

"Pokémon Go" Points to a World of Augmented Reality



By Los Angeles Times,
adapted by Newsela staff
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Exeggute, a Pokémons, is found by a "Pokémon Go" player in Miami, Florida, July 12, 2016. The game marks a turning point for augmented reality, or technology that superimposes a digital facade on the real world. Photo: AP Photo/Alan Diaz LOS ANGELES, Calif. — Virtual reality is said to be the future of gaming. It can transport gamers to computer-generated settings that look real. These virtual worlds seem real because gamers use high-tech headsets, gloves with sensors or helmets with screens to play with them.

The success of the new smartphone game "Pokémon Go" might mean big things for augmented reality, a similar technology. Augmented (meaning "added to") reality works by adding a computerized picture to what people see in the real world.

Pokémon is a Japanese brand and cartoon series that became popular in the 1990s. "Pokémon Go" is its newest product. It launched in July. "Pokémon Go" takes place in the player's own location in the real world. The game makes Pokémons characters pop up on players' smartphone screens by using their cameras and GPS.

"Pokémon Go" Can Be Played Outside

Shops, parks and other public spaces around the world have noticed more foot traffic. Gamers are heading out and walking around with their smartphones to play the game. Experts think the popularity of "Pokémon Go" is just one sign that augmented reality will

play a huge part in people's lives.

Some think augmented reality will be even bigger than virtual reality. Virtual reality currently requires people to use headsets and other devices. Augmented reality is simpler. People can blend the real world and the virtual world with only their smartphones. They don't need other gear to play.

Augmented reality games also let gamers interact with each other. "Pokémon Go" does this by allowing players to compete to catch Pokémons. It also encourages players to step outside and interact with others. That's only possible because the game takes place on smartphones. An estimated two-thirds of American adults already carry their smartphones with them.

"(The game) taps into the fact that we have our mobile devices on us 24/7 ... and it allows us to use them in new and novel ways," Scott Steinberg said. He is an expert on trends at a technology consulting company.

"Pokémon Go" can be played in small bits of time. People are already checking their phones many times a day. Now they can play in augmented reality for a few minutes, too. This is unlike playing games on a console or a computer.

Interest In Augmented Reality Growing

Now that "Pokémon Go" is so popular, there's little doubt that gamers can understand augmented reality. And they love it.

Gamers such as Anthony Moreno, 17, have traveled all around the Los Angeles region trying to catch Pokémons. He said he is visiting new places within his own city. "We haven't been here (before), so it's going to be a new experience for us," he said.

"Pokémon Go" could teach people how to use augmented reality. The popular game "Angry Birds" taught people how to swipe on glass touchscreens. Players had to master this skill to be able to make the birds fly on their screens.

In the same way, "Pokémon Go" could help gamers become familiar with augmented reality.

Pokémon Go

Week 4 Day 1: Read, Annotate (write in the margins: questions, circle unknown words, connections, main idea of each paragraph, etc.), and Summarize the article.

Week 4, Day 2: Re-read, Annotate using a new color to find the answer to each question. Next to the text annotation, write the question number. Answer the questions on a new page in complete sentences.

1. Give an example from the article that suggests that Pokémon Go has been a success.
2. The article states: “players had to master this skill to be able to make the birds fly on their screens.” What does “master” mean in this context? What synonym could you replace “master” with?
3. Why could augmented reality become more popular than virtual reality? Explain using evidence from the text.

Week 4, Day 3: Re-read the article. Use the planning page to plan out your opinion piece for tomorrow.

Prompt: Why do you think Pokémon Go has become so popular? Will its popularity last? Do you believe augmented reality will continue to grow? Why or why not?

Week 4, Day 4: Writing Piece: Re-read the article, Annotate using a new color to find evidence to answer the question, and Cite evidence from the article to support you answer. **Write Multiple Paragraphs.** Why do you think Pokémon Go has become so popular? Will its popularity last? Do you believe augmented reality will continue to grow? Why or why not?

Write an opinion piece using information from the article to support your opinion. Use at least three pieces of evidence from the article to support your opinion.