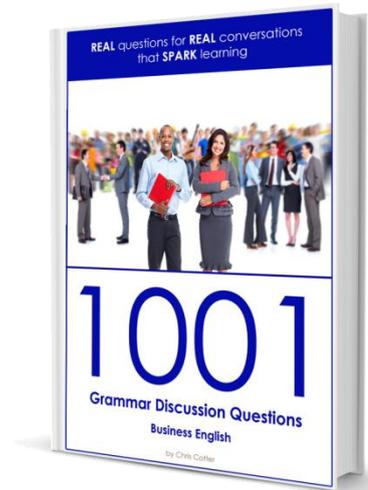
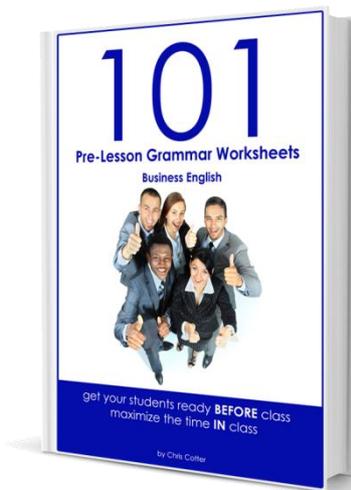
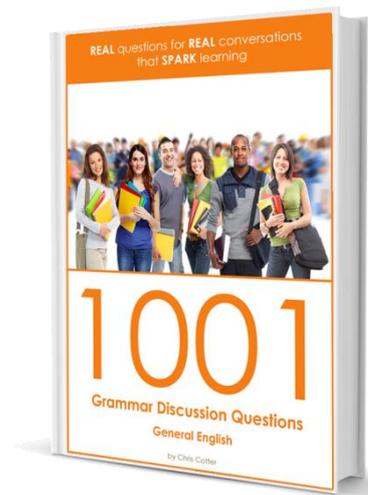
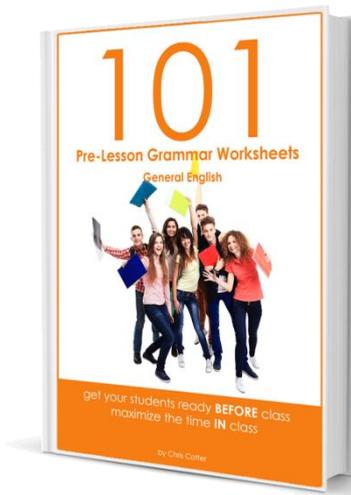
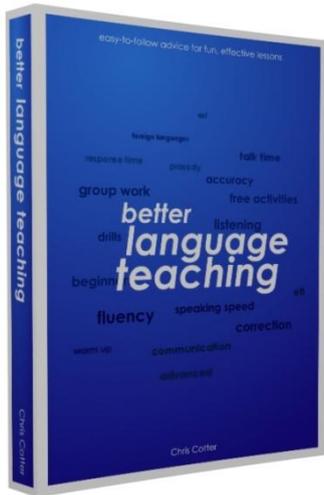


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the ARTICLE (for teachers)

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)

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.

Notes:

Are We Living in a Computer?

Advanced - Listening

STEP ONE

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

STEP TWO

Questions: Read as much of the article as you can in two minutes. Guess the answers to the questions below, then listen to your teacher read the article. Try to confirm your answers.

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

STEP THREE

Fill in the Blanks: Listen to your teacher read the article again. Fill in the blanks with the missing words.

STEP FOUR

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?

STEP FIVE

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

a.	If we really were in a simulation, would you want to know? Why/not?
b.	Would you want to visit a virtual world from history? If yes, what time period(s) would you want to visit?
c.	Would you want to visit a virtual world based on the future? Why/not?
d.	If you created a virtual world, would you be considered a god? Why do/don't you think so?