

- G. Find **at least three** words in the text containing vowels or groups of vowels which are pronounced in the same way as /æ/ in **scan**, /eɪ/ in **games**, /ə/ in **computer** and /ɪ/ in **city**.

Virtual Reality

Virtual Reality (VR) is a reconstruction of an environment using computer technology. It is so realistic that users imagine that they are actually *inside* the environment. VR was first developed in the 1960s to help train pilots. Besides its use in games and entertainment, it is used today to train surgeons to perform operations, to prepare astronauts for space travel and to help engineers to design safer cars. It also has a less well-known use – recreating the past.

In the 1st century AD, a fresco of a Roman city was painted on a wall in the Domus Aurea, the palace of the Roman Emperor Nero. It was discovered in 1998. A digital image (scan) of the fresco was made, making it easier for historians to study the fresco. The historians then used modern technology to share their discovery. Using the scan of the fresco, the city was “rebuilt” by VR artists. This provided VR users with a unique opportunity to explore the ancient world. Once the city was brought to life, they could study its buildings and streets, move around the city, view it from every angle and zoom in to examine details. Future plans include adding realistic sounds of the time and virtual people who users can question about life in the past.

- H. Find **at least three** words in the text containing vowels or groups of vowels which are pronounced in the same way as /ɜ:/ in **girls**, /aʊ/ in **round**, /əʊ/ in **approach** and /e/ in **rest**.

Getting to know you

A recent survey in Spain has come up with some very interesting results. It shows that the majority of boys (60%) prefer girls to ask them out, rather than the other way round. The survey also highlights several regional differences. In Andalusia, for example, most boys still prefer to make the first move. In Catalonia, however, there is a growing preference for young people to date each other by SMS. These results indicate that in this country, like the rest of the world, traditional methods of dating are changing.

This use of SMS in the dating process, especially among teenagers, is becoming a worldwide trend. The truth is that for people who find it difficult to talk to others, SMS is an ideal way of striking up a conversation. As one girl said, “We would never have started going out last year if my boyfriend hadn’t sent me SMS messages. He feels so uncomfortable talking to strangers that he would never have found the courage to approach me at school.”

Another modern trend which is catching on in Britain and America is ‘speed-dating’. It works like this – people meet in a hall which has got lots of numbered tables in it. A bell rings and they sit at a table with another person and start chatting. After five minutes, the bell rings again, and each person moves on to a different table for another five-minute session. After they have met twenty prospective partners, they write down the names of the people they would be willing to meet again and give them to the organisers. If two people write down each other’s names, the organisers will give them each other’s telephone number. No information will be handed over unless both people express interest in each other.

Dating used to be so simple. If a boy were attracted to a girl, he would ask her out on a date. Shy boys had to overcome their embarrassment and ask girls out. People who were very busy had to make the time to look for a partner. However, things have changed, and it appears that the dating process is being adapted to suit the faster pace of modern life.