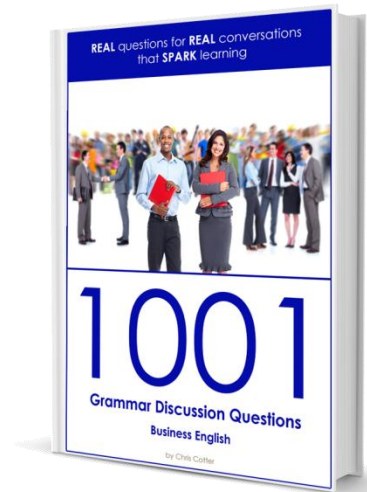
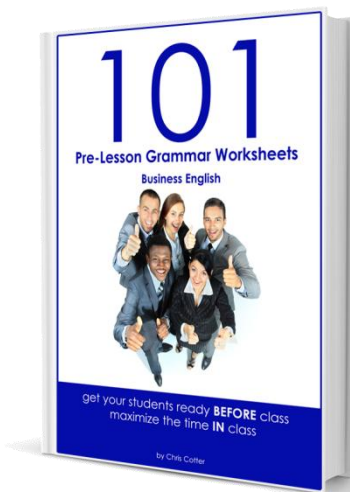
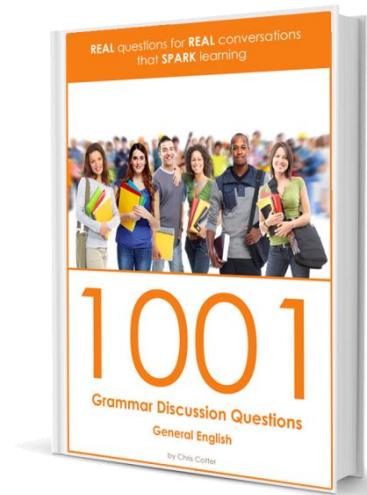
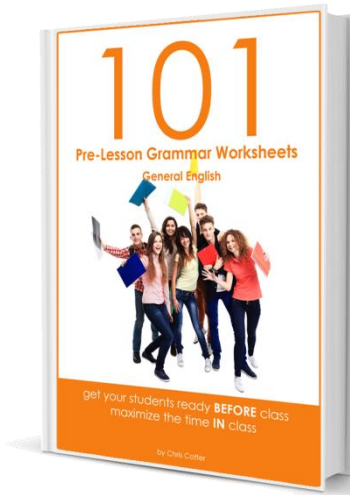
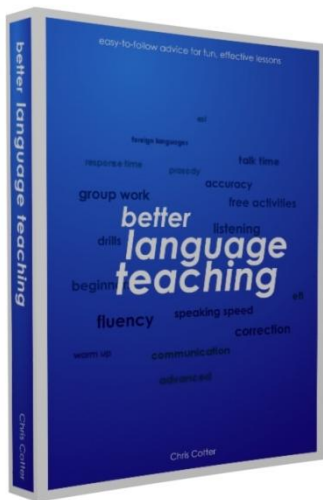


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the ARTICLE (for teachers)

Are We Living in a Computer?

It may sound very strange, but quite a few important physicists and philosophers have suggested that all people and things in our universe are a computer simulation. In other words, although 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 is running computer simulations. Perhaps our future descendants thousands of years from now want to gain insight into 21st century humans, for example. However, instead of research, it's also possible that these beings are running the computer simulation for enjoyment, such as when 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. Thinking that we are unique and interesting seems exceedingly self-centered. These skeptics think the following: Humankind really is not terribly special.

However, some tech billionaires have begun to fund research. They want 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 the program doesn't crash or the people watching don't grow bored and switch us off.

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?

a) _____, but quite a few important physicists and philosophers have suggested that all people and things in our universe are a computer simulation. In other words, although 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 is running computer simulations. Perhaps our future descendants thousands of years from now want to gain insight into 21st century humans, for example. However, instead of research, b) _____, such as when 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. Thinking that we are unique and interesting seems exceedingly self-centered. c) _____: Humankind really is not terribly special.

However, some tech billionaires have begun to fund research. 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 the program doesn't crash or the people watching don't grow bored and switch us off.

Notes:

Are We Living in a Computer?

Upper-Intermediate - 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, the computer simulation will definitely crash.	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?