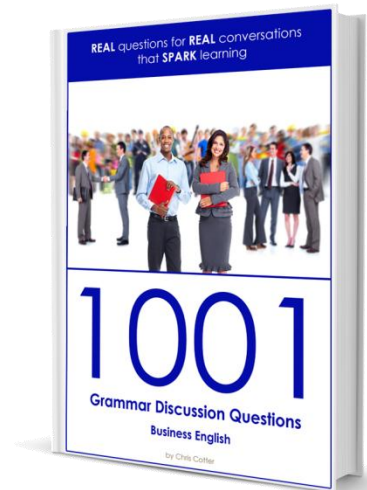
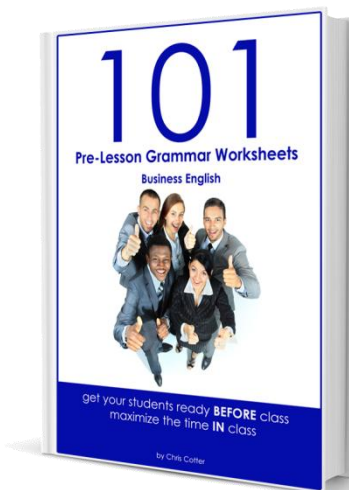


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the ARTICLE (for teachers)

Are We Living in a Computer?

It may sound very strange, but important physicists and philosophers have suggested that our universe is a computer simulation. That means all people and things aren't real. We are computer code in a virtual reality.

The legitimate theory suggests that an advanced civilization is responsible for running computer simulations. For example, maybe our future descendants want to understand 21st century humans. However, instead of research, maybe these future people are running the computer simulation for entertainment, such as when we play video games. If there is enormous computing power in the future, as expected, then these sorts of simulations would be possible.

Of course, not everyone agrees. And some tech billionaires have begun to fund research to discover the truth. They have also given money to scientists to discover a way to free humankind from the simulation.

Whatever the truth, if we are a computer simulation on someone's computer in the future, let's hope that the program doesn't crash or it isn't switched off.

Teacher's Notes:

* Underlined words in red typeface are the recommended vocabulary for this lesson.

WARM-UPS

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 words and ideas for "virtual reality" for two minutes. Next, talk about the words and ideas for five minutes.

3: Title: Today's article is: "Are We Living in a Computer?" What will you read about?

4: 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.	legitimate	u.	huge
b.	descendant	v.	real
c.	enormous	w.	shut down
d.	fund	x.	give money
e.	discover	y.	future generations
f.	switch off	z.	find

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

	switched off	enormous	fund
	legitimate	discover	descendants
a.	The () theory suggests an advanced civilization is responsible.		
b.	Maybe our future () want to understand 21st century humans.		
c.	There is () computing power in the future.		
d.	Tech billionaires have begun to () research to discover the truth.		
e.	They have given money to scientists to () a way to free humankind.		
f.	Let's hope that the program doesn't crash or it isn't ().		

3: Define: Look in your dictionary for each word. Write the definition, correctly pronounce the word, and give an example sentence to the class.

a.	legitimate:
b.	descendant:
c.	enormous:
d.	fund:
e.	discover:
f.	switch off:

WORD RECOGNITION

These activities are optional. They reinforce vocabulary and increase reading speed.

1: Word Search: Find only the target words (in bold). Time yourself, and see how long it takes to find all the words.

switched off legitimate	enormous discover	fund descendants
<p>E T A M I T I G E L S F R A S E G G G P X K O F N W O O D T D T O D J N K U O Y I F E K N U W A G X R N D E Q T S N D A D S O M B D E M P N C U O R D D Y U B E H Z E F E H U R U N Z I I E C T V F N J E W M Q E Q A S T I Y I D W E D R U U C V U I C N Q A G K F O G O Q E A W U L O N K Y E P F O S V D S O I Y T V H W S L F Y X K A L J H S S O E S N O N K Q W A X K A M D B E R X N N K R Y Z V A J W G D G Q T E P L Y A B E N O R M O U S M B O G V L C</p>		

2: Target Word Pool: Find only the target words (in bold) with their exact match. Time yourself, and see how long it takes to find all the words.

switched off legitimate	enormous discover	fund descendants
<p>numerously switched fundamental numerous descendants illegitimate enormous switched off discovering funding undiscovered legitimately switch off discover descend funds discovered normalize legitimate descendant descending switch on descent switched on legalize discovery fund legume enormously unfunded</p>		

Are We Living in a Computer?

Lower-Intermediate

pre- or post-COMPREHENSION

Select one or more activity to direct students before the article is read, or to check understanding after the article is read.

1: Brainstorm Questions: Brainstorm questions that you would like to ask about today's topic. Answer a partner the questions. He shouldn't look at the article when he answers.

2: True or False?: Guess (before the article) or answer (after the article) if 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 is for research and entertainment purposes.	T/F
c.	Computers will be very powerful in the future, so a simulation is possible.	T/F
d.	Some tech billionaires want to find a way out of the simulation.	T/F
e.	According to the article, the computer simulation will definitely crash.	T/F

3: 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.	What are tech billionaires doing about the simulation?
e.	Does the tone of the article at the end serious or humorous? Why do you think so?

4: Fragments: Remember how the fragments were used, and complete the sentence.

a.	It may sound very strange, but important physicists and philosophers...
b.	For example, maybe our future descendants want...
c.	If there is enormous computing power in the future, as expected, then...
d.	They have also given money to scientists to...

post-COMPREHENSION

Select one or more activity to discuss the contents of the article.

1: Vocabulary: Circle any other unknown words/phrases in the article. In pairs/groups, use your dictionaries to understand these words. Write an example sentence for each one.

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

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 and ask more questions with your partner.

- | | |
|----|---|
| a. | Did you like this article? Why/not? |
| b. | Do you think we live in a computer simulation? Please explain. |
| c. | If we really were in a simulation, would you want to know? Why/not? |
| d. | If we really were in a simulation, would you make any changes to your life? |
| e. | If we really were in a simulation, how would most people react? Why? |
| f. | Would you want to visit a virtual world from history? If yes, what time period? |

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?

It may sound very strange, but important physicists and philosophers have suggested that our universe is a computer simulation. That means all people and things aren't real. We are computer code in a virtual reality.

The legitimate theory suggests that an advanced civilization is responsible for running computer simulations. For example, maybe our future descendants want to understand 21st century humans. However, instead of research, maybe these future people are running the computer simulation for entertainment, such as when we play video games. If there is enormous computing power in the future, as expected, then these sorts of simulations would be possible.

Of course, not everyone agrees. And some tech billionaires have begun to fund research to discover the truth. They have also given money to scientists to discover a way to free humankind from the simulation.

Whatever the truth, if we are a computer simulation on someone's computer in the future, let's hope that the program doesn't crash or it isn't switched off.

Notes:

STUDENT HANDOUT (fill in the blank)

Fill in the blank with the correct word.

crash	switched off	fund	reality	descendants
enormous	legitimate	entertainment	discover	billionaires

Are We Living in a Computer?

It may sound very strange, but important physicists and philosophers have suggested that our universe is a computer simulation. That means all people and things aren't real. We are computer code in a virtual (a. _____).

The (b. _____) theory suggests that an advanced civilization is responsible for running computer simulations. For example, maybe our future (c. _____) want to understand 21st century humans. However, instead of research, maybe these future people are running the computer simulation for (d. _____), such as when we play video games. If there is (e. _____) computing power in the future, as expected, then these sorts of simulations would be possible.

Of course, not everyone agrees. And some tech (f. _____) have begun to (g. _____) research to discover the truth. They have also given money to scientists to (h. _____) a way to free humankind from the simulation.

Whatever the truth, if we are a computer simulation on someone's computer in the future, let's hope that the program doesn't (i. _____) or it isn't (j. _____).

STUDENT HANDOUT (extended listening)

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

Are We Living in a Computer?

It may sound very strange, but important physicists and philosophers have suggested that our universe is a computer simulation. That means all people and things aren't real. We are computer code in a virtual reality.

The legitimate theory suggests that a) _____
_____. For example, maybe our future descendants want to understand 21st century humans. However, instead of research, maybe these future people are running the computer simulation for entertainment, such as when we play video games. If there is enormous computing power in the future, as expected, then these sorts of simulations would be possible.

Of course, not everyone agrees. b) _____
_____. They have also given money to scientists to discover a way to free humankind from the simulation.

Whatever the truth, c) _____,
let's hope that the program doesn't crash or it isn't switched off.

Sentence #1:

Sentence #2:

Sentence #3:

Are We Living in a Computer?

Lower-Intermediate

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary

1: Vocabulary Match:

a.	v
b.	y
c.	u
d.	x
e.	z
f.	w

2: Fill in the Blanks:

a.	legitimate
b.	descendants
c.	enormous
d.	fund
e.	discover
f.	switched off

pre- or post-Comprehension

1. True or False:

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

2. Fragments:

a.	have suggested that our universe is a computer simulation.
b.	to understand 21st century humans.
c.	these sorts of simulations would be possible.
d.	discover a way to free humankind from the simulation.

Student Handout

1: Fill in the Blanks:

a.	reality	f.	billionaires
b.	legitimate	g.	fund
c.	descendants	h.	discover
d.	entertainment	i.	crash
e.	enormous	j.	switched off

2: Extended Listening:

a.	an advanced civilization is responsible for running computer simulations
b.	And some tech billionaires have begun to fund research to discover the truth
c.	if we are a computer simulation on someone's computer in the future