

READING COMPREHENSION

MATCHING HEADINGS – Session 2

ACTIVITY: Read the text and then choose the correct heading for each paragraph.

1. Beware of Robots!

2. Newspapers superseded by technology.

3. The LGVs' main functions

4. Getting the newspaper to the printing center.

5. Controlling the robots

6. Split location for newspaper production

7. Looking ahead

ROBOTS AT WORK

A. The newspaper production process has come a long way from the old days when the paper was written, edited, typeset, and ultimately printed in one building with the journalists working on the upper floors and the printing presses going on the ground floor. These days the editor, sub-editors and journalists who put the paper together are likely to find themselves in a totally different building or maybe even in a different city. This is the situation which now prevails in Sydney. The daily paper is compiled at the editorial headquarters, known as the pre-press center, in the heart of the city, but printed far away in the suburbs at the printing center. Here human beings are in the minority as much of the work is done by automated machines controlled by computers.

B. Once the finished newspaper has been created for the next morning's edition, all the pages are transmitted electronically from the pre-press center to the printing center. The system of transmission is an update on the sophisticated page facsimile system already in use on many other newspapers. An image-setter at the printing center delivers the pages as film. Each page takes less than a minute to produce, although for colour pages four versions, once each for black, cyan, magenta and yellow are sent. The pages are then processed into photographic negatives and the film is used to produce aluminium printing plates ready for the presses.

C. A procession of automated vehicles is busy at the new printing center where the Sydney Morning Herald is printed each day. With lights flashing and warning horns honking, the robots (to give them their correct name, the LGVs or laser guided vehicles) look for all the world like enthusiastic machines from a science fiction movie, as they follow their own random paths around the plant busily getting on with their jobs. Automation of this kind is now standard in all modern newspaper plants. The robots can detect unauthorized personnel and alert security staff immediately if they find an "intruder"; not surprisingly, tall tales are already being told about the machines starting to take on personalities of their own.

D. The robots' principal job, however, is to shift the newsprint (the printing paper) that arrives at the plant in huge reels and emerges at the other end sometime later as newspapers. Once the size of the day's paper and the publishing order are determined at head office, the information is punched into the computer and the LGVs are programmed to go about their work. The LGVs collect the appropriate size paper reels and take them where they have to go. When the press needs another reel, its computer alerts the LGV system. The Sydney LGVs move busily around the press room fulfilling their two key functions - to collect reels of newsprint either from the reel stripping stations, or from the racked supplies in the newsprint storage area. At the stripping station the tough wrapping that helps to protect a reel of paper from rough handling is removed. Any damaged paper is peeled off and the reel is then weighed.

E. The question newspaper workers must now ask, however is, "how long will it be before the robots are writing the newspapers as well as running the printing Center, churning out the latest edition every morning and distributing the papers to sales outlets?"