

ProTalk

Discussion Files

afaq

Language Center

C2. Virtual reality

Afaq Language Center

Goals

- Can understand and recall some more advanced vocabulary related to virtual reality.
- Can evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of virtual reality technology.



Pushing beyond reality and entering digital worlds has become a possibility for many with the commercial spread of **virtual reality**.

Could these virtual worlds become a gateway to reach our human potential – learning, experience and greater human **empathy**?

Or instead could it **herald** an age of **escapism** and **social disconnection**?

Virtual reality

Have you ever experienced virtual reality?

Talk to your teacher about your experience.



Predictions



Where do you see virtual reality technology ten years into the future?

Why?

Why might some people be opposed to the spread of virtual reality?





Social isolation?





Society?

Read the text and summarize it.

Virtual reality



The idea of entering an **immersive** simulated environment has long been at the forefront of technological fantasies. The first **rudimentary** headsets appeared in the 1960s, and were then popularised in the 1980s. The **imminent** spread of affordable technology like high resolution screens and motion tracking sensors have only recently made the technology commercially viable, raising concerns about its effect on our social environment and culture.

There are a myriad of conceivable benefits to virtual reality. The Guardian, a UK based publisher, has been experimenting with virtual reality based storytelling and reporting, using the technology to transport audiences into an immersive world.

Read the text and summarize it.

Virtual reality



Reporting which shows rather than tells can help audiences to understand issues on a greater level and feel a greater sense of emotional **empathy** or see a position from another perspective. A person experiencing a virtual **simulation** of conditions in a warzone is experiencing the conflict rather than simply watching or reading about it passively. The controlled environments made possible with virtual reality means that people could use it for learning complicated or **intricate** procedures which would lower the cost of entry to a great many professions.

Read the text and summarize it.

Virtual reality

Complicated surgical manoeuvres like heart surgery, or learning to pilot an aircraft could become available to a **wider net** of individuals. Learning practically has been shown to be more effective than reading from books or listening to lectures, so from an educational standpoint virtual reality could also be used to revolutionise **pedagogical** practice in the classroom. The US military already uses virtual reality to train its recruits.

Do you know these words from the text? Discuss the meanings with your teacher and use each in a sentence.

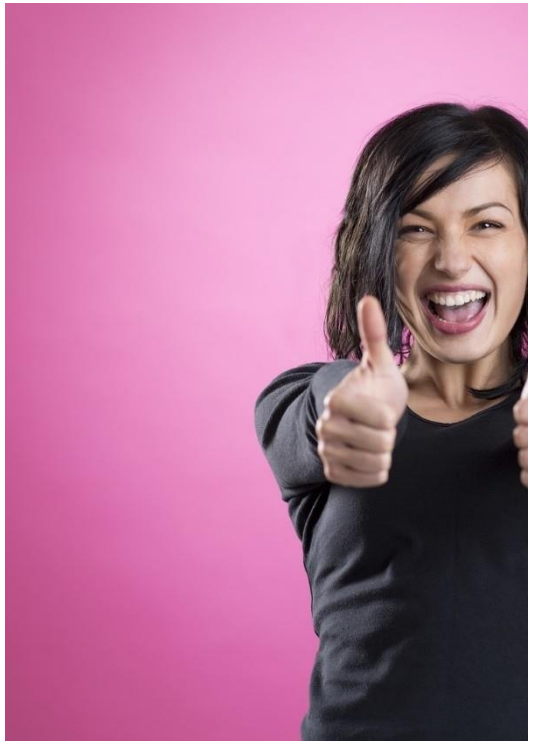
rudimentary	The technology is still too **rudimentary** to be used in the field.
imminent	It seems that climate change is **imminent**.
immersive	He found the computer gamer's world extremely **immersive**.
wide net	Technology is making information available to a wider and **wider net** of people.

Do you know these words from the text? Discuss the meanings with your teacher and use each in a sentence.

empathy	Tessa felt a great deal of **empathy** for the homeless man on the train.
simulation	It is hard to believe that was only a **simulation** and not the real thing.
intricate	The locket was designed with an **intricate** pattern.
pedagogical	He is a teacher with outstanding **pedagogical** methods.

Optimism

Talk about the reasons why some people would be optimistic about the possibilities brought on by virtual reality.



immersive worlds

greater connectedness and empathy

hands-on training

pedagogical opportunity

video games and entertainment

the pursuit of pleasure

Categorise

Categorise the reasons why people might be interested in purchasing a virtual reality unit for their home.

learning new skills

travelling around the world

interested in technology

to be informed by the news

new experiences

playing video games

exercise and relaxation

trendy and cool

Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not likely at all

Analysing the text

‘The Guardian, a UK-based publisher, has been experimenting with virtual reality based storytelling and reporting, using the technology to transport audiences into an immersive world.’

1. Why might media companies and publishers be interested in using virtual reality to tell stories?
2. What effect might this have on journalism?
3. Could there be dangers in doing this?



demographic

A **demographic** is a portion of the population. The term is often used to denote consumers.

Demographics are often studied and targeted in marketing campaigns.



The marketing campaign was successful as it targeted a range of **demographics**.

Marketing

You're a marketing executive in Virtual Friend, a company with a new virtual reality headset to sell to the public. You are going to create a marketing campaign to ensure the new product is a success.



1 Name your product. What are its primary features?

Demographics

Consider who is the most likely out of the demographics studied earlier to purchase your product. Explain to your teacher how you settled on your choice.



1 Name your product. What are its primary features?



2 List your target demographics. Who will be most interested in your product?

Virtual reality

Your advertising brief should be short, but accurately summarise the capabilities of your virtual reality unit. What can it do? Make sure your description is catchy – you want your customers to buy it!



1. Name your product. What are its primary features?
2. List your target demographics. Who will be most interested in your product?
3. Write a catchy 100 word advertising brief describing what your product is capable of.

Rephrase

You're a headmaster at a leading college in the UK. You are considering investing in virtual reality headsets for your classrooms. Talk to your teacher about how the technology might impact the learning in your school in the following subjects.



1. Science
2. History
3. Languages

escapism

Escapism is the avoidance of aspects of daily life deemed boring, unpleasant or scary. It can also refer to the practices people use to avoid the feelings associated with depression.

Escapism can take the form of entertainment or a mental diversion from necessary tasks or work.



Those five hours in front of the television were pure **escapism**.

Talk to the teacher

Respond to each of the people in a rational way. Do you agree or disagree with their opinions?

Embrace the technology



"Every industry will be revolutionised by virtual reality"



"My classroom will never be the same again!"

Educational potential

Sceptics



"Virtual reality is a great big trap for humanity – another way to avoid the real world"



"I don't see the point in real friendships anymore – this is better than reality"

Potential for social isolation

Implications

“What’s to stop us from completely withdrawing physically from society if the simulation is believable enough?

Talk to your teacher about the potential social implications of fully immersive digital worlds.



Virtual reality addiction

It's 2030. You are a psychologist whose patient is addicted to virtual reality. Help them come up with a strategy to kick their habitual use – use convincing language to help your patient.



Consider using some of the ideas below to support your argument.

sell the technology	avoid the temptation to escapism	make a timetable – be in control of your behaviour
plan a trip abroad	set long-term goals?	in the long run you are degrading your relationships

Big question

Do you believe virtual reality will help humanity to reach its potential? Or is it more likely to leave us disconnected from each other and used as a tool for escapism?

Talk

Regulating VR use

What could be done to realistically minimise overuse and the ensuing social isolation brought about by virtual reality?

Talk to your teacher about how regulation or guidelines could be put in place.

Presentation

How might virtual reality affect us? Could an alternative system serve the collective needs of humanity and our planet better?

Prepare a two-minute presentation.

Include several reasons to support your point of view.
Give your presentation to the class. Answer questions and get feedback.



