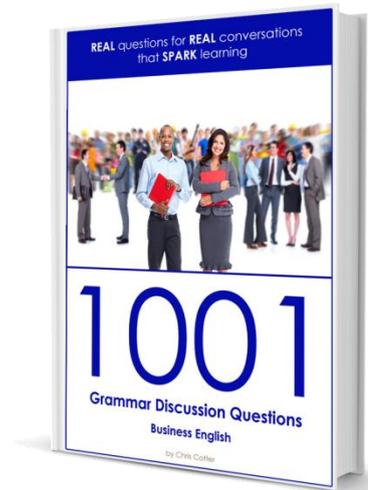
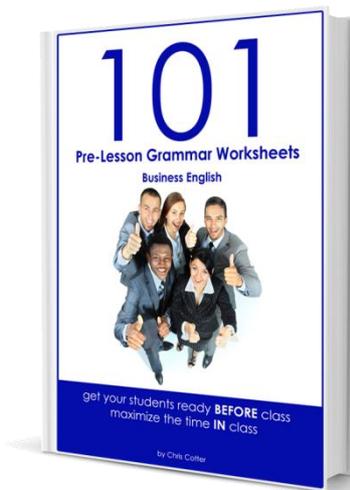
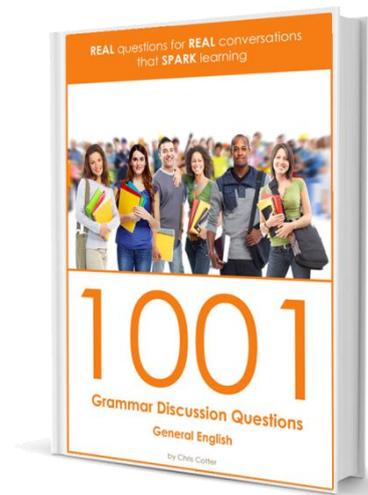
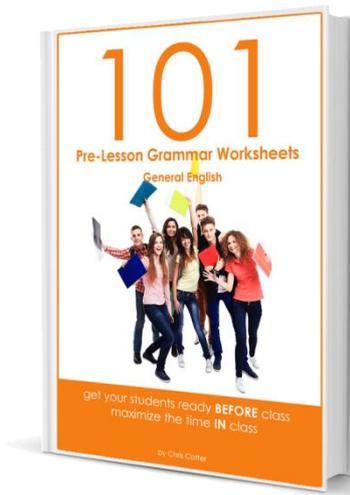
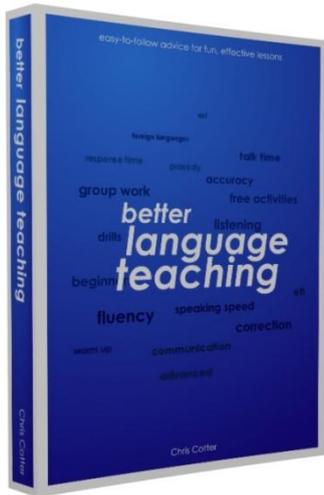


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the ARTICLE (for teachers)

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)

Fill in the blank with the correct word.

confirm	enjoyment	insight	billionaires	fund
enormous	far-fetched	merely	exceedingly	whatever
terribly	skeptics	thrown	code	legitimate

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 (a. _____), nothing and no one is real. We are simply computer (b. _____) in a virtual reality.

The (c. _____) theory suggests that an advanced civilization is running computer simulations. Perhaps our future descendants thousands of years from now want to gain (d. _____) into 21st century humans, for example. However, instead of research, it's also possible that these beings are running the computer simulation for (e. _____), such as when we run video games and virtual worlds for our entertainment. And with access to (f. _____) computing power, such would be possible.

Of course, not everyone agrees. Thinking that we are unique and interesting seems (g. _____) self-centered. These (h. _____) think the following: Humankind really is not (i. _____) special.

However, some tech (j. _____) have begun to (k. _____) research. They want to (l. _____) whether humankind does indeed live in a computer, even if the evidence will prove difficult to find. And in fact, additional money is being (m. _____) at scientists to find a way to free humankind from the simulation.

(n. _____) the truth, if we are (o. _____) 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.

Are We Living in a Computer?

Upper-Intermediate - 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.	far-fetched	q.	surpass
b.	legitimate	r.	awareness
c.	insight	s.	just
d.	enormous	t.	provide money for
e.	exceed	u.	hard to believe
f.	skeptic	v.	prove
g.	terribly	w.	disbeliever
h.	fund	x.	huge
i.	confirm	y.	very
j.	merely	z.	real

STEP THREE

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

	merely	skeptics	far-fetched	terribly	exceedingly
	legitimate	enormous	confirm	insight	fund
a.	Although seemingly (), nothing and no one is real.				
b.	The () theory suggests that an advanced civilization is running computer simulations.				
c.	Our future descendants thousands of years from now want to gain () into 21st century humans.				
d.	With access to () computing power, such would be possible.				
e.	Thinking that we are unique and interesting seems () self-centered.				
f.	These () think the following.				
g.	Humankind really is not () special.				
h.	However, some tech billionaires have begun to () research.				
i.	They want to () whether humankind does indeed live in a computer.				
j.	We are () computer simulations on a future descendant's computer.				

Are We Living in a Computer?

Upper-Intermediate - 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 you 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.