HOW WILL WE LIVE?

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A Picture this: You wake up in the morning. A soft light turns on in your room. You go into the bathroom and the shower starts. The water is the perfect temperature. After your shower, you go into the kitchen. Your favorite breakfast is already cooked, and it's on the table, ready to eat. Now it's time to go to work. It's a rainy day. You live alone, but you find that your umbrella and hat are already by the door. How is all this possible? Welcome to your future life!

APPLIANCES THAT TALK

B **Technology** will allow homes in the future to be "smart." Appliances will communicate with each other—and with you. Your stove, for instance, will tell you when your food is cooked and ready to eat. Refrigerators will **suggest** recipes based on food items you already have.

C The technology is possible because of tiny information-storing devices called RFID[1] chips. People already use them to keep track of pets and farm animals. Future RFID chips will **store** information about all the items in your cabinets.[2] For example, they will record the date that you bought each item. Other devices will "read" this information using radio waves. When you need more food, your cabinets will tell you to buy it.

[1]RFID stands for "radio-frequency identification."
[2]A cabinet is a type of cupboard used for storing medicine, drinks, and other items.

HOUSES THAT THINK

Are you tired of the color or pattern of your walls? In a smart home, you won't have to repaint them. The walls will actually be digital screens, like computer or TV screens. The technology is called OLED,[3] and it's here already.

D OLEDs are tiny devices that use electricity to light things. You can find the same technology in today's thin TV screens. OLED walls can become clear, like windows, or display colors and patterns, like walls.

A computer network will link these walls with everything else in your house. This intelligent technology works like a computer "brain" that controls your entire house. It will also adapt to your preferences. Your house can learn

E about your likes and dislikes. It will then use that knowledge to control the environment. For example, it will set the heat in the house to your favorite temperature. It will turn on the shower at the right heat. It will also darken the windows at night and lighten them when it's time to wake up.

ROBOTS THAT FEEL?

But how about your cooked breakfast, and the umbrella and hat you found by the door? For those, you can thank your robot helper. Futurologists predict

F that many homes will have robots in the future. Robots already do many things, such as building cars and vacuuming floors. But scientists today are starting to build friendlier, more intelligent robots—ones that people will feel more comfortable having around in the house.

Sociable robots will be able to show feelings with their faces, just like

G humans. They will smile and frown, make eye contact, and speak. These robots will do work around the house, such as cooking and cleaning. They will even take care of children and the elderly.

How soon will this smart home be a reality? There's a good chance it

H will be a part of your life in the next 10 years, perhaps sooner. Much of the technology is already here.

Task 2: Choose the correct answer for each item. (Source: My ELT Pathways' online resource).

1. What can the appliances in a smart home do?

a. communicate

b. conserve energy

c. change color

2. What can smart appliances do with food?

a. defrost and freeze food, and buy food that you need

b. wash and chop vegetables, and serve food when it's ready

c. cook food and tell you when it's ready, and suggest recipes

3. How do smart refrigerators and cabinets know what is inside them?

a. You update your preferences after you use something.

b. Chips record and store the information about the food.

c. Robots communicate with the cabinets and with you.

4. In a smart home, why won't you hang a picture on the wall?

a. The walls are digital screens.

b. The walls are all windows.

c. The walls change color often.

5. How do the walls, appliances, and other systems communicate?

a. They need a smart robot to connect them.

b. You can control them with your cell phone.

c. They are linked through a computer network.

6. How will sociable robots be similar to people?

a. They will be able to laugh, cry, and entertain people.

b. They will live with people and take care of their children.

c. They will be able to speak and show emotions with their faces.