

Select Readings, Second Edition

Intermediate, Midterm

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

High-Tech Times

Science fiction is now a reality

Flying cars! Robot teachers! Jet packs! Sounds like the stuff of the newest Hollywood science fiction blockbuster, right? Not anymore. Technological advances over the past 2,000 years have actually come about relatively slowly—electricity, the automobile, telecommunications, and air travel being some of the most obvious innovations of our modern times. However, since the arrival of the Internet some twenty years ago, it seems that we are suddenly moving at warp speed. Here, we take a look at some of the most exciting new technological creations of the past year and how they may just change all of our lives.

Robots teach English in South Korea

South Korea, which employs more than 30,000 foreigner educators to teach English, has some new plans for its English-language classrooms. Meet *RoboTeacher*. Starting in late 2009, students in several schools started learning from these brightly-colored little androids, and the results seem promising.

Down the line, the government plans to introduce the RoboTeacher into more and more schools—as many as 20 over the next year—in an effort to give South Korean students a head start in English. Not surprisingly, RoboTeacher has many flesh-and-blood teachers more than a little worried. With a cost far more modest than maintaining a human teacher, experts say the androids could eventually make foreign English teachers pretty much redundant¹.

The world's first practical jetpack?

Since the 1930s, when the first images of future transport appeared on movie screens, the jetpack has always stood out. However, with the exception of the clumsy *Bell Rocket Belt*, developed in the 1960s, no one has been able to make the idea 'fly.' Enter New Zealand inventor Glenn Martin, who has spent nearly 30 years developing what he calls the world's first practical jetpack—the *Martin Jetpack*.

At first glance, the Martin Jetpack doesn't really appear to be practical. It looks more like two leaf-blowers attached to a lawn mower² engine. While the design details may still need to be worked out, the Martin Jetpack could just bridge the gap between fantasy and reality. With its 200-horsepower engine, the jetpack is supposed to be able to take its operator to a height of 750 meters. The inventor hopes to start sales by early 2011. But with a price tag of around \$100,000, don't expect to see too many people wearing it to school or work soon.

Flying car changes the morning commute

¹ **redundant** no longer necessary

² **lawn mower** a machine for cutting grass

When the co-founders of Massachusetts-based Terrafugia, husband and wife team Carl Dietrich and Anna Mracek Dietrich, teamed up with a group of aeronautics³ engineers, they entered an entirely new frontier. And their invention, the *Transition*, could just redefine the idea of door-to-door travel. The *Transition* is a street-legal, airbag-and-parachute-equipped flying car—and at only \$200,000, it costs less than a Lamborghini. The *Transition* can carry two passengers about 800 kilometers at a cruising speed of 169 km/h, and the first models will be available in 2011.

A real-life *Iron Man*

The *XOS2*, developed by Salt Lake City-based Raytheon Sarcos, is a real-life *Iron Man* suit. Demonstration videos have mesmerized all who have seen them. Allowing even the least muscular wearer to lift 90-kg weights easily, and to punch through thick pieces of wood that would ordinarily be difficult to cut with a saw, the *XOS2* is like a superhero fantasy. Don't get too excited, though—the suit will only be available to the military and emergency workers for the time being.

1. According to the passage, advances in technology have been
 - A. moving at warp speed since the arrival of electricity.
 - B. obviously science fiction.
 - C. fairly slow over the past 2,000 years, until recently.
 - D. developed primarily for the movie industry.
2. Which of the following can be inferred from paragraphs 2 and 3?
 - A. The RoboTeacher has already demonstrated that it can help improve students' English.
 - B. Foreign teachers of English are already being decreased in favor of the RoboTeacher.
 - C. The RoboTeacher costs less to maintain than originally projected.
 - D. Each school in South Korea will eventually have 20 RoboTeachers to use.
3. The word "maintaining" in paragraph 3 is closest in meaning to
 - A. managing
 - B. recruiting
 - C. paying
 - D. assessing
4. Why does the passage say that the Martin Jetpack doesn't appear to be practical?
 - A. It's made out of leaf-blowers and a lawn mower engine.
 - B. The design doesn't look very sophisticated at the moment.
 - C. It doesn't really fly yet.
 - D. It was created in the 1960s.
5. What is the main use of the "operator" mentioned in paragraph 5?
 - A. inventor

³ **aeronautics** the study of flying through the air

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- B. user
 - C. engineer
 - D. designer
6. The Martin Jetpack can
- A. travel a distance of 750 meters.
 - B. carry two passengers at a time.
 - C. be purchased for about \$100,000.
 - D. travel at up to 200 km/h.
7. In paragraph 5, in “see too many people wearing it,” the word “it” refers to
- A. jetpack
 - B. operator
 - C. inventor
 - D. price tag
8. All of the following is true about the Transition EXCEPT
- A. it can carry two passengers at a time.
 - B. it has both airbags and parachutes.
 - C. it costs less than a Lamborghini.
 - D. it currently goes about 800 km/h.
9. The word “frontier” in paragraph 6 is closest in meaning to
- A. territory
 - B. edge
 - C. country
 - D. inspection
10. Which of the following can be inferred from paragraph 7?
- A. The XOS2 is being used extensively in the construction industry.
 - B. The XOS2 will probably eventually be sold to the public.
 - C. To use the XOS2 effectively, the wearer should weigh at least 90 kg.
 - D. The XOS2 has already been featured in a superhero movie.
11. In paragraph 7, in “all who have seen them,” the word “them” refers to
- A. the XOS2 suits
 - B. 90-kg weights
 - C. military and emergency workers
 - D. demonstration videos
12. The word “muscular” in paragraph 7 is closest in meaning to
- A. imposing

- B. powerful
- C. competent
- D. healthy

13. Which of the following inventions is NOT mentioned in the article?

- A. the automobile
- B. a flying car
- C. a teaching robot
- D. the light bulb

14. The purpose of the reading is most likely

- A. to compare newer technology with older science fiction.
- B. to give readers interesting information about new technological products.
- C. to persuade readers to buy one of the products featured.
- D. to inform readers about upcoming changes to certain types of careers.

15. The overall tone of this reading is

- A. scientific and technical
- B. academic and serious
- C. light and informative
- D. entertaining and silly