

FOCUS

Reading

1 Read the text and choose the correct answer, A, B or C.

MAN AND MACHINE

BY MARK RAVENS

Science and technology have developed a lot since the fifteenth century, when the artist Leonardo da Vinci drew mechanical figures that looked like men – the first known robot designs. Now, of course, robots are everywhere, from factories to space stations, and they safely carry out all sorts of tasks, from cutting the grass to performing surgery. However, until recently most of them haven't looked like humans at all, as Leonardo imagined, and they certainly haven't had feelings. But now all that is beginning to change.

Imagine a world in which robots not only look like us but also know our moods, and have feelings themselves. It might even be possible for robots to become our friends! Science fiction writers have written about a world just like that for many years, and scientists are now predicting that intelligent robots like these will exist quite soon. In fact, they've already produced one that recognizes sound, movement and touch. Its bright red heart, which you can see through its plastic body, beats faster if you are rough with the robot or shout at it. But its heart slows down if you are gentle with it. Although it can't talk, it's easy to believe the robot actually has feelings!

It's true that so far 'human' robots do not really move, talk or respond in the way we humans do, but they are becoming more advanced all the time. At some point in the future, a robot will definitely be created that may not look like us, but will be capable of doing anything that we can. And then we will truly be in the world of science fiction stories!

1 What does Mark say about da Vinci's robot drawings?

- A The designs were amazing for their time.
- B Some later designs were based on them.
- C They were the earliest designs ever recorded.

2 In the first paragraph, Mark says that robots

- A are used much more than before.
- B already look like real people.
- C can still only do basic tasks.

3 What does Mark say about science fiction writers?

- A They have warned about the dangers of intelligent robots.
- B The robots they have written about might soon be real.
- C They are looking forward to having robots as friends.

4 Mark says that the robot with a heart

- A realises what's happening around it.
- B really has feelings.
- C understands how other people feel.

5 In the final paragraph, Mark says he

- A hopes that robots won't advance much further.
- B believes that completely 'human' robots will only exist in stories.
- C thinks that robots will one day do what humans do.

FOCUS

7 Read the text. Complete gaps 1-5 with sentences A-F. There is one extra sentence.

- A** In 2005, Kyle MacDonald was in the news when he started with a small red paperclip, and ended up with an entire house.
- B** He found the paperclip on his desk and it inspired him to do something different.
- C** However, if it's something expensive, like a car or a computer, it's a good idea to see it first.
- D** Next came several bikes, a laptop and then a series of cars.
- E** On the other hand, Steven is planning to sell his Porsche.
- F** He became the owner of a car worth about \$10,000 that he saw online – but he got it without any money!

TEEN TYCOON

BY SARAH MARSH

Have you ever bought something on the Internet that wasn't new? It's becoming a more popular way to buy second-hand things, and you can certainly pick up some bargains. (1) _____ That will ensure you don't make a mistake that will cost you money.

Of course, some people get things from the Internet that they don't need to pay for! One person who has got second-hand things online is teenager Steven Ortiz, from the US. (2) _____ So how did he do it? With patient and clever use of a website he discovered, which advertises items that people want to exchange for something else. The whole process took him two years.

It all started when Steven was given an old mobile phone by a friend. He traded it for a better phone, which he then exchanged for an MP3 player. (3) _____ With the fourteenth exchange, he ended up with a Porsche – a very expensive sports car. Luckily, by then he was old enough to drive it!

The story may sound too good to be true, but in fact, Steven isn't the first person to do something like this. (4) _____ He did this in only fourteen moves. Kyle did it by creating a website called 'One red paperclip' and also blogging about his adventures. Followers contacted him with offers of items to exchange, and altogether the process took him a year.

Steven and Kyle have both become celebrities in their home countries since sharing their stories. Kyle has written a book about what he did, and is often asked to give talks at events and conferences. (5) _____ He is thinking of buying a car that is less expensive to repair.