7 Tweenbots



Pre-Reading

Think about the following questions.

1. What would you do if you saw a robot like this on the street?
2. What do you think a small robot like this could be used for?
3. Do you think that most people are kind and helpful?

Vocabulary Preview

Write the letter of the word or phrase with the same meaning as the underlined word.

a. to steer; to travel through	d. gotten to or reached a destination
b. help	e. lack of power or means
c. place to which one is going	f. related to people or society

1. ___ A big <u>social</u> problem these days is that people don't want to help strangers.
2. ___ New York is not my final <u>destination</u>. From New York, I'm traveling to Boston.
3. ___ She hasn't <u>arrived</u> yet, so let's wait a little longer.
4. ___ The robot's <u>inability</u> to turn or change direction is a problem.
5. ___ It is not easy to find some of the tourist sites. This map can <u>aid</u> you during your visit.
6. ___ The streets are narrow, so it is difficult to <u>navigate</u> a large car on them.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Tweenbots

Track 13

Imagine the busy streets of New York City, an enormous place with millions of people. Every day, the streets are **congested** with people going about their daily lives. Now imagine a small robot in the middle of all of those people rolling down a busy **sidewalk**. Most people would not even notice the ten-inch smiling robot, called a Tweenbot, rolling along the street. This strange machine may interest some people, while others would ignore it completely. A researcher interested in studying how helpful people really are uses such robots in her experiments that take place on the streets of New York.

The Tweenbots experiment is the idea and creation of Kacie Kinzer. Kinzer's idea was to make a robot that could navigate the city and reach its destination only if it was aided by **pedestrians**. Tweenbots rely on the kindness of warm-hearted strangers. Made simply of **cardboard**, wheels, and a device to turn the wheels, the Tweenbots face many dangers on the city streets. They could be run over by cars or **smashed** by **careless** kids. Kinzer thought her little robots might even be seen as some kind of **terrorist** device. The only real protection a Tweenbot has is its friendly smile. In addition to that, each of Kinzer's robots is fitted with a flag that displays instructions for the robot's destination. The only way these robots will reach their final point is if someone lends them a hand. Tweenbots are essentially a social experiment aimed at providing people a chance to show how caring they are.

On a daily basis, people in New York City are often in a hurry to get around. However, the Tweenbots, through their inability to look after themselves, took people out of their normal **routines**. The people who noticed the helpless little robots were actually interested in helping the Tweenbots find their way home. Tweenbots move at a constant speed and can only go in a straight line. If one was to get stuck, or was going in the wrong direction, it would be up to strangers to free it or turn it in the right direction. Surprisingly, no Tweenbot was lost or damaged, and each one arrived at its target in good condition. In fact, most people treated the robot in a gentle **manner**, and some even treated it as though it were a small living being.



Even if you were in a rush to go somewhere, would you stop and help a Tweenbot successfully reach its destination?

Reading Time _____ minutes _____ seconds 418 words

2 *congest*: to block up
4 *sidewalk*: a concrete walking path beside a street
11 *pedestrian*: a person who is walking
12 *cardboard*: a heavy, thick kind of paper used for making boxes
13 *smash*: to crush; to break into pieces
13 *careless*: not careful
14 *terrorist*: a person who hurts or kills others for political or religious reasons
22 *routine*: a usual schedule
29 *manner*: a way of acting or behaving

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Reading Comprehension

Choose the best answer.

1. What is this reading about?

a. A place to buy robots
b. A new kind of toy
c. An experiment
d. An interesting idea for the future

2. What is a Tweenbot?

a. A person from New York City
b. A ten-inch smiling robot
c. A pedestrian
d. A very large machine

3. How did a Tweenbot get to its final destination?

a. With the help of other Tweenbots
b. With the help of kind pedestrians on the street
c. With the help of Kacie Kinzer
d. With the help of other robots in New York City

4. Which of the following statements is NOT correct?

a. Most Tweenbots arrived at their destination damaged or broken.
b. Most people treated the Tweenbots in a gentle manner.
c. Tweenbots could not navigate the city on their own.
d. Tweenbots move at a constant speed and can only go in a straight line.

5. What can be inferred about the Tweenbot?

a. They were useful for research.
b. They were ignored by most people.
c. They were helpful for pedestrians.
d. They did not work as planned.

Idiomatic Expressions

Find these idioms in the reading.

- **rely on** [to require; to depend on]
  My friend is relying on me to help her study for the history exam.
- **be fitted with** [to be supplied with; to have]
  All of the rooms at the hotel were fitted with queen-sized beds and flat screen TVs.
- **lend (someone) a hand** [to help someone or something out]
  I have to move some furniture today. Can you lend me a hand?

Fill in the blank with one of the above idioms. Change its form if necessary.

1. If you see someone who needs help, it is always nice to _____.

2. Each jewelry box _____ a special gold lock.

3. Our club _____ the money we collect from our members each month.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Summary

Fill in the blanks with the correct words or phrases.

aid	**arrive**	**destination**	**inability**
lend a hand	**navigate**	**rely on**	**routines**

The Tweenbots experiment is the idea of Kacie Kinzer. Tweenbots are small machines that 1 _____ the kindness of strangers to 2 _____ and help them reach their final destination. Surprisingly, some pedestrians took the time to stop and 3 _____ a Tweenbot. Each robot's 4 _____ to turn means that it needs the help of people to 5 _____ the sidewalks of New York. With a person's help, a Tweenbot can continue in the right direction to 6 _____ successfully at its 7 _____.



This experiment shows that people are quite helpful and don't mind being distracted from their normal 8 _____ to help a small robot in need.

Listening

Robots That Help

Track 14

Listen to the dialog and choose the best answer.

1. What is the man telling the woman about?

a. Building a robot
b. Small robots that help people
c. Robots that do the dishes
d. Cleaning his house

2. According to the man, what do these small robots do?

a. Help out around someone's house if they need it
b. Help students do their homework at school
c. Take elderly people for walks
d. Take elderly people to the doctor

3. Why does the woman want a small robot?

a. To make her bed
b. To help with the dishes
c. To clean floors
d. To do the laundry

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Discussion

Discuss the following questions.

1. If you saw a small robot on the street that needed to reach a destination, would you help it?
2. What surprised you most about the Tweenbot experiment?
3. When was a time you helped someone? Did you spend a lot of time helping that person?

Grammar

May or *Might*

May or *might* can be used to express a possibility due to circumstances.

This strange machine (may / must) interest some people, while others would ignore it completely.
Kinzer thought her little robots (can / might) even be seen as some kind of terrorist device.

Writing

Write your own short paragraph by answering the questions below.

Helping Others

(1) Do you like helping people? Why or why not? **(2)** If you saw someone that was lost, would you help that person? **(3)** Have you ever been lost before? When was it? **(4)** Who helped you? Did you find your way home safely? **(5)** Why do you think it is important to be kind and helpful to others?

Example

Yes, I like helping people because it makes me feel good. If I saw someone who was lost, I would help that person. I got lost before in a park when I was very young. A police officer helped me get home safely. I think it is important to be kind and helpful to others because one day you may need someone to be kind and helpful to you.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Vocabulary and Idiom Review

A. Choose the best word or phrase to fill in the blank.

1. I live in a(n) _____ city that has over five million people living in it.
a. enormous b. physical c. social d. kind

2. Don't _____ just your memory. Write down important appointments.
a. be fitted with b. rely on c. run over d. lend a hand

3. He left this morning, but he never told me what his _____ would be.
a. damage b. cardboard c. destination d. inability

4. There was no one at the information desk who could _____ me.
a. associate b. estimate c. aid d. navigate

5. If you _____ at the festival today, I will buy you an ice cream after it is over.
a. lend a hand b. are far c. wipe out d. beef up

6. I forgot to put the mail out this morning because that is not part of my normal _____.
a. motion b. glacier c. superstition d. routine

7. Someone sat on my lunch bag! Now my sandwich is _____.
a. interested b. smashed c. fitted d. blocked

B. Choose the correct form of the word to fill in the blank.

8. The person who sits in the seat beside the pilot is the _____.
a. navigation b. navigator c. navigated

9. You can see a list of all the _____ flights on the screen over there.
a. arrivals b. arrives c. arriving

10. The young girl has the amazing _____ to sing and dance like a professional entertainer.
a. ability b. inability c. unable

LIVEWORKSHEETS