**Virtual Reality**

We’ve all got things we’d like to do if we could. Things we wouldn’t dare to do in real life. Places we can’t afford to go. Dreams we can’t make possible.

In our world, at least.

That’s where virtual reality comes in. Virtual reality, or VR, has been around for several decades now, dating back as far as the 1960s. When we talk about VR, we’re referring to a computer-generated 3D environment, which creates a simulation of the world as we experience it through our senses. The user of VR can interact with this world and experience its environment. Headsets, treadmills, gloves and other apparatus can be used to help the user immerse themselves in the VR world.

VR is used a lot in gaming. You can climb mountains, ride rollercoasters, swim the depths of the oceans, hunt werewolves, fly spaceships, battle robots, defuse bombs and much more – all in the complete multi-dimensional immersion of VR.

Although its potential for entertainment and games is immense, VR isn’t only used as wish fulfillment. VR is an extremely valuable tool for training professionals in firefighting, surgery, flying planes, and other activities which would be too expensive or life-threatening to practice in real life. In fact, VR has applications in fields as diverse as space travel, pain management, sociology, architecture, music, marketing, healthcare and many others.

As the potential of VR to augment and ameliorate our own world is recognised, the VR industry is growing rapidly. In 2016, there were 230 companies developing products related to VR. Some of the colossi of the corporate world - including Amazon, Google, Facebook, Sony, Samsung and Apple – have entire departments dedicated to developing VR.

However, alternative universe though it may be, VR isn’t immune to the problems and challenges of the real world. Prolonged use of VR can cause unpleasant or dangerous physical effects, such as repetitive strain injury, seizures and developmental issues in children. There are also concerns over the implications of VR for our privacy, as it makes extensive use of tracking, which means information can be gained more easily by the people doing the tracking. There are also some concerns over what VR will do to our relationship with each other, the outside world and even the way we think.

Because VR is still a relatively new technology, we won’t know the full extent of its true benefits, harms or potential for a while to come. But with the amount of investment in VR, we’ll see it becoming more and more a part of our lives – that much is virtually guaranteed.

**Questions**

**Challenging**

1. Name FOUR facts about VR that you learn from this article.

2. Write out an example of a) a simple sentence and b) a complex sentence from this article.

3. Name one language technique that the writer has used to try and interest the reader. Write a PEEL paragraph explaining the effect.

**More Challenging**

1. Name SIX things about VR that you learn from this article.

2. Find the word in this article which is a synonym for ‘vast’.

3. Name ONE structural technique that the writer has used in order to make the text interesting for the reader. Write a PEEL paragraph explaining the effect.

**Mega Challenging**

1. Name all of the techniques used in paragraph one. How effective is this as an opening?

2. Write out your own definitions for ‘colossi’, ‘ameliorate’ and ‘augment’. Use each word in a sentence of your own.

3. To what extent do you think the writer presents a balanced point of view? Use at least THREE examples from the text in your answer.