

ENGLISH PLACEMENT TEST

Sample Writing Test

INSTRUCTIONS

This test assesses your ability to use standard written English in (a) evaluating, summarizing, and synthesizing information and (b) stating and supporting arguments with sufficient details and examples.

Two texts on the topic of **the potential impact of robots on the current workforce** are provided below. Read the texts and use them to complete the following writing tasks:

Task 1 (15 minutes): Write a summary paragraph which compares/contrasts the views of the authors of the two texts (100 - 120 words).

Task 2 (30 minutes): Write an essay in which you *argue for or against the notion that robots taking over some of the jobs is beneficial to humanity*. You should use information from the two texts **and** your own ideas to support your argument (300 – 350 words).

You will have 50 minutes to complete both writing tasks, including 5 minutes to read the texts before you start writing.

You may NOT use a dictionary.

Notes:

1. Be sure to give credit to the authors when you use ideas or examples from their texts.
 2. Demonstrate your ability to summarize or paraphrase ideas. Do NOT copy word-for-word from the texts.
 3. Your composition will be evaluated on development of ideas, organization, language (including grammar and vocabulary), and conventions (including spelling and citation of sources).
-

Text 1: Robots will take over most jobs within 30 years, experts warn By Sarah Knapton from *the Telegraph* (modified)

Robots will have taken over most jobs within 30 years leaving humanity facing its 'biggest challenge ever' to find meaning in life when work is no longer necessary, according to experts. Professor Moshe Vardi, of Rice University, in the US, claims that many middle-class professionals will be outsourced to machines within the next few decades leaving workers with more leisure time than they have ever experienced.

According to Professor Vardi, machines will be able to outperform humans at almost any task. Already, robots are doing more and more jobs that people used to do. Such jobs include pharmacists, prison guards, boning chicken, bartending, and so on. The question is, does technology benefit humanity? Existing robotic and AI technologies were already eliminating a growing number of middle-class jobs, and many claim that the pace of advancement in the field of artificial intelligence (AI) is increasing. For example, robots in development can climb ladders and crawl into small spaces and are expected to join the workforce within the next decade.

"A typical answer is that if machines will do all our work, we will be free to pursue leisure activities," he said. "I do not find this a promising future, as I do not find the prospect of leisure-only life appealing. That seems to me a dystopia. I believe that work is essential to human well-being. We need to rise to the occasion and meet this challenge before human labor becomes obsolete. What's different this time is computer scientists are working on building machines that can out compete us in everything we can do. If machines can do all the work or even 50 per cent of the jobs that we used to do, what will people do?"

Text 2: Robots can take over some of our jobs. But some things only humans can do by Brooks Rainwater from *the Guardian* (modified)

From the grocery store to the factory floor, once common jobs have become tasks done by robots. This is going to have an ever-larger effect on the workforce. But instead of asking ourselves which jobs will be replaced, we need to shift the conversation to answer the question: what jobs do we want humans to do?

We all need to focus on which jobs are the best use of humans' unique talents and abilities, as well as which jobs will require peoples' oversight and decision-making capacity. The macro-level policy discussion needs to advance from its current emphasis on job retraining and move towards one of job rethinking.

By using machines for things they can do better and bolstering the areas where we thrive, it provides opportunities to allow humans to focus on creative thinking and problem solving. We could in fact see a new renaissance where automation unlocks more creativity and innovation in humans as people are freed from repetitive tasks and rote production roles that we have been saddled with for generations.

Makers, today's artisans, are creating, crafting and developing new and interesting ideas. We can move towards a future of hope – and a realization that there are areas of work in which creativity, craftsmanship and human judgment will always be superior to what a machine can do.