLE (for teachers)

### 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.

**Teacher's Notes:**

\* Underlined words in red typeface are the answers.

## the Article (for students)

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. \_\_\_\_\_).

# Are We Living in a Computer?

## Advanced - Vocabulary

### STEP ONE

**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.

### STEP TWO

**Vocabulary match:** Match the words in column A (from the article) with the best choice in column B. Use a dictionary for any words you don't know, but be sure to check your English-English dictionary, too.

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

### STEP THREE

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

	<b>legitimate</b>	<b>enormous</b>	<b>harks back</b>	<b>skepticism</b>	<b>somewhat</b>
	<b>confirm</b>	<b>prominent</b>	<b>hence</b>	<b>antics</b>	<b>unique</b>
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 ( ).				

# Are We Living in a Computer?

## Advanced - Vocabulary

### STEP FOUR

The Article: 1) Read the article, but don't worry about the missing words. 2) Fill in the blanks with today's vocabulary, followed by all the other words. 3) Read the article again, and circle any unknown words/phrases. In pairs/groups, use your dictionaries to understand the words or phrases your circled. 4) Answer the questions to check your 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?

### STEP FIVE

**Discuss:** Write down five vocabulary words from today's article that you want to use.

a.	
b.	
c.	
d.	
e.	

Now talk about the following questions in pairs/groups. Every time you use a vocabulary word, place a check next to it.

a.	Did you like this article?
b.	Do you think we live in a computer simulation? Please explain.
c.	If we really were in a simulation, would you make any changes to your life? Please explain.
d.	Would you want to visit a virtual world from history? If yes, what time period(s) would you want to visit?

**Score yourself:**

**10 or more times:** Fantastic! Be sure to review the words at home.

**6-9 times:** Pretty good! You're on your way to acquiring today's vocabulary. Try writing your own sentences at home for additional practice.

**5 or less times:** Try harder next time! To acquire new vocabulary, you need to use the new words as much as possible.