

A Scan the article. Who is the article about? What idea did he have?

# Improving the world – one idea at a time



[1] Jack Andraka was 15 when he came up with an idea for a new way to test for pancreatic cancer. When Andraka was 14, a family friend died of the disease, and this affected him deeply. This kind of cancer is particularly lethal because there is no test you can have done to find it in the early stages. By the time standard tests determine you have the disease, it is often too late. Realizing that this was the case, Andraka decided to try to develop a test that might catch problems at the earliest stages.

[2] The road ahead looked difficult for Andraka. He was still a high school student, and he wanted to create something that no one else had done. But Andraka read endlessly about the disease, wrote a proposal for his idea, and sent it out to 200 cancer researchers. Only one professor, Dr. Anirban Maitra, responded positively. Dr. Maitra agreed to work with Andraka on his idea, giving him guidance and access to a laboratory.



[3] The next big reward for Andraka's perseverance was winning the grand prize at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair. This prestigious award is given to young innovators who have developed a world-changing idea. Developing the test is likely to take many years, but Andraka hopes the test will eventually improve people's lives – and maybe save them.

[4] Jack Andraka is not alone as a young innovator. After all, there were 1,499 other contestants for the Intel award, and all of them had ground-breaking ideas. For Andraka, having a family that loves science and encourages creative thinking gave him an advantage. But the key for Andraka is that reading, research, and discovery are just plain fun – and the chance to improve the world around him in the process makes it even better.

B Read the article. Write the number of each paragraph next to its summary sentence.

- \_\_\_\_\_ One doctor's help makes the unlikely become possible.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A personal experience creates a groundbreaking idea.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Family support and a passion for discovery can lead to great things.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Although he won a big prize, there's plenty of work ahead.

C Choose the correct answers.

1. Pancreatic cancer is so serious because **there is no treatment / it is hard to diagnose early**.
2. Andraka was inspired to find a solution by **an upsetting experience / reading about a disease**.
3. The response to Andraka's proposal was **fairly positive / largely negative**.
4. Andraka's test for pancreatic cancer is **in use now / being developed now**.
5. Andraka's family helped him by **encouraging him / working on his idea**.

D **GROUP WORK** If you could come up with an idea to help humanity, what would it be?

## 13 READING

A Skim the article. Which sentence below could be another title for the article? Why?

Professionals Who Can Change the Future

An Unhappy View of the Future

Good Guesses About the Future

**Futurists (sometimes called futurologists)** are professionals who make predictions about the future of human society, the earth, and even the universe. They study the past and present in order to understand how things change and what factors can alter or interrupt these changes.

Since most people are curious about the future, futurists often try to picture how our lives will be different in a certain year. 2050 is a popular target since it is far enough away to require some speculation, but close enough that many of us will see the changes in our lifetime. Here are some of their predictions.

In the area of technology, computers will be nearly a billion times more powerful than they are today. That means that there will be almost no limit to what you can create, store, and display. Computers will also be small enough to implant in people's brains to improve memory, vision, or even to allow paralyzed people to move again. For those who love shopping or travel, a technology called "immersive telepresence" will allow us to actually feel like we are in two places at the same

time, buying things in expensive foreign shops or visiting fascinating tourist destinations while sitting at home.

There will be many more people on earth – as many as 9.6 billion. This means that food production and housing will need to increase dramatically. People will live in *mushroom cities*, skyscrapers that house many people and use solar power and other eco-friendly technologies. Futurists also think that – thanks to advances in genetics – we will be close to finding cures for most human diseases. Some futurists even predict that wars and other conflicts will become less common as people learn that they have to get along in order to survive.

Of course, none of these predictions is a certainty. Even futurists can't know how epidemics, natural disasters, or climate change will alter our lives. Having some idea of what is in store for us, however, may help us to make the best choices for our own personal future.

B Read the article. Check (✓) the predictions futurists made about the year 2050.

- Computers will be as powerful as they are today.
- Tiny computers will help people with physical problems.
- Travel will be faster than it is now.
- People will be able to explore places without leaving home.
- People will need less food.
- Many people will live together in eco-friendly buildings.
- People will not get sick anymore.
- People will fight with each other over food and water.

C **GROUP WORK** Do you agree that the predictions in the article are likely?

What changes would you like to see in the future?