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Auszug aus: *Visions of the Future*

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Visions of the future – Utopia/dystopia, Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence

by Rainer Jacob

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Wie wird die Welt in 50 Jahren aussehen? In 100 Jahren? In 1000? Erwartet die Menschheit eine Utopie oder eine Dystopie? Mittels der drei Themenkomplexe „Utopia/Dystopia“, „Virtual Reality“ sowie „Artificial Intelligence“ suchen die Lernenden Antworten auf diese und weitere Fragen. Die Schüler setzen sich mit verschiedenen Szenarien auseinander, erweitern ihren Wortschatz zum Thema und schulen außerdem ihre Lese- sowie ihre Hör-/Sehverstehenskompetenz.

Visions of the future – Utopia/dystopia, Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence

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Competences and skills:

By working with several informative and fictional texts, students enhance their **reading comprehension**. They also improve their **writing skills** by writing comments on various questions related to the topic. Additionally, students demonstrate their **viewing competences** by answering questions on a video and practise their **listening competences** by working with a podcast. Students' **speaking skills** are improved by giving presentations. Additionally, students enhance their vocabulary knowledge and engage in creative tasks. **Interpretative skills** are improved by analysing two cartoons.

Overview:

List of abbreviations:

C Comment

LC Listening comprehension

PR Presentation

T Working with a text

W Writing

CT Creative task

M Mediation

R Research

V Vocabulary work

D Discussion/debate

P Working with a picture

RC Reading comprehension

VI Working with a video

Topic	Material	Method
1: Utopia/dystopia	M1–M5	C, D, PR, R, RC, T, V, W
2: Virtual Reality	M6–M8	C, CT, P, PR, R, RC, T, V, VI, W
3: Artificial Intelligence	M9–M15	C, CT, D, LC, M, P, PR, RC, T, VI, W

Visions of the future – Utopia/dystopia, Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence

Facts

The rapidly increasing power of computers in recent years has opened up opportunities in many fields and given rise to revolutionary technologies. Two of the most advanced are Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Virtual Reality (VR). These techniques are no longer fantasy products of science fiction writers but are already being used to power services and companies. The term “Artificial Intelligence” denotes the design of intelligent machines, early examples of which were robots which excelled in specific areas, such as winning at chess, cleaning the kitchen floor or recognising human speech. Virtual Reality means the simulation of the real world or the creation of a completely new three-dimensional environment. Both techniques are welcomed enthusiastically by many, but at the same time viewed with suspicion by others. This unit informs students about these two innovative technologies and shows how they can be applied. By working through the material, students develop an understanding for machine learning and simulation-based reality so that they can weigh up the opportunities and potential issues connected with these developments.

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Notes on the material

The unit presented here comprises three topics. **Topic 1** introduces the subject “Utopial Dystopia” by presenting a number of futuristic projects and letting students decide whether they are feasible, desirable or unrealistic. The reading text gives an overview of the development of science fiction literature, defines the difference between utopias and dystopias and explains the rise in dystopian novels among writers of our time. An assignment for an Internet research on the most prolific science fiction authors forms the basis for a presentation according to the rules of this task. The short story *Children of the New World* is used as an example of a dystopian view of future developments, illustrating



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