



SESSION 3 READING COMPREHENSION

Consult the two documents. Then answer the questions at the bottom of the worksheet.

DOCUMENT 1

[The billionaire battle for the metaverse | The Economist](#)

Dec 18th, 2021

The billionaire battle for the metaverse

Forget space. The race is on to take people beyond reality



You have to hand it to Mark Zuckerberg. When the **founder** of Facebook announced in October that he was changing the name of the social-media network's parent company to Meta Platforms in order to help create an alternative digital reality known as the metaverse, he was **mercilessly mocked**. To some, he was generating a **smokescreen** to distract attention from a political **furor**. To others, he was merely the latest middle-aged tech billionaire **to chase** a childhood fantasy, much as Amazon's Jeff Bezos and Tesla's Elon Musk were doing with space rockets.

It is **shaping up** to become a billionaire battle similar to the Bezos-Musk space race. Instead of rocket science, it will be fought with **reality-bending** headsets, blockchains, cryptocurrencies and **mind-frazzling** amounts of computing power.

Precisely what these plutocrats mean by the metaverse is as yet unclear. Will it be an **all-consuming** futuristic world of virtual reality, avatars, oceanside mansions and other online **razzmatazz** that will make the real world a **dull** place by comparison? Or will it simply be a richer, more immersive version of what already exists today: a way to socialise, work, shop and play online even as life in the everyday world **carries on as normal**? It is even less clear whether tomorrow's internet users will be seduced by the dreams of entitled tech billionaires.

Behind their futuristic ambitions lie some common experiences. First, the mobile internet is **reaching the end of an era**. In America and Europe, politicians are threatening tighter rules against monopolies and privacy abuses, especially with respect to Facebook and Google. In China, the tech industry is reeling from the government onslaught.

Next, they operate in constrained worlds. Apple is a particular bugbear for Mr Zuckerberg and Mr Sweeney. [...] That is why both men **vow** so **vehemently** to promote interoperability—ie, no closed systems—as well as common standards. They, too, want to be architects of the operating systems of the future.

Moonshots

There is a lot to play for. As Mr Thompson says: "Elon Musk wants to go to the Moon. Mark Zuckerberg wants to create entirely new moons in digital space." But just as space is a race, so is the metaverse. [...]

DOCUMENT 2

Trailer of Ready Player One, Steven Spielberg, 2018



QUESTIONS

- 1 Identify similarities between these two documents and the vision of the metaverse presented by Mark Zuckerberg.
- 2 Looking at the Ready Player One trailer, what impressions of the real world does it portray and how does this contrast with Mark Zuckerberg's representation of the real world?



SESSION 3 READING COMPREHENSION

Consult the two documents. Then answer the questions at the bottom of the worksheet.

DOCUMENT 1

[The billionaire battle for the metaverse | The Economist](#)

Dec 18th, 2021

The billionaire battle for the metaverse

Forget space. The race is on to take people beyond reality



You have to hand it to Mark Zuckerberg. When the **founder** of Facebook announced in October that he was changing the name of the social-media network's parent company to Meta Platforms in order to help create an alternative digital reality known as the metaverse, he was **mercilessly mocked**. To some, he was generating a **smokescreen** to distract attention from a political **furor**. To others, he was merely the latest middle-aged tech billionaire **to chase** a childhood fantasy, much as Amazon's Jeff Bezos and Tesla's Elon Musk were doing with space rockets.

It is **shaping up** to become a billionaire battle similar to the Bezos-Musk space race. Instead of rocket science, it will be fought with **reality-bending** headsets, blockchains, cryptocurrencies and **mind-frazzling** amounts of computing power.

Precisely what these plutocrats mean by the metaverse is as yet unclear. Will it be an **all-consuming** futuristic world of virtual reality, avatars, oceanside mansions and other online **razzmatazz** that will make the real world a **dull** place by comparison? Or will it simply be a richer, more immersive version of what already exists today: a way to socialise, work, shop and play online even as life in the everyday world **carries on as normal**? It is even less clear whether tomorrow's internet users will be seduced by the dreams of entitled tech billionaires.

Behind their futuristic ambitions lie some common experiences. First, the mobile internet is **reaching the end of an era**. In America and Europe, politicians are threatening tighter rules against monopolies and privacy abuses, especially with respect to Facebook and Google. In China, the tech industry is reeling from the government onslaught.

Next, they operate in constrained worlds. Apple is a particular bugbear for Mr Zuckerberg and Mr Sweeney. [...] That is why both men **vow** so **vehemently** to promote interoperability—ie, no closed systems—as well as common standards. They, too, want to be architects of the operating systems of the future.

Moonshots

There is a lot to play for. As Mr Thompson says: "Elon Musk wants to go to the Moon. Mark Zuckerberg wants to create entirely new moons in digital space." But just as space is a race, so is the metaverse. [...]

DOCUMENT 2

Trailer of Ready Player One, Steven Spielberg, 2018



QUESTIONS

- 1 Identify similarities between these two documents and the vision of the metaverse presented by Mark Zuckerberg.
- 2 Looking at the Ready Player One trailer, what impressions of the real world does it portray and how does this contrast with Mark Zuckerberg's representation of the real world?