

'Dear, did you say pastry?': meet the 'AI granny' driving scammers up the wall

Level 2: Intermediate

Article summary: This article discusses how an AI bot with a grandmotherly persona has successfully stopped scammers.

Time: 60 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking, Writing

Language focus: Subordinating clauses with the conjunctions *while*, *because* and *which*

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

- b. Before reading the article carefully, students use some of the key words to fill the gaps in the sentences to ensure that they understand and know how the words are used in other contexts.

Key:

1. *knit*
2. *frustrated*
3. *scammers*
4. *furious*
5. *fraud*
6. *awareness*
7. *upgrade*
8. *call centres*

1. Warmer

- a. The purpose of this activity is to get students started talking about *scams* and *frauds*. Encourage students to express and give details to their answers. Write any new vocabulary on the board.

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to do the activity individually and then compare their answers in pairs or small groups. The word *pastry* can also be used more broadly to mean the type of dough itself. As an extension activity, ask students to highlight the key words in the article.

Key:

1. *scammer*
2. *furious*
3. *Fraud*
4. *waste*
5. *frustrate*
6. *Knitting*
7. *pastry*
8. *blank*
9. *upgrade*
10. *Awareness*
11. *persona*
12. *call centre*

3. Comprehension check

- a. Students answer the questions based on the information in the article. They may do this in different ways, e.g. in item 1, they may say, 'She's an AI bot whose purpose is to waste scammers' time to stop them from scamming real people' or similar.

Key (suggested answers):

1. *Daisy is an AI bot.*
2. *She wastes scammers' time and stops them from scamming real people.*
3. *Her persona is that of a grandmother who is friendly but confused about technology.*
4. *She delays them by looking for her glasses, having trouble turning on her computer, being confused about finding icons, asking about recipes and discussing knitting patterns.*
5. *up to 40 minutes*
6. *O2 (Virgin Media O2)*
7. *They pass Daisy's details on to another scammer in their call centre to try again.*
8. *to raise awareness about scammers and internet fraud*
9. *four*
10. *He posts videos of himself wasting criminals' time. In this project, he helped put phone numbers on websites to attract scammers.*

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4. Key language

- a. The activity gives students an opportunity to practice working with complex sentences with subordinating clauses. You may have to remind students that *because*, *since*, *while* and *which* are all subordinating conjunctions.

Key:

1. Because she asks about whether they like tea, the criminals end up furious rather than successful.
2. Because she's confused about how computers work and eager to talk about her younger days, Daisy can frustrate the scammers on the other end of the line.
3. He waits while she looks for her glasses.
4. Daisy wasted each scammer's time for up to 40 minutes when they could have been scamming real people.

- b. This activity continues to build students' exposure to subordinate clauses. Remind students that when the subordinating clause is first, it is followed by a comma (,). When it's used as a second clause, a comma is not needed. As another extension opportunity, ask students to find more examples in this or other articles.

Key:

1. The criminals end up furious rather than successful because she asks about whether they like tea.
2. Daisy can frustrate the scammers on the other end of the line because she's confused about how computers work and is eager to talk about her younger days.
3. While she looks for her glasses, he waits.
4. When they could have been scamming real people, Daisy wasted each scammer's time for up to 40 minutes.

5. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the statements related to the article and give their reasons and justifications for each answer, referring to their own experiences wherever possible.

6. In your own words

- a. Ask students to research more about internet fraud. Ask them to answer one or more of these questions: *What are some ways that scammers try to harm people? How can people protect themselves and their loved ones? How can AI help fight this problem? What are some things to do if you, or someone you love, have been scammed?*
- b. Students could then present their reports to the class. Encourage students to include facts and statistics when they share their research findings. Encourage them to also share their opinions and give reasons to support their answers.