



"Robots"

Reading Comprehension Assessment

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Name _____
 Date _____

• Reading Comprehension Assessment

Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the questions below.

Robots

A robot is a machine. But it is not just any machine. It is a **special** kind of machine. It is a machine that moves. It follows instructions. The instructions come from a computer. Because it is a machine, it does not make mistakes. And it does not get tired. And it never complains. Unless you tell it to!

Robots are all around us. Some robots are used to make things. For example, robots can help make cars. Some robots are used to explore dangerous places. For example, robots can help explore volcanoes. Some robots are used to clean things. These robots can help vacuum your house. Some robots can even recognize words. They can be used to help answer telephone calls. Some robots look like humans. But most robots do not. Most robots just look like machines.



Long ago, people imagined robots. Over 2,000 years ago, a famous poet imagined robots. The poet's name was Homer. His robots were made of gold. They cleaned things and they made things. But they were not real. They were imaginary. Nobody was able to make a real robot. The first real robot was made in 1961. It was called Unimate. It was used to help make cars. It looked like a giant arm.

In the future, we will have even more robots. They will do things that we can't do. Or they will do things that we don't want to do. Or they will do things that are too dangerous for us. Robots will help us fight fires. They will help us fight wars. They will help us fight sickness. They will help us discover things. They will help make life better.

1) As used in paragraph 1, we can understand that something **special** is NOT

- A. normal
- B. expensive
- C. perfect
- D. tired

2) According to the author, robots may be used to

- I. make cars
 - II. explore volcanoes
 - III. answer telephone calls
- A. I only
 - B. I and II only
 - C. II and III only
 - D. I, II, and III

1) A

Question Type: Vocabulary
special (*adjective*): being a particular one; particular, individual, or certain.

In order to answer this question correctly, we need to figure out what the word special means as it is used in paragraph 1. Then we need to say which word means the opposite of this meaning. To do this, we can start by using context clues—hints from known words or phrases around the unknown word or phrase—to help us figure out what the word special must mean, as it is used in paragraph 1. In paragraph 1, we read: “It is a special kind of machine.” In the previous two sentences, we are told that a robot is “a machine,” but that it is “not just any machine.” From this, we can tell that a robot is a machine, but that it is not just any machine. Because it is not just any machine, we can tell that it is not like other machines, or that it is different from normal machines. From this, we can understand that, when the author says that a robot is “a special kind of machine,” he or she must mean that it is not a normal or ordinary kind of machine. This lets us know that, as it is used in paragraph 1, the word special must mean “different from normal.” We can now understand that the word special means the opposite of “normal.” Something special is not normal. Therefore **(A)** is correct. Using the above information, we can tell that the word special, as it is used in paragraph 1, must mean “different from normal.” This lets us know that the meaning of the word special does not have anything to do with whether or not it is expensive. We can now understand that the word special does not mean “not expensive.” This eliminates **(B)**. Using the above information, we can tell that the word special, as it is used in paragraph 1, must mean “different from normal.” This lets us know that the meaning of the word special does not have anything to do with whether or not it is perfect, since something that is different from normal might or might not be perfect. We can now understand that the word special does not mean “not perfect.” This eliminates **(C)**. Using the above information, we can tell that the word special, as it is used in paragraph 1, must mean “different from normal.” This lets us know that the meaning of the word special does not have anything to do with being tired. We can now understand that the word special does not mean “not tired.” This eliminates **(D)**.

2) D

Question Type: Detail

In paragraph 2, we read: “robots can help make cars.” This lets us know that robots may be used to make cars. This supports **option (I)**. In paragraph 2, we also read: “robots can help explore volcanoes.” This lets us know that robots may be used to explore volcanoes. This supports **option (II)**. In paragraph 2, we again also read that robots “can be used to help answer telephone calls.” This lets us know that robots may be used to answer telephone calls. This supports **option (III)**. Therefore **(D)** is correct.

3) C

Question Type: Detail

In paragraph 2, we are told all about the things that robots can do. We are told that “some robots are used to make things.” We are told that “some robots are used to explore dangerous places.” We are told that “some robots are used to clean things.” We are told that “some robots can even recognize words,” and “answer telephone calls.” We are also told about some examples of things that robots do. For example, we are told about robots that help build cars, that help explore volcanoes, and that vacuum houses. All of this lets us know about things that robots can do. From this we can understand that the main purpose of paragraph 2 must be to describe the things a robot can do. Therefore **(C)** is correct. In paragraph 2, we are told all about the things that robots can do. We are not told anything about how to make a robot. From this we can understand that the main purpose of paragraph 2 cannot be to show how easy it is to make a robot. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. Although this passage does tell us what a robot is, it does not tell this to us in paragraph 2. It tells us in paragraph 1, where we are told that a robot is a machine that can move and follow instructions from a computer. In paragraph 2, we are told all about the things that robots can do, but we are not told what a robot is. From this we can understand that the main purpose of paragraph 2 cannot be to tell what a robot is. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. Although this passage does explain to us the difference between a robot and an ordinary machine, it does not do so in paragraph 2. It does this in paragraph 1, where we learn that a robot is a “special machine,” and we are told that a robot is a special machine because it can move and follow instructions from a computer. In paragraph 2, we are told all about the things that robots can do, but we are not told how to tell the difference between a robot and a machine. From this we can understand that the main purpose of paragraph 2 cannot be to explain the difference between a robot and a machine. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

4) A

Question Type: Detail

In paragraph 3, we read: “The first real robot was made in 1961.” This lets us know that, according to this passage, the first real robot was made in 1961. Therefore **(A)** is correct. The passage does not provide information to support choices **(B)** or **(C)**. Therefore they are incorrect. Although the passage does tell us that a famous poet imagined robots over 2000 years ago, it also tells us that these robots “were not real,” and that the “first real robot was made in 1961.” This lets us know that the first real robot was not made 2000 years ago. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

5) D

Question Type: Inference

In paragraph 4, we read that, in the future, robots “will do things that we can’t.” We also read that they “will do things that we don’t want to do.” Again, we also read that they “will do things that are too dangerous for us.” We are then given some examples of these things that robots will do. For example, they will help us fight fires, wars, and sickness. And they will help us discover things. All of this lets us know that the best uses for robots are for tasks that are very hard for humans to do, or very dangerous for humans to do, or that help us discover things we couldn’t discover otherwise. Going to explore Mars would be both very hard and very dangerous for humans to do, and would help us discover things we couldn’t discover otherwise. From this we can understand that helping to explore Mars is a best use of a robot. Therefore **(D)** is correct. Using the above information, we can tell that the best uses for robots are for tasks that are very hard for humans to do, or very dangerous for humans to do, or that help us discover things we couldn’t discover otherwise. Helping to make a sandwich is not something that would be very hard or dangerous for humans to do, and would not help us discover things we couldn’t discover otherwise. From this we can understand that helping to make a sandwich is not a best use of a robot. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect. Using the above information, we can tell that the best uses for robots are for tasks that are very hard for humans to do, or very dangerous for humans to do, or that help us discover things we couldn’t discover

otherwise. Helping to tie shoes is not something that would be very hard or dangerous for humans to do, and would not help us discover things we couldn't discover otherwise. From this we can understand that helping to tie shoes is not a best use of a robot. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. Using the above information, we can tell that the best uses for robots are for tasks that are very hard for humans to do, or very dangerous for humans to do, or that help us discover things we couldn't discover otherwise. Helping to read a book is not something that would be very hard or dangerous for humans to do, and would not help us discover things we couldn't discover otherwise. From this we can understand that helping to read a book is not a best use of a robot. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

6) **C**

Question Type: Global

In this passage, we learn many things about robots. We learn what a robot is, and that robots do not make mistakes or get tired. We learn that robots can help make things, explore dangerous places, clean things, and recognize words. We learn that the first robot was made to help build cars, and that before that imaginary robots were imagined as helping to clean and to make things. We learn that in the future robots will help us to do the things we cannot do or do not want to do, and that they will "make life better." All of this lets us know that the most important thing about robots, according to the author of this passage, is that they help. The author does not talk about any robots that do not help or that cause harm. All of the robots he or she talks about are helpful robots. From this we can understand that the author of this passage most likely feels that robots are helpful. Therefore **(C)** is correct. Although the author of this passage does tell us that people from long ago in history imagined robots, this does not mean that robots are old. In fact, we are told that nobody was able to make a real robot until 1961. Also, the author of this passage talks mostly about the robots of today or the robots of tomorrow. The only old robot that he or she talks about is the first real robot, the Unimate. From this we can understand that the author of this passage most likely does not feel that robots are old. This eliminates **(A)**. The author of this passage does not say anything that might make us think that robots are confusing. From this we can understand that the author of this passage most likely does not feel that robots are confusing. This eliminates **(B)**. Although the author of this passage does talk about dangerous things, he or she does not say that robots are dangerous. He or she says that robots can help to "explore dangerous places" or "do things that are too dangerous for us." This lets us know that the author of this passage most likely does not feel that robots are dangerous. This eliminates **(D)**.