

1 You are going to read a magazine article about a new type of hotel. For questions 1-6, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

Hotels of the future

Our Travel correspondent Joana Richards reports about a new trend in hotels.

I recently visited a hotel in France which has no visible human staff. This is just one of several hotels in Europe and Asia which runs with apparently no human contact. Most of the services are provided by robots and machines. The concept is to provide an environmentally friendly hotel where staff and running costs kept to a minimum. Personally, I've spent my life away from robots and machines, and so kept having to remind myself that in many parts of the world, it's not unusual for jobs and household tasks to be automated these days.

So I lost no time in booking myself a room at one of these hotels and going to see it for myself. And sure enough, there at the reception desk instead of a friendly receptionist wearing a uniform was a machine.

'I'd like to check in please, I shouted, wondering if the machine would respond to my voice, and feeling thrilled that I was about to have my first ever conversation with a check-in machine. Nothing. I said it again but there was silence. I was hoping the machine would say something like 'If you want to check in, press 1. But then I noticed a written message in the machine's screen. 'Please insert your credit card and key in your booking reference, then follow the instructions.' No conversation. How disappointing.

Staying at the hotel costs from €35 (more if you want a bigger room). That's a bargain for Paris, where a stay in a more conventional hotel can easily cost two or three times that much. And if you did stay there, it wouldn't necessarily be any nicer, and certainly wouldn't be any more memorable. The hotel is located near to the amusement park, Disneyland Paris, which was created as a visitor attraction on the east of the city with lots of amusement rides. In fact, many of the guests book the hotel purely in order to be close to the park.

Back in the hotel, as well as machines to check in, there are vending machines to serve drinks and snacks and vacuum cleaners that work without a human, using sensors to navigate around the rooms. According to the owners, the laundry has robots which do all the washing unaided. Another innovation is the use of face recognition instead of keys to get into your room. A photograph of the guest's face is taken at the reception desk by the check in machines.

With 60 rooms in the building, there is a lot of coming and going. Guests are actively encouraged to stop and get a coffee from one of the machines in the guest lounge with other guests, so there is at least some social interaction. One area where humans are absolutely essential for the hotel is security. There are scanners and CCTV cameras everywhere, and the footage from these is watched by human security guards, no matter whether or not the hotel is full. It is their job to make sure that the guests are safe – and that no-one causes any damage to hotel property, including of course making off with a costly robot.

Critics say that businesses like these automated hotels will mean that people lose their jobs, as more and more roles can be performed by robots and machines. But there are many who see them as a vision of the future and argue that robots can make our lives easier. But this can only happen if higher manufacturing and (line x) operating standards are achieved, and if guests are prepared to put their trust in machines and don't mind the lack of personal contact. Only then will this type of hotel be a success. Time will tell if this is the case.

- 1 The aim of this hotel is to be very
 - A efficient.
 - B friendly.
 - C profitable.
 - D unusual.
- 2 What aspect of the writer's experience at reception was 'disappointing' (line X)?
 - A the appearance of the reception
 - B the time she wasted checking in
 - C the lack of verbal interaction with the machine
 - D the rudeness of the other guests
- 3 What does the writer say about the price of the rooms in the hotel?
 - A The hotel is good value.
 - B The prices are likely to rise.
 - C Other hotels provide better accommodation.
 - D It is not always clear how much a room will cost.
- 4 What is the writer's main point in the fourth paragraph?
 - A There are limits to what robots and machines can do.
 - B Robots and machines can learn a wide range of skills.
 - C Different robots and machines are used for different tasks.
 - D Humans make mistakes that robots and machines do not make.

- 5 What risk is mentioned in the fifth paragraph?
 - A robots being stolen
 - B security guards being ineffective
 - C the hotel not doing enough business
 - D areas of the hotel becoming too crowded
- 6 What does 'this can only happen' in line X refer to?
 - A more roles being performed by robots and machines
 - B many seeing the hotel as a vision of the future
 - C robots and machines making our lives easier
 - D reduction in social human contact

2 You are going to read a magazine article about bicycles. For questions 1-10, choose from the people (A-D). The people may be chosen more than once.

Which person

- 1 bought a second-hand bike?
- 2 says their new bike is good value for money?
- 3 found it difficult to slow down at one point?
- 4 had to take their bike in for repair?
- 5 needed to put the bike together before they could ride it?
- 6 bought a new bicycle to replace one that had been stolen?
- 7 says that riding their bike up hills is tiring?
- 8 says they wish they had checked the size of the bike sooner?
- 9 had to get off their bike when they were riding to fix it?
- 10 compares cycling with another way of keeping fit?

My new bicycle

Four people talk about their bikes.

A Jonas Hagen I bought my new mountain bike online and as soon as it was delivered to my home in kit form I set to work. Once it actually looked like a bike and I'd checked that everything seemed to be working properly, I set off down the road. All went well at first, but later on I had a brief moment of panic when the brakes suddenly failed and I narrowly avoided crashing into a hedge. I adjusted them when I got home, and since then they've been fine. The only other adjustment I've had to make is to raise the seat to the maximum because it turns out this bike is for riders whose inside leg measures considerably less than mine. I should really have noticed that before I bought it.

B Lili Huang I originally bought my bike just for occasional use, but now I go everywhere on it. It's great exercise, every bit as good as going to the gym. It feels just the right size for me and somehow I always feel full of energy when I'm on it, even when my friends and I ride into the mountains at weekends. I've only ever had one breakdown, which was when the chain broke. Fortunately there was a garage nearby, where a very kind car mechanic quickly got me back on the road. I don't know what I'd do without my bike, which is slightly worrying because a lot of people round here have had their bikes stolen. That's why I keep it in the hall downstairs, rather than in the street.

C James Thompson This is only the second bicycle I've ever bought. It was on offer at the local cycle shop and I think I got something of a bargain because on the whole I've been pleased with it. At first I had some difficulties with the gears, but I managed to sort those out while I was riding. It's a very solid bike, though that does mean it's rather heavy and I wouldn't want to have to push it far if I had a breakdown. It also makes pedalling up steep slopes hard work, although fortunately most of the routes round here are reasonably flat. I don't think it's the kind of bike anyone would want to steal, but I always secure it with a good strong lock just in case. Recently I've also fitted more powerful front and rear lights so that drivers can see me better after dark.

D Mia Doherty I actually chose this bike in something of a hurry. I'd left my old one outside the sports centre and when I came back it had just disappeared. I reported it, of course, but that was the last I ever saw of it, and I needed a new one to get to work every day. I probably paid more than I should have done for it, though I know the previous owner had looked after it well and I haven't had any trouble with it. Apart, that is, from a flat tyre which meant I had to stop and mend it on the way home in the pouring rain. Riding it certainly helps keep me fit, and even in weather like that I wouldn't change it for a car. The only incident I've had was when a dog ran out into the road in front of me, but the brakes did their job superbly.

3 You are going to read an article about a man who takes photos of celebrities. Six sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A-G the one which fits each gap (1-6). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

The airport photographer

I'm a photographer based at Heathrow Airport in London. Airlines often commission me to take photos of aircraft or their staff. But mostly I concentrate on getting shots of celebrities as they come through the arrivals hall. I sell some photos direct to the daily newspapers and celebrity magazines, and the rest go to a picture agency.

On a typical day I look out for the flights arriving from Los Angeles on the major airlines. (1)..... Most of them fly either with British Airways because it's such an established company, or with Virgin Atlantic because the owner, Richard Branson, moves in those celebrity circles.

You've got to cover all the incoming flights though – Victoria Beckham took to flying with Air New Zealand at one time. I know the ground and security staff here very well. (2)..... That can really make all the difference to being in the right place at the right time.

I've been working here for many years now, so I've seen thousands of celebrities throughout the decades. In my experience, the old stars are the best. Joan Collins is my favourite – she sends me a Christmas card every year. Mick Jagger also knows me and always says hello. People like Paul McCartney and Rod Stewart are lots of fun, too. (3)..... I guess that's because they can see the value of it.

Today's big stars are generally okay and give you a polite smile. I won't mention names, but there are some who wave me away rudely, whilst others even have their managers popping up from nowhere, saying: 'no pictures' to the waiting photographers. (4)..... You've probably seen photographers leaping around in this manner on TV footage of celebrities arriving at airports and wondered why they do it – well often that's why.

(5)..... One time, Naomi Campbell refused to come out from behind a pillar. She called up for a buggy and hopped on the back, so there I was chasing it, trying to get a shot of her. But the next time I saw her she'd just got engaged and came up to me to show me the ring.

But if today's stars don't make my job as easy as it was, today's technology more than makes up for it. When I started out it was much less sophisticated. I remember when the British queen's granddaughters, Princesses Beatrice and Eugenie, were just babies. I heard that their mother, the Duchess of York, was coming through Heathrow with them. She was carrying both babies in her arms. (6)..... I realised I had a good chance of getting one of them onto the front page of the newspaper, which is always the photographer's aim.

So I called my editor to warn him, took the shots, then rolled up the film, labelled it, put it in an envelope and organised for a motorbike dispatch rider to pick it up, take it back to the newspaper offices and have it developed. It had taken three hours. Today, using digital cameras and a laptop, the office gets images in three minutes.

- A You get the impression that they enjoy the attention.
- B I was lucky enough to get some lovely shots of them.
- C Often it's one of them who tips me off that a big star has just come through passport control.
- D That's where you generally find the celebrities.
- E They could be appearing in the arrivals hall at any time, night or day, of course.
- F When that happens, they have to do what we call 'duck and dive' to get a shot.
- G With some stars, however, you're never quite sure what you're going to get.