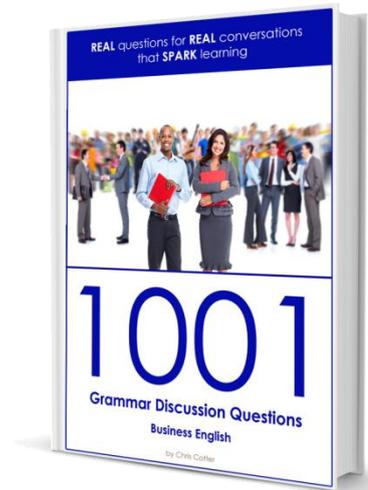
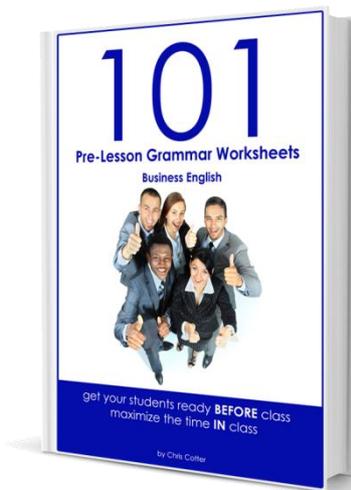
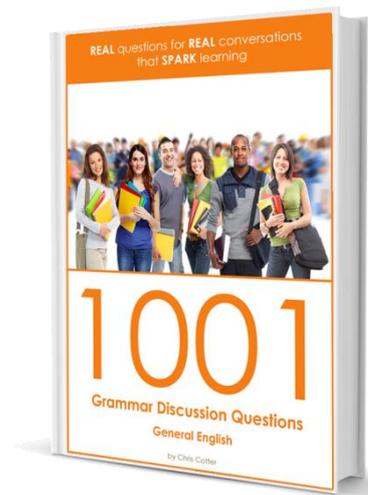
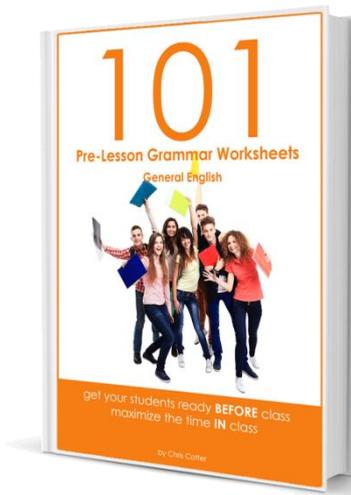
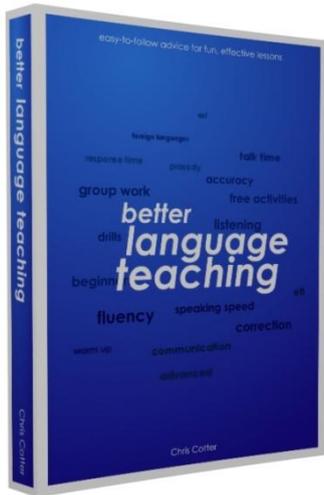


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the ARTICLE (for teachers)

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 may be vocabulary unfamiliar to the students.

the Article (for students)

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Notes:

Are We Living in a Computer?

Advanced - Speaking

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

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. |

STEP THREE

The Article: Read the article, and work with a partner to understand it. Lastly, summarize in your own words.

STEP FOUR

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

- | | |
|----|---|
| a. | What was your general impression after reading 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. | If we really were in a simulation, how would most people react? Why do you think so? |
| e. | Would you want to visit a virtual world based on the future? Why/not? |
| f. | If you created a virtual world, what kind of place would it be? |

STEP FIVE

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: