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$100 laptop for world's poor children

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1 October, 2005

THE ARTICLE

$100 laptop for world's poor children

BNE: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has produced a laptop computer that will sell for $100. The machines will revolutionize learning for children in developing countries. Nicholas Negroponte, head of MIT's Media Lab, has started a non-profit organization called One Laptop Per Child. His aim is to distribute millions of the new laptops to the world's poor children. He wants to make sure they don't end up on the wrong side of a digital divide. Mr. Negroponte thought of the idea after seeing how children in a Cambodian village learned from a laptop.

The laptops are powered by clockwork. One minute of winding up a hand crank produces ten minutes of power. They are foldable in more ways than a normal laptop. They are also covered in rubber to make them sturdier. The laptops will be able to do almost everything a $1,000 model can do except store huge amounts of data. They have color screens, 1GB of memory and four USB ports. Mr. Negroponte is aiming for "One laptop per child" rather than per community as he wants computers to be personal learning tools. He explained: "One does not think of community pencils."

WARM-UPS

1. MY COMPUTER HISTORY: In pairs / groups, talk about your history with computers. Can you remember the first time you used one? Do you have a love-hate relationship with them? How important have they become in your life?

2. ENABLING: Talk with your partner(s) about how computers help the lives of these people:

- Children in Cambodian villages
- Senior citizens
- The US President
- Soccer players

- Four-year-old children
- Backpackers
- Artists
- English students

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Technology / laptop computers / $100 computers / developing countries / non-profit organizations / digital divides / batteries / clockwork / pencils / learning

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. LAPTOPS: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with laptop computers. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. COMPUTERS: In pairs / groups, agree on the endings to the following sentences about computers. Talk about what you wrote. Change partners and share your sentences and ideas.

a. Computers are _____.

b. Computers should _____.

c. Computers can _____.

d. Computers can't _____.

e. Computers will _____.

f. Computers may _____.

g. Computers could _____.

h. Computers have _____.

6. COMPUTERLESS: With your partner(s), talk about what the world would be like without computers. What things would suddenly stop working? What would you have to do differently every day?

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BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

a.	Third World children can buy recycled laptop computers for $100.	T / F
b.	A university boss wants the world's poor children to have computers.	T / F
c.	The university boss wants children to learn how to multiply and divide.	T / F
d.	The idea came from children in a Massachusetts elementary school.	T / F
e.	A wind-up hand crank gives the computers ten minutes of power.	T / F
f.	The laptops can do almost anything more expensive computers can.	T / F
g.	The idea is for one computer per child, not per community.	T / F
h.	Each laptop will come with a free pencil.	T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

a.	produced		boss
b.	revolutionize		barrier
c.	head		information
d.	distribute		usual
e.	divide		manufactured
f.	crank		stronger
g.	normal		hand out
h.	sturdier		instead of
i.	data		transform
j.	rather than		starter

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

a.	a laptop computer that		children in developing countries
b.	revolutionize learning for		to make them sturdier
c.	non-profit		side
d.	end up on the wrong		by clockwork
e.	digital		personal learning tools
f.	The laptops are powered		divide
g.	winding up a hand crank		huge amounts of data
h.	covered in rubber		will sell for $100
i.	store		produces ten minutes of power
j.	he wants computers to be		organization

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

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BNE: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has
_____ a laptop computer that will sell for $100. The
machines will _____ learning for children in developing
countries. Nicholas Negroponte, _____ of MIT's Media Lab,
has started a non-profit _____ called One Laptop Per
Child. His _____ is to distribute millions of the new laptops
to the world's poor children. He wants to make sure they don't
_____ up on the wrong side of a _____ divide. Mr.
Negroponte thought of the _____ after seeing how
children in a Cambodian village learned from a laptop.

idea

end

revolutionize

organization

produced

aim

digital

head

The laptops are _____ by clockwork. One minute of
_____ up a hand crank produces ten minutes of
_____. They are _____ in more ways than a normal
laptop. They are also covered in rubber to make them
_____. The laptops will be able to do almost everything a
$1,000 model can do except _____ huge amounts of data.
They have color screens, 1GB of memory and four USB ports.
Mr. Negroponte is _____ for "One laptop per child" rather
than per community as he wants computers to be personal
learning _____. He explained: "One does not think of
community pencils."

power

sturdier

tools

foldable

aiming

powered

store

winding

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms … for the words **'lap'** and **'top'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning…?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "CHEAP LAPTOP" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about Mr. Negroponte's plan to equip developing world children with their own personal laptops.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- MIT
- revolutionize
- non-profit
- distribute
- digital divide
- village
- powered
- ten minutes
- rubber
- store
- tools
- pencils

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

a. What did you think when you first saw this headline?
b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
c. What do you think of the idea of $100 laptops?
d. Why do you think laptops in stores are $1,000 or more?
e. Would you buy a $100 laptop from Mr. Negroponte?
f. Do you think the computers will work properly?
g. How will the children learn how to use the laptops?
h. Is your computer a personal learning tool or a mailing tool?
i. Do you think computers are overpriced?
j. What other expensive products do you think can be produced for $100?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

a. Did you like reading this article?
b. What do you think about what you read?
c. Are you surprised at anything you read in the article?
d. What do you think of Mr. Negroponte's idea?
e. Who will pay for all the world's poor children to have their own laptops?
f. How do you think the laptops will change the lives of the children?
g. Why do you think these computers are not being sold in stores?
h. What other, similar ideas could help poor children?
i. Do you think these computers should also be given to poor children in the developed world?
j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
c. Was there a question you didn't like?
d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
e. What did you like talking about?
f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

$100: In pairs / groups, discuss what you think of the idea of the products in the left hand column being sold for $100. How would they be different from usual, more expensive products? What differences would they make to the world? How possible is it to produce / offer these products for $100?

PRODUCTS	DIFFERENT	DIFFERENCES	$100?
Computer			
Car			
Small house			
Water purification unit			
Long-distance air tickets.			
Your idea			

Change partners and tell each other what you discussed with your previous partners.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

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HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on the $100 computers. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. THOUGHTS: You are a child living in a remote village in a developing country. You have had your wind-up computer for a month. Write your thoughts on the computer. What did you do the day it arrived? How has it changed your life and hopes for the future? Read what you wrote to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you have similar thoughts?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to Mr. Negroponte. Tell him what you think of his idea. Suggest other ideas that could help poor children around the world. Read your letter to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about or suggest similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. F   b. T   c. F   d. F   e. T   f. T   g. T   h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

a.	produced	manufactured
b.	revolutionize	transform
c.	head	boss
d.	distribute	hand out
e.	divide	barrier
f.	crank	starter
g.	normal	usual
h.	sturdier	stronger
i.	data	information
j.	rather than	instead of

PHRASE MATCH:

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c.	non-profit	organization
d.	end up on the wrong	side
e.	digital	divide
f.	The laptops are powered	by clockwork
g.	winding up a hand crank	produces ten minutes of power
h.	covered in rubber	to make them sturdier
i.	store	huge amounts of data
j.	he wants computers to be	personal learning tools

GAP FILL:

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