

Before You Read

Reading Activator

A This is a scene from movie *The Matrix*. Read the comic strip below and then discuss with your partner what Neo should choose.



Word Booster

B Complete the following sentences using the appropriate words from the box.

- a** nudge: to push something or someone gently
- b** stimulate: to cause a response in something
- c** address: to give attention to or deal with a matter or problem

1. • Good discussions _____ people's minds in a positive way.
• The drugs _____ damaged tissues into repairing themselves.
2. • I _____ (e)d the cat off the chair so that I could sit down.
• I _____ (e)d him and whispered, "Look who's just come in."
3. • Your writing doesn't _____ the real issues of our society.
• Airports are trying to _____ security concerns without causing inconvenience to passengers.

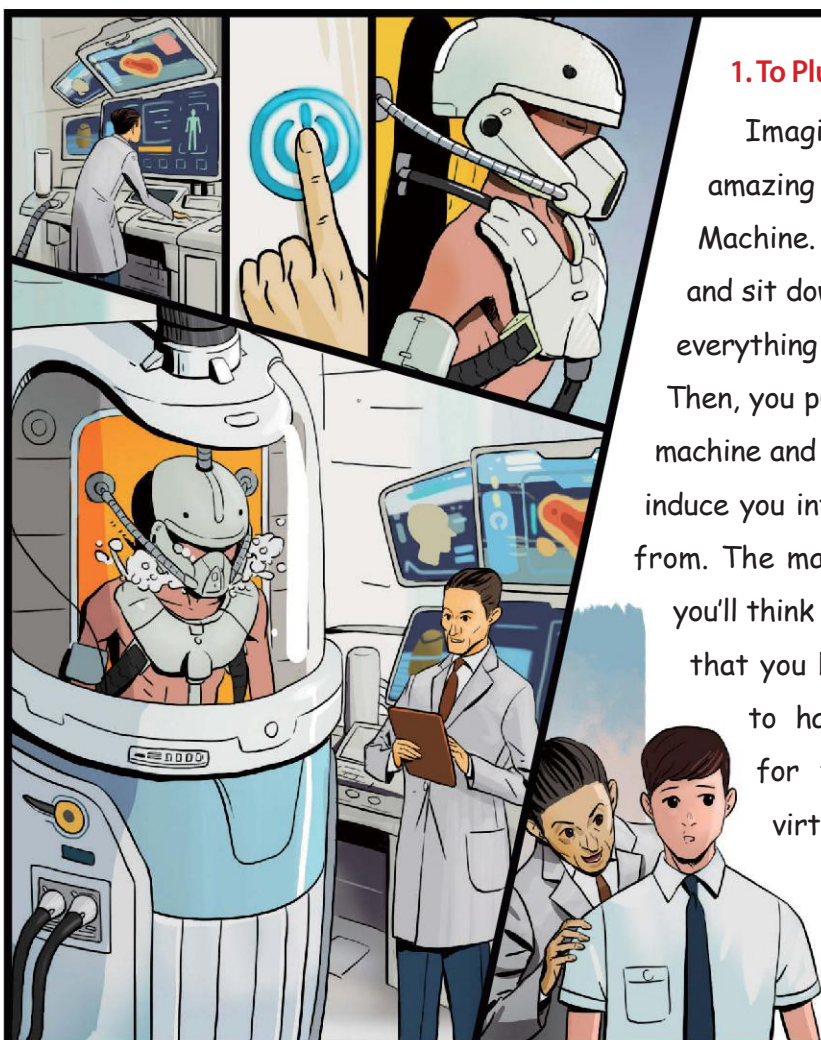
BRAIN TEASERS FOR THINKING

Pay Attention

L4 Some of these situations could be dilemmatic, requiring you to make a difficult choice between two or more alternatives.

L19 This allows you to have whatever experiences you want for the duration of your life.

From seemingly unimportant daily choices, like deciding what to eat for lunch, to huge life-changing decisions, like choosing our future career, we face many situations where we have to make difficult decisions. Some of these situations could be dilemmatic, requiring you to make a difficult choice between two or more alternatives. Read the following stories and think about how you would react in each of the dilemmatic situations.



1. To Plug in or Not?

Imagine scientists have come up with an amazing new invention called the Experience Machine. It works like this: You go into a lab and sit down with the staff and tell them about everything you've ever wanted to do in life. Then, you put on some gear that connects to the machine and go into a tank of fluid. The scientists induce you into a coma that you will never awaken from. The machine will stimulate your brain, and you'll think and feel that you are doing the things that you have always desired. This allows you to have whatever experiences you want for the duration of your life. In this virtual reality, you are happy.

Q What does the Experience Machine allow you to do?

Expressions in Focus

Check ☒ if you know the following words and expressions.

☐ **L4**dilemmatic
☐ **L16**induce

☐ **L5**alternative
☐ **L16**coma

☐ **L14**gear
☐ **L17**stimulate

☐ **L15**fluid
☐ **L21**duration

Of course, you wouldn't know that you were in the tank; you'd think that everything was all actually happening. Maybe you wouldn't have a good reason to deny something substantially better than reality—even if it was "artificial." But what about human dignity? And the satisfaction of our "true" desires? The truth is that you would just be floating in a tank filled with fluid. If the Experience Machine was available to you and guaranteed to work flawlessly, would you plug into it for life, pre-programming your life experiences?

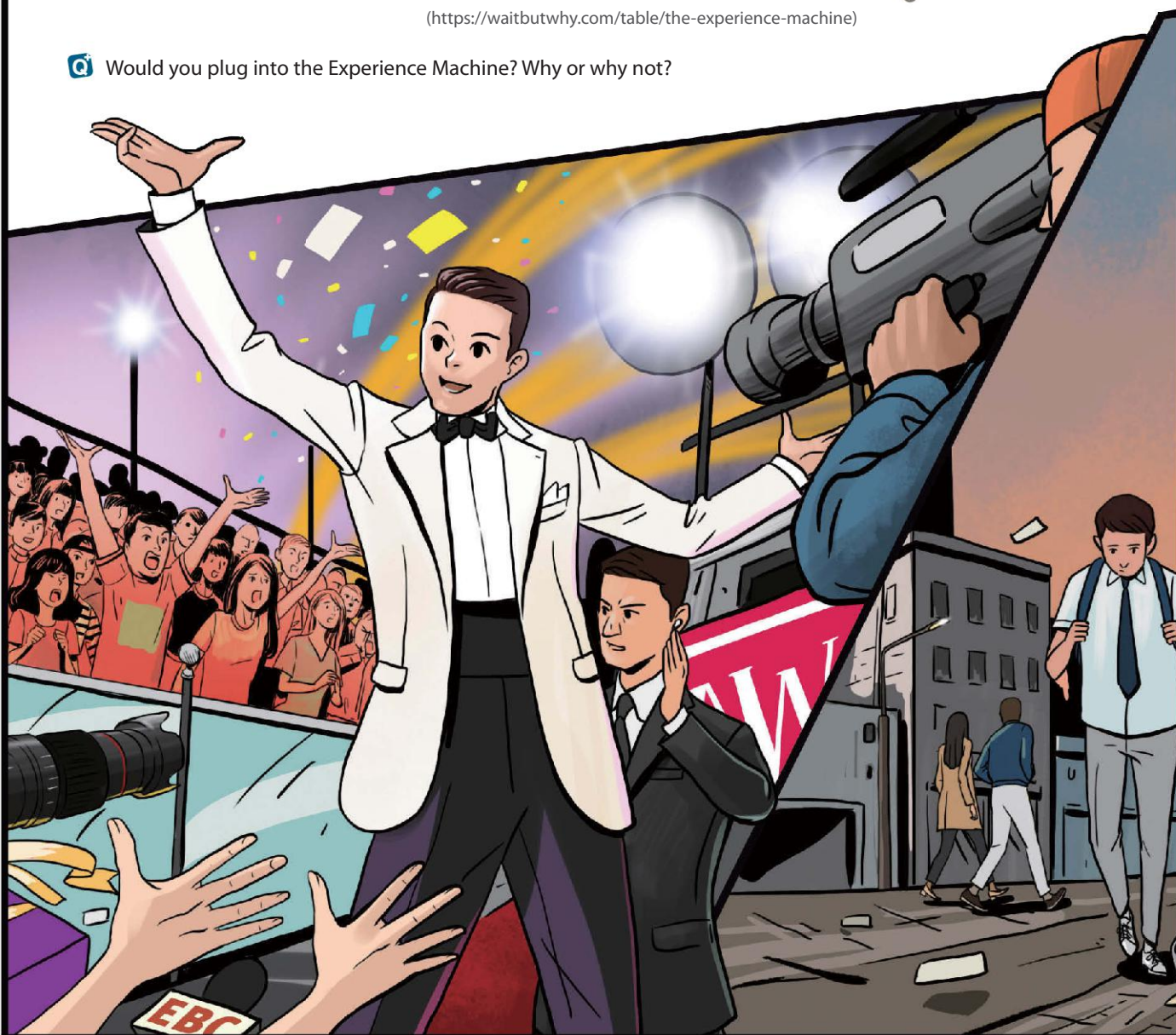
(<https://waitbutwhy.com/table/the-experience-machine>)

 Would you plug into the Experience Machine? Why or why not?

One More Step

L4 Choose the word that has a similar meaning to *artificial*.

- ☐ a artistic
- ☐ b genuine
- ☐ c unnatural
- ☐ d state-of-the-art



Expressions in Focus

Check ☒ if you know the following words and expressions.

- ☐ ^{L3}substantially
- ☐ ^{L7}flawlessly

- ☐ ^{L4}artificial
- ☐ ^{L8}pre-program

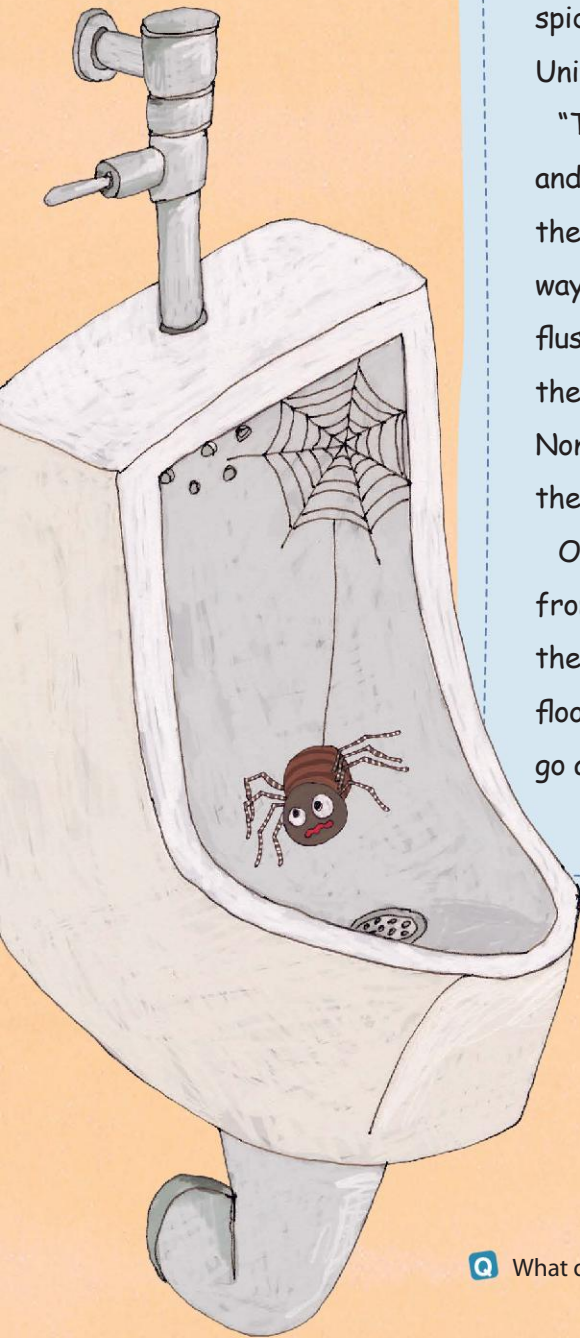
- ☐ ^{L4}dignity

- ☐ ^{L6}float

Pay Attention

L8 Whenever I went to the restroom, the spider seemed to try to scramble out of the way.

L18 He just sat there, not moving a muscle.



2. To Help or Not to Help?

Thomas Nagel is a famed professor of philosophy at New York University. He addresses issues of non-interference and the meaningfulness of life in a story. One day, he noticed a little spider living in the urinal of the restroom at Princeton University, where he was teaching. 5

"The spider appeared to have an awful life, living in a smelly and dirty place. He didn't seem to like it. Whenever I went to the restroom, the spider seemed to try to scramble out of the way. Often, he would get caught, fall, and get soaked by the flushing water. The worst part was that there was no way for the spider to get out and no way to tell if he even wanted to. None of the other students or professors did anything to alter the situation. 10

One day toward the end of the term, I took a paper towel from the wall dispenser and extended it to him. His legs grasped the end of the towel, and I lifted him out and placed him on the floor. He just sat there, not moving a muscle. I nudged him to go anywhere he wanted." 15

Q What did Thomas Nagel do to alter the spider's situation?

Expressions in Focus Check ☒ if you know the following words and expressions.

☐ **L2** famed

☐ **L3** address

☐ **L3** non-interference

☐ **L9** scramble

☐ **L10** soak

☐ **L13** alter

☐ **L16** grasp

☐ **L18** nudge



Was it okay for Nagel to act out of empathy, assuming that the spider would fare better—and perhaps even enjoy life—outside of its normal existence? After Nagel put the spider on the floor, it didn't move. He left and came back two
 5 hours later. He found that the spider had drowned in some water, probably while the restroom was being cleaned. This leads to a dilemma: Even though our intentions are good, should we interfere in others' lives? What if our interference accidentally causes unexpected harm?

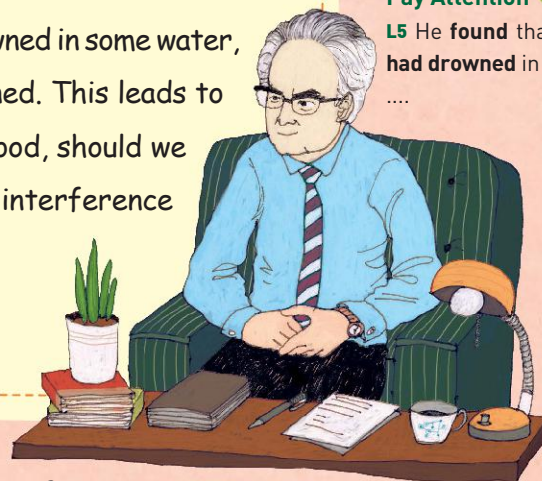
(<https://io9.gizmodo.com/9-philosophical-thought-experiments-that-will-keep-you-1340952809>)

Highlight

Highlight all the instances of *it* and find what each means.

Pay Attention

L5 He **found** that the spider **had drowned** in some water,



Do you think Thomas Nagel's behavior was right or wrong?

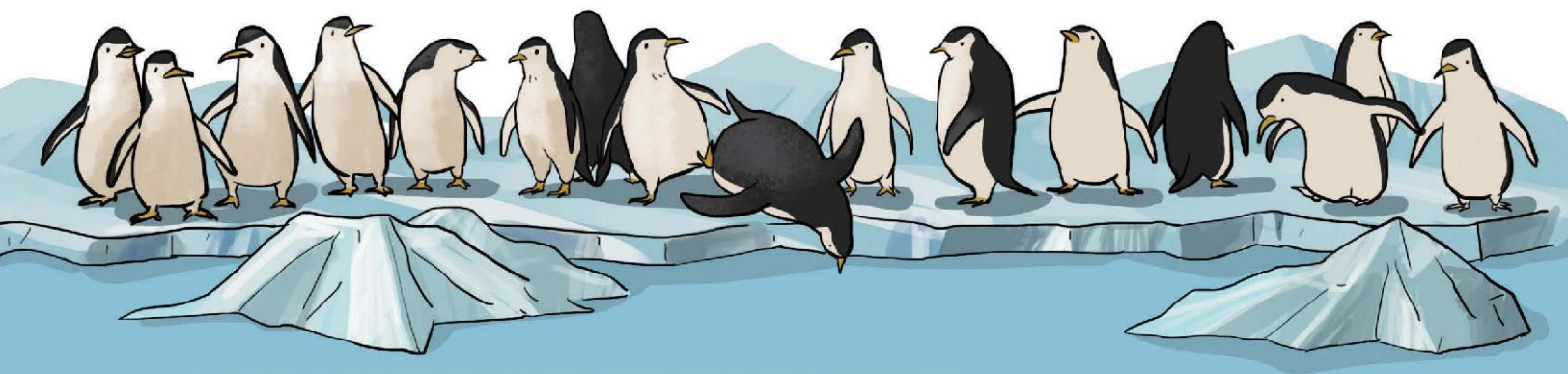
Expressions in Focus Check ☒ if you know the following words and expressions.

☐ **L2** fare

☐ **L3** existence

☐ **L5** drown

☐ **L8** interfere



3. Who Dives First?

There is a penguin living in Antarctica with his friends. They're completely surrounded by snow and ice. It is really hard for the penguin and his friends to find food, and quite literally they are starving. For survival, they must jump into the sea and hunt for fish. 5 But the penguin hesitates and says to himself, "I'm so scared. The sea is full of dangers!" It's true. There might be a huge killer whale in the sea, which no doubt would be very dangerous. In fact, all the other penguins think the same thing, and they also wait to dive into the water until others safely do it. The penguin gets more and more 10 hungry. Unless he or one of his friends gathers the courage to jump, the situation will worsen. If you were the penguin, what would you do? Would you summon up the courage and become the first diver? Or would you keep waiting for others to jump into the sea first?

Pay Attention

L11 Unless he or one of his friends **gathers** the courage to jump, the situation will worsen.

One More Step

Choose the appropriate phrase related to the dilemma of the penguins.

- a Bell the cat.
- b Walls have ears.
- c Time flies like an arrow.
- d Out of sight, out of mind.

How would you react in each of the three dilemmatic situations? 15 Answering this question is not so easy. In your personal life, you probably encounter similar situations. In these situations, where you have to make tough decisions, try to step back and think things through. This will help you make wiser decisions.

(Mark Buchanan. (2007). *The Social Atom*. Bloomsbury. USA)

Q Why are the penguins afraid of jumping into the sea first?

Q Among the three dilemmas, which do you think would be the most difficult one to deal with?

Expressions in Focus Check ☒ if you know the following words and expressions.

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ^{L2} Antarctica | <input type="checkbox"/> ^{L4} literally | <input type="checkbox"/> ^{L5} starve | <input type="checkbox"/> ^{L6} hesitate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ^{L13} summon up | <input type="checkbox"/> ^{L17} encounter | | |

After You Read

Text Miner

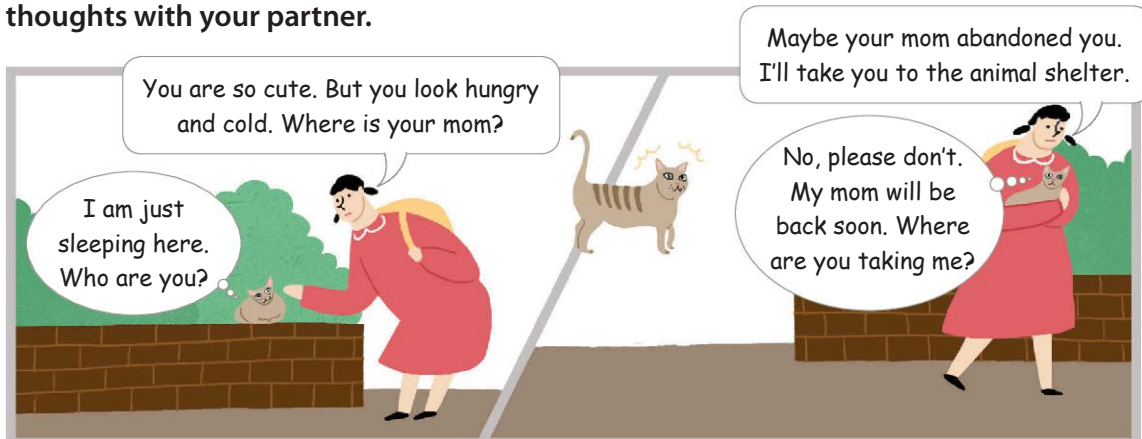
A Fill in the blanks with the expressions in the box to complete the summaries of the dilemmas.

1. With the Experience Machine, you can have whatever _____ you want for the duration of your life. However, you will be induced into _____, floating in a tank. Would you _____ the Experience Machine for life, pre-programming your life experiences?
2. Thomas Nagel addresses issues of non-interference and the meaningfulness of life in a story about _____ in a restroom urinal. He tried to help the spider, but eventually the spider died. Even though our intentions are good, should we _____ in others' lives? What if it could cause _____?
3. For survival, penguins have to jump into the sea and hunt for fish. But the sea is full of _____. They wait to dive into the water until others safely do it. Would you summon up the courage and become _____ or keep _____ for others to jump into the sea first?

a coma
waiting
a spider
dangers
plug into
interfere
experiences
the first diver
unexpected harm

Reading Enhancer

B Read the comic strip and consider whether the girl's action is good or bad. Share your thoughts with your partner.



✓Self-Check

Check your understanding.

If you need help,

Words

1	2	3	4	5
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look up the words you still don't know.

Structures

1	2	3	4	5
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review the "Pay Attention" sections.

Content

1	2	3	4	5
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read the text again while focusing on its meaning.