

**High-Intermediate 1**  
**Unit 6, Reading**  
**Presented by Mohammad Rajabpur**

## **My Friend the Robot**

**robot** = automaton

**automaton** (singular) ⇔ **automata** (plural)

Technology marches on. What we only dreamed about yesterday is a reality today. What we dream about today will become a reality tomorrow—or, at the rate things are going, maybe this evening. Did you know, for example, that there are now computers that can operate underwater? Soon there will be computers that we can wear. There is now computer-controlled plastic surgery. And then there are robots. Twenty years ago, hardly anyone thought personal computers would become common in the home, but they have. Robots may now be at the stage that personal computers were twenty years ago. The development of the personal robot may be the next big technological advance, and some are predicting that within twenty years, home robots will have become as common as PCs are today.

**march on** = advance; make progress

**rate** = speed

**surgery** = surgical operation

**surgeon** = a doctor who can perform surgical operations

**and then** = moreover, besides

**stage** = phase, level

**advance** (n.) = progress, breakthrough

Robots that looked like vaguely humanoid, walking tin cans used to be the staple of science fiction writers. Czech writer Karel Čapek gave us the word "robot" in his play R.U.R., Rossum's Universal Robots, in 1921. Čapek coined the term from *robota*, which means "forced labor" or "drudgery." The robots in Čapek's play eventually destroyed mankind because they had learned to love and hate. Today, though, most visualize robots not as threatening creatures but as beneficial machines that are helping us with our work, especially unpleasant drudgery.

**vaguely** = a little, slightly

**humanoid** (adj.) = resembling human beings

**tin** = a kind of metal

**tin can** = a can made of tin

**vaguely humanoid, walking tin cans** = tin cans which could walk and to a little extent looked like humans

**android** = a robot which looks like human beings = humanoid robot

**staple** = a main or important part of something



**Karel Čapek**

**play** = a piece of text intended to be played by actors or actresses on a stage

**term** = word

**coin a term** = make a new word

**drudgery** = chores; hard and boring tasks

**eventually** = finally; at last

**mankind** = human beings, humans, man

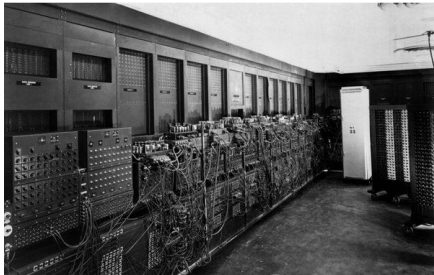
**visualize** = think of; imagine

**beneficial** = useful



**Gregory Dudek**

Computer science professor Gregory Dudek recalls how bulky and awkward computers were when they first appeared and how they've been getting much smaller and more efficient. He predicts the same kind of development for the personal robot, saying, "That's the kind of change we're looking for in the robot industry. I don't think it will happen in the next two years, but in the next five or ten, certainly."



**ENIAC: the first programmable electronic computer**

**recall** = remember

**bulky** = oversized, too big, huge, immense, gigantic

**awkward** = inconvenient; difficult to use

**efficient** = effective

**industry** = the business of production

However, many researchers see future robots as much more than just mechanical workers that perform the tasks we don't want to do. Many see them as companions. Consider robotic pets, for example. The Sony Corporation has developed a robotic dog that wags its tail, fetches a ball, and responds to human commands. Researchers at the Georgia Institute of Technology have been developing a mobile robot called Pepe, short for "personal pet." Its makers hope that future users will regard it more as a friend or companion than as a robot. Wouldn't you like to have a robot pet that does what you want, but you wouldn't have to feed it or take it to the vet to get its shots?

**companion** = friend

**corporation** = company

**wag** = move

**fetch** = go and bring

**respond to** = reply to, answer

**command** = order

**mobile** (adj.) = that can move

**regard** = consider

**vet** = veterinarian = a doctor for animals

**shot** = injection



**Sony Robotic Dog**

Another use of robots is as waiters or servants. Does this sound unbelievable? It isn't. In London's Yo! Sushi restaurant, there are robots that prepare food, serve drinks, warn customers to get out of their way, and make funny statements like, "Life is a never-ending circuit." Robots will probably never replace humans. Wouldn't it be nice, though, to have companions who will do our drudgery for us, be there when we wish, speak when spoken to, listen attentively to everything we say, and not talk back?

**sound** = seem

**circuit** = a closed system of wires or pipes through which electricity or liquid can flow

**attentively** = carefully

**talk back** = answer angrily; argue



Robotic Waiters

**Full Text:**

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**Sample Summary:**

Technology is rapidly advancing, making once-dreamed innovations a reality, like computers that operate underwater and wearable tech. Robots, currently evolving like personal computers did twenty years ago, may become common household items within two decades. Initially perceived as sci-fi threats, robots are now viewed as beneficial, helping with work and drudgery. Professor Dudek predicts that personal robots will soon become smaller and more efficient. Researchers envision robots not just as workers but as companions, with developments like Sony's robotic dog and Georgia Tech's "Pepe." Additionally, robots are already serving as waiters in places like London's Yo! Sushi restaurant. Though robots might not replace humans entirely, their role as helpful companions is growing.

**Source:**

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