

The Metaverse

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Which social media platforms do you use?
Which one is your favorite?
2. Do you think social media will change in the next 10 years? If so, how?
3. Have you ever played Fortnite or Minecraft?

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can. Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| ___ 1. popular | a) an image used to represent a person in an online profile |
| ___ 2. avatar | b) to take control |
| ___ 3. explore | c) the actual time something happens, live |
| ___ 4. expert | d) liked by many people |
| ___ 5. feature | e) to move around a place and look for new, interesting things |
| ___ 6. limit (<i>n</i>) | f) a characteristic or part |
| ___ 7. real time | g) a person who has a lot of skills or knowledge about something |
| ___ 8. virtual reality | h) a computer-generated 3D environment that people can interact in |
| ___ 9. take over | i) a point or level that one can't go beyond |



Reading

THE METAVERSE

Are you ready for life as an avatar?

1. *The future of the internet*

Is the world ready for the next chapter of the internet? Facebook has changed its name to Meta and plans to create a 3D virtual world called “the metaverse.” In this online space, users will be able to work, play, and learn. The idea sounds exciting, but will it be **popular**?

2. *“Metaverse” definition*

A metaverse is an online world where people can interact with each other as they move around in a digital environment. When users enter a metaverse, they take on the identity of an **avatar**. Some people say metaverses already exist in the form of massively multiplayer online games (MMOs), such as Minecraft and Fortnite. In these virtual playgrounds, users around the world can **explore**, create, and work together at the same time. In the game Second Life, users can do everyday activities in the online world such as earn money, shop, attend college or business meetings, and even go to rock concerts.

3. *Key features of a metaverse*

Not every virtual world in a video game is a metaverse. Technology **expert** Matthew Ball says there are important features that make a metaverse:

- A metaverse continues forever—it does not stop or reset. Furthermore, there is no **limit** to the number of users.
- Metaverse users communicate in **real time**.
- Users can create experiences in a metaverse and help to build the environment.
- A metaverse has its own money. Users can buy and sell items for their avatars in the metaverse.

4. *Zuckerberg’s metaverse*

The metaverse that Meta’s CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, wants to build will be different from the ones we have seen before. Meta’s metaverse will be a world of “mixed reality.” Users will wear their **virtual reality** (VR) headsets or glasses. They will be able to easily move between the real world and their virtual environment. Zuckerberg hopes that VR devices will help users feel more “present” in the online worlds they enter while still feeling connected to the real world. Meta hopes to change how users experience social media and the internet.

5. *Dangers of the metaverse*

Not everyone likes the idea of Zuckerberg’s metaverse. Some people worry that the metaverse will **take over** our lives and that it may not be good for our mental health. Others worry about information privacy. Some experts are concerned that the creators at Meta may have too much control over the online world. What do you think? Are you ready to jump into the metaverse?

Response

Think about the article you just read. Write your ideas about it in your notebook.

Comprehension

Fill in the chart with the notes in the box.
When you finish, read the article again to check your answers.

Notes:

- an online world where people interact as avatars
- never stops or resets
- ~~negative mental health effects~~
- Second Life
- the creators might have too much control
- users interact in real time
- has its own money
- VR headsets and glasses
- easy to move between the online world and real life
- Fortnite
- new way to experience social media
- Minecraft
- data may be shared
- a world of mixed reality

Definition of a metaverse	
Features of a metaverse	
Examples of existing "metaverses"	
Meta's plans for a metaverse	
Dangers of the metaverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>negative mental health effects</i>

Sequencing

The following conversation is out of order.
Put the conversation in the correct order from 1 to 12.

- _____ Actually, metaverses have been around for a while. About 20 years ago, someone started Second Life, which is like a virtual meet-up space. Lots of people still use it.
- _____ Kind of. I mean, Facebook has decided to change its name to Meta. They want users to wear virtual reality headgear and interact in an online space. They want to make it easy to jump between their virtual metaverse and the real world. This isn't going to happen for a while, though.
- _____ So, what do you think? Will it be popular?
- _____ Hmm. I read that some people are worried about information privacy and things like that.
- 1 To be honest, I don't really understand what a metaverse is.
- _____ Wow! Business meetings in a virtual world? I've never heard of anything like that before!
- _____ An online world? Right. But what makes a metaverse different from just, say, playing online games with a friend? It's the same thing, right?
- _____ Who knows? If you ask me, it sounds pretty scary. But, you know, it does sound interesting.
- _____ Well, basically, it's an online world where real people get together. They interact as avatars in real time.
- _____ I've never heard of Second Life. So, why are people talking about Facebook and the metaverse? Do they have a new product coming out or something?
- _____ Not exactly. It's more than just a game. A metaverse is like a whole world that is happening online. In a metaverse, you can do lots of everyday things in virtual reality like buy and sell goods, have business meetings, and go out for coffee. It's like having a real life in a virtual world.
- _____ Aren't people worried about this? I mean, there must be some risks.

Vocabulary Review

Complete the sentences using vocabulary from page 1.
You may need to change the word forms.

1. The software changes your speech to text in _____. It's amazing! There is no delay.
2. Only four players can join the game. I'm sorry, but that's the _____.
3. Don't worry—the snake won't bite you! It's not real. You're wearing a _____ headset!
4. I don't want my _____ to look like me. I want it to be a cuddly animal or a Pokémon.
5. We might find something interesting in that room. Let's go and _____.
6. I think the game is too simple. It needs more levels, more graphics, and other _____ to make it a bit more interesting.
7. Stop pressing the buttons! You always _____ when I'm playing. It's my turn!
8. That online word game is really _____ right now. Everyone is talking about it.
9. I'm not a technology _____, but I don't think people will like this new metaverse.

Vocabulary Discussion Questions

1. What is the most **popular** social media platform?
2. Do you prefer human **avatars** or animal **avatars**?
3. Do you like to **explore** new cities?
4. What subject are you an **expert** in?
5. What are the best **features** on your phone?
6. Should social media companies introduce a daily time **limit** for all users?
7. Which news site is the best for **real-time** updates?
8. Have you ever worn a **virtual reality** headset?
If so, when?
9. Has social media **taken over** your life? (Be honest!)

Discussion

1. How do you think the metaverse will change people's daily lives?
2. Would you join an online metaverse?
Why or why not?
3. How do you feel in general about the use of virtual reality? Does it excite you? Interest you? Worry you?

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students learn about what some people call the next chapter of the internet—the metaverse. Students also read about Facebook’s name change and CEO Mark Zuckerberg’s plans to build the company’s own metaverse.

LEVEL: Int

TIME: 1.5–2 hours

TAGS: discussion, technology, internet, Facebook, Meta, avatar, Mark Zuckerberg, Zuckerberg, virtual reality

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Have students work in small groups or as a class.

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- 1. d 3. e 5. f 7. c 9. b
- 2. a 4. g 6. i 8. h

Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. You can also play the listening as your students read along. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

Response

Encourage students to write down their initial reactions to the article. If they are comfortable, you can have them share their comments with the class.

Comprehension

Definition of a metaverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an online world where people interact as avatars
Features of a metaverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • never stops or resets • users interact in real time • has its own money
Examples of existing “metaverses”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minecraft • Fortnite • Second Life
Meta’s plans for a metaverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VR headsets and glasses • easy to move between the online world and real life • new way to experience social media • a world of mixed reality
Dangers of the metaverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • negative mental health effects • the creators might have too much control • data may be shared

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Sequencing

- 6 Actually, metaverses have been around for a while. About 20 years ago, someone started Second Life, which is like a virtual meet-up space. Lots of people still use it.
- 8 Kind of. I mean, Facebook has decided to change its name to Meta. They want users to wear virtual reality headgear and interact in an online space. They want to make it easy to jump between their virtual metaverse and the real world. This isn't going to happen for a while, though.
- 11 So, what do you think? Will it be popular?
- 10 Hmm. I read that some people are worried about information privacy and things like that.
- 1 To be honest, I don't really understand what a metaverse is.
- 5 Wow! Business meetings in a virtual world? I've never heard of anything like that before!
- 3 An online world? Right. But what makes a metaverse different from just, say, playing online games with a friend? It's the same thing, right?
- 12 Who knows? If you ask me, it sounds pretty scary. But, you know, it does sound interesting.
- 2 Well, basically, it's an online world where real people get together. They interact as avatars in real time.
- 7 I've never heard of Second Life. So, why are people talking about Facebook and the metaverse? Do they have a new product coming out or something?
- 4 Not exactly. It's more than just a game. A metaverse is like a whole world that is happening online. In a metaverse, you can do lots of everyday things in virtual reality like buy and sell goods, have business meetings, and go out for coffee. It's like having a real life in a virtual world.
- 9 Aren't people worried about this? I mean, there must be some risks.

Vocabulary Review

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------|
| 1. real time | 6. features |
| 2. limit | 7. take over |
| 3. virtual reality | 8. popular |
| 4. avatar | 9. expert |
| 5. explore | |

Vocabulary Discussion Questions

Answers will vary.

Can be done individually or in small groups or pairs.

Discussion

Answers will vary.

Can be done individually or in small groups or pairs.

SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the word *Favorite*. Most other English-speaking countries spell this word this way: *Favourite*. Make it a challenge for your students to find this word in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spelling.