

9 High-Tech World

Reading

A These devices can be used to spy on people. What kind of information do you think people doing surveillance could get from these devices?

- a surveillance camera
- a video camera
- a computer
- a mobile phone
- a satnav

Satnav or satellite navigation is a system that uses the information from satellite to plan the best route to a chosen destination.

B Quickly read the text and write T (True) or F (False).

What does the text tell us about surveillance?

- 1 We are being watched all the time. ☐
- 2 It should only be used on criminals. ☐
- 3 Surveillance equipment can be more effective than people at detecting some things. ☐



The view from one of four million surveillance cameras in the United Kingdom; this one, in London, includes tiny wipers to clear the rain.



They're watching you

In the novel 1984, which was published in 1949, British author George Orwell wrote about a time in the future when it is impossible to hide from **surveillance** by the government. In the novel, people are always reminded that the government can see them by the phrase, 'Big Brother is watching you'.

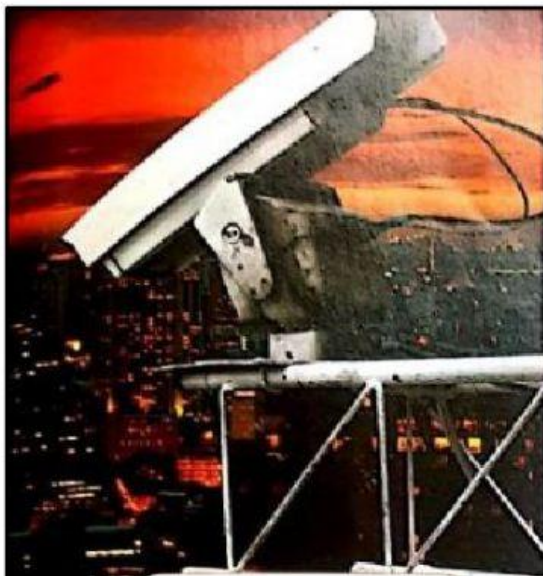
The world that Orwell predicted is already here. Video systems that watch people are now used in many cities around the world. In Paris, France, for example, there are road cameras nearly everywhere to help control traffic and approximately 2,000 cameras on city buses to prevent crime. In Britain, there are cameras that watch streets and parks, public transport, stadiums and shopping areas. With nearly five million cameras – one camera for every 14 people – Britain has more surveillance cameras than anywhere else in Europe.

So who's watching? The police, certainly. There is nothing a criminal can say when the crime he has committed has been caught on video. For example, in 2009, 95 per cent of Scotland Yard murder cases used video surveillance as **evidence**. But even when criminals are not actually caught on video, just seeing a video camera can make an area safer. For this reason, some people put up signs that say 'Video Surveillance Is In Operation' even where there are no video cameras.

Video surveillance has also been used to save lives. One day in France, 18-year-old Jean-François LeRoy was swimming in a public swimming pool. While he was under water, he **lost consciousness**. The lifeguards who were watching the pool didn't realise



Police check cars using cameras and optical licence tag recognition in London.



Word Focus

surveillance: watching of a person or place

evidence: reasons for believing that someone is guilty of a crime

lose consciousness: to not be awake because of an injury

set off: to cause an alarm to make a sound

what was happening. LeRoy sank slowly and quietly to the bottom of the pool. Without help, he would have died in four minutes.

Although no lifeguard saw LeRoy drowning, 12 large machine eyes under the water noticed it. Nine months earlier, a surveillance system called Poseidon had been put in the pool. Poseidon can understand when swimmers are not moving normally, and it **sets off** an alarm for the lifeguards. Just 16 seconds after Poseidon noticed that LeRoy was sinking, the lifeguards pulled him from the pool. Poseidon had saved his life.

Although it is useful for fighting crime, many people are still concerned about public surveillance. Norman Siegel, an American lawyer, says that there has been a huge increase in video cameras in public places, but there hasn't been a lot of discussion about the advantages and disadvantages. He believes that people should vote to show if they agree or disagree with public surveillance.

Whether you agree with it or not, the fact is that we live in a world where we are surrounded by surveillance.

- Generally, do you agree or disagree with public surveillance? Why? / Why not?
- Is there video camera surveillance in your area? Where?
- How would you feel if there were cameras at your school?

Exam

up

Finding the answers

- Before you read the text, make sure you underline the key words in the questions.
- As you read the text, write short notes about the content or topic of each paragraph.
- Go back to the questions and work out which paragraph the information is in.
- The content of the questions is in the same order as the information in the text.
- As you read through the paragraph, look for words or expressions that are similar to the key words you underlined.

C Read the *Exam Close-up*. Then read the *Exam Task* below and underline the key words.

D Now complete the *Exam Task*. Remember to check your answers carefully when you have finished.

Exam Task

Look at the sentences below about surveillance. Read the text to decide if each sentence is correct or incorrect. Write T (True) or F (False).

- 1 The author refers to the book 1984 to recommend we read it. ☐
- 2 In 1984, the government knows everything that everyone does. ☐
- 3 Each surveillance camera in Britain can watch 14 people. ☐
- 4 Britain has fewer surveillance cameras than France. ☐
- 5 There are surveillance cameras at sports events in Britain. ☐
- 6 Criminals say nothing when they are caught by the police. ☐
- 7 British police have used surveillance cameras to find killers. ☐
- 8 A sign on a house about video cameras might not be true. ☐
- 9 The Poseidon system had been working in the pool for less than a year. ☐
- 10 Norman Siegel is concerned because nobody wants to vote. ☐

E Find the meaning of the red words below in the text. Then circle the correct words in the sentences.

- 1 When there are many police officers on the streets, it can **prevent** / **commit** crime.
- 2 Can you **predict** / **remind** what will happen in five years?
- 3 The police must **catch** / **control** the fans at a football game.
- 4 **Public** / **People** transport is very expensive in some cities.
- 5 She threw the stick into the river and it **drowned** / **sank** to the bottom.
- 6 Dad **put in** / **put up** a car alarm so that no one could steal his taxi.

Ideas Focus