DAY 72. Vocabulary practice

Reading 1

Are robots taking over?

A Elliot



It never ceases to amaze me how we hurl ourselves toward a human-free society at lightning speed. Despite endless articles and even award-winning films about how we're losing touch with ourselves and our humanity, out roll driverless cars and automated trains. I might not be able to speak for all of society, but I think I've got quite a good grasp on the human psyche and, for whatever reason, we are not terribly fond of robots. I recently read a survey about people's feelings on artificial intelligence and I believe it perfectly encapsulates the current mood. Around 70 per cent of people are happy to allow robots to do ordinary, boring jobs such as crop monitoring. But when those activities encroach upon our private space, for instance having a robot maid, only around half of respondents were in agreement with it. Give a robot a scalpel and have it perform surgery, and only a quarter of people would hop on the table. I'm only shocked that it's not zero per cent – whoever is part of that 25 per cent must be completely mad, as far as I'm concerned.

B Josephine



Is our trepidation about artificial intelligence every bit as manufactured as the technology itself? Our cinematic experiences may very well be culpable for embedding most of this fear of the unknown into our minds. However, if you toss that aside and peruse current articles about real-life AI, you still might find yourself trembling slightly. News of driverless public transport popping up in major European cities does little to assuage our anxiety because, let's face it, you can't help but imagine what could happen if things went awry. A simple malfunction could place two commuter-packed buses in a head-on collision or cause a brake failure in a speeding underground train which cannot be stopped by human intervention. Honestly, just like our food labels should tell us if what we're eating is genetically modified, so should a bus or train have signage saying it is operated only by machine. Then we can decide if we want to step foot inside or wait for a conventional public transport vehicle to pull up.

C Ronald



I would postulate that we have a bitter-sweet love affair with automation. Do we want robots to wash our dishes, clean up our mess, vacuum and polish our flooring, do our laundry, and even fold, iron and hang up our finely tailored clothing? I would give an affirmative response to that. And who wouldn't, really? But do we want them buzzing around our homes, rummaging through our drawers, answering our phone calls, communicating for us cn social media or – and I shudder to think – doing a better job at being a human being that we are? One might wonder if there's a fine line between what we want to do ourselves and what we want them to do for us, but I have no doubt about what I think the boundaries should be. Automation is perfectly fine from a distance, but up close it's, well, a little too personal.

D Laura



We've been fascinated with robots and artificial intelligence for decades now. I remember watching Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A *Space Odyssey* when I was a child, terrified at how the ship's sentient robot, HAL 9000, usurped control of the vessel from the film's protagonist, Dr David Bowman. Society at large has a latent fear that robots will do that in real life, but I would advise them to remember that in this important masterpiece of Kubrick's, Bowman prevailed in the end. Of course, our fears of out-of-control computers subjugating humans make nice fodder for the science-fiction genre, but let's not lose our heads. I'm confident that mankind will only ever devise an artificially intelligent device just powerful enough to serve us, but never powerful enough to supplant us.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

You are going to read four people's opinions about artificial intelligence. For questions **1 – 10**, choose from the people (**A – D**). The people may be chosen more than once.

Which person gives each of these opinions about artificial intelligence?

1 We should be clear on what robots are and aren't allowed to do. ☐
2 An analysis of fiction concerning tales of man against machine would ease our fears of robots. ☐
3 The more intimate the chore, the more unnerved we become about robots doing it. ☐
4 Our fears of robots may have been overblown by fictional stories. ☐
5 Simple awareness is important in order for people to make informed choices. ☐
6 Mankind is too aware of the threat machines pose to allow them to be problematic. ☐
7 It's impossible to avoid thinking of the worst-case scenario regarding robot-controlled tasks. ☐
8 It's a common desire to want menial tasks done via automation. ☐
9 That anyone would leave their well-being in the hands of robots is particularly appalling. ☐
10 Our fears of machines are always there, if not always easily visible. ☐



Practice 2

For questions **1 – 8**, read the text below and decide which answer (**a**, **b**, **c** or **d**) best fits each gap.

- Read the sentence with your chosen answer to make sure you have made the correct choice.

Learning more than how to surf

Technology's continual surge forward is well evidenced in television, advertising and multimedia, so it's not difficult to (**1**) _____ that the general public's knowledge of computers must develop at the same pace. The level of computer (**2**) _____ required to succeed in life is hardly limited to emailing, surfing the web and having a basic knowledge of Microsoft Word. A seasoned employee is likely to be well versed in the ins and (**3**) _____ of computer software and hardware, as least to some extent. In fact, former UK culture minister Ed Vaizey recently postulated that knowing how a computer works would be '(**4**) _____ a par with a knowledge of the arts and humanities'. He also suggested that knowing a bit about computer coding would acquaint people with the digital world in a way that would allow them to become an active participant in its (**5**) _____ process.

Acquiring above-average skills in computer usage isn't even all that's required, because as computer systems and programs become (**6**) _____, users have to learn new sets of keystrokes, menu options and interfacing. It goes far beyond basic office management and data processing; medical equipment is often tethered to a computer system which aids doctors and nurses in (**7**) _____ vital data. While there may still be some fields of employment in which computers take a back (**8**) _____ to the work (think fishing), there isn't a job, field or profession that wouldn't benefit from a digital revolution. Come to think of it, even the smallest of fishing boats are likely to be fitted with GPS devices!

1	**a**	reduce	**b**	deduce	**c**	induce	**d** produce
2	**a**	fluency	**b**	familiarity	**c**	literacy	**d** mastery
3	**a**	forwards	**b**	downs	**c**	ups	**d** outs
4	**a**	on	**b**	with	**c**	to	**d** in
5	**a**	customary	**b**	evolutionary	**c**	revolutionary	**d** contemporary
6	**a**	archaic	**b**	conventional	**c**	obsolete	**d** unfashionable
7	**a**	interpreting	**b**	translating	**c**	illuminating	**d** decoding
8	**a**	stage	**b**	seat	**c**	row	**d** door



Practice 3

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Read the passage, then select the word or phrase that fills the blank in both meaning and grammar.

The future place in space

Many people wonder if what they saw in *Total Recall*, a film in which humans inhabited Mars, (**1**) _____ happen one day in their lifetime. While space exploration mostly centres around travel to Mars, scientists have set their sights on destinations further out in our solar system once the technology to do so gets (**2**) _____ to speed. In fact, when mankind (**3**) _____ the fourth planet from the sun, we will have likely found ways to reach arguably far more intriguing celestial bodies, at least in terms of their potential to sustain life.

you can guess answers be distractors.

- Ensure you read the text in the text often help ide answer.
- Remember that not only sentence need to make s make sense in the contex careful of answers with ne that can change the mea
- When a gap relates to tin understand the sequence

One such destination is Europa, one of Jupiter's four Galilean moons. Current technology has revealed that its ice-covered surface contains vast amounts of liquid water underneath, and space explorers (**4**) _____ finding extra-terrestrial life there. Both NASA and ESA recently announced that they are (**5**) _____ probes to Europa. Unfortunately, radiation levels around Europa would wreak havoc with the probes' instruments, preventing an actual landing. Instead, the probes will conduct fly-by missions while orbiting Jupiter, and they are (**6**) _____ to make some tantalising discoveries.

1	**a**	will	**b**	can	**c**	would	**d** did
2	**a**	on	**b**	up	**c**	over	**d** round
3	**a**	reaches	**b**	has reached	**c**	will reach	**d** will be reaching
4	**a**	are anticipating	**b**	anticipate	**c**	will anticipate	**d** have anticipated
5	**a**	to send	**b**	send	**c**	will send	**d** sent
6	**a**	almost	**b**	about	**c**	bound	**d** indeed

Practice 4

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Read the partial review. Use these words and phrases to rewrite the phrases in bold.

exorbitant newbie proficient promotional steep learning curve tech expo tech wiz wearable

When it comes to using technology, I have to admit I'm **not someone who's used a lot of it before** _____. But I wanted to attend **one of those places where they feature the latest in technology** _____, so I decided to go with a friend. While perusing the floor, I came across a booth with a number of **devices that you can wear on your head or body** _____. I tried one on, but honestly, I had a bit of trouble using it. A representative who was **very good and highly skilled** _____ in its use helped me get started. I thought for sure it would **take hours and hours just to learn basic tasks** _____. However, after about 20 minutes, I had mastered it and I really felt like **someone who knows everything about technology** _____! The representatives handed me some **information that lists the device's selling points** _____, but I was hesitant to invest in one. It had **a price tag that was far too high for me to ever be able to afford** _____, so I'll stick with my cheap smartphone.



Practice 5

A **Complete each pair of sentences with these words.**

censors sensors

1 The film was far too racy for prime-time television and the _____ wouldn't allow it to be broadcast until after midnight.

2 Many paper towel dispensers are equipped with _____ that allow you to get paper towels automatically.

ingenious ingenuous

3 The _____ child reached out to shake the robot's hand without any fear of having her hand crushed.

4 Whoever came up with this _____ idea to manufacture handbags from disused plastic is a true environmentalist.

decompose disintegrate

5 If no one removes that dead whale from the beach, its body will soon _____ and produce a nasty stench.

6 Placing a polystyrene cup into nail polish remover will cause it to _____ in a matter of seconds.

emit omit

7 The researcher had to prove that he did not purposefully _____ pertinent data from the report.

8 Stars of average size, like our sun, _____ more energy in one second than mankind has consumed in its entire existence.

LIVEWORKSHEETS