



In the future

Lesson code: JQVD-SIPB-8Q1V-T

PRE-INTERMEDIATE

1 Warm-up

Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future?

2 Key words

Match the words on the left with their correct definitions on the right:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. a prediction | a. a guess at something |
| 2. valuable | b. a state in which you are bored |
| 3. driverless | c. boring |
| 4. dull | d. extremely important or useful |
| 5. an estimate | e. something that you think will happen in the future |
| 6. boredom | f. without a driver |

3 Find the information

You are going to read an article about science-fiction writer Isaac Asimov, who in 1964 made some predictions about 2014. Which five predictions do you think he made from the list below? Tick them, and then read the article to check your answers.

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Cars will be able to fly. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People will no longer watch television. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People will live underground. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People will live in the deserts and polar regions. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cars will be driverless. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People will not need to work. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The global population will grow to 10 billion. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Robots will be very common. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Robots will not become very common. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

THE
INDEPENDENT

Isaac Asimov's predictions of the world in 2014

Predictions made by the writer 50 years ago are all over the Internet. But Asimov wasn't right about everything.

Isaac Asimov was one of the greatest science fiction authors of the last century. In 1964, he wrote an article for the New York Times imagining the world 50 years in the future — in 2014.

Some of his ideas are accurate (for example, he predicts Skype and video-calls). But reading the article reminds you that future technology will always be difficult to predict accurately.

People will continue to live further away from nature. They will create an environment that will suit them better.

Asimov was talking about a world in which it is normal for humans to live underground, with large electronic screens and ceilings.

However, modern society still thinks that the natural world is important. For many people, our technology world has made outdoor activities even more valuable.

However, if you think about smartphones, tablets and laptops — which always show us news from our friends, information and entertainment — then you can say that Asimov was right.

Robots will neither be common nor very good in 2014, but they will exist.

Asimov is right, and he even predicts that we will see a large, slow-moving robot cleaner that is able

to pick things up, clean and manipulate different machines.

Specialised robots that work in industry are normal in the modern world.

Vehicles will not be driven by people.

Although these are not common, driverless cars developed by Google are certainly coming in the future. The dull but necessary work of testing their safety and discussing the laws are some of the problems that are currently slowing the cars' progress.

Population pressure will force people to live in desert and polar areas.

Although his estimate of the world population in 2014 was close (he guessed 6.5 billion and the real number is closer to 7.1bn), Asimov was wrong about the deserts and polar regions.

In the future, people won't work.

Asimov believed that in 2014, people will not need to work. Instead, machines will do all the work and we will suffer from "the disease of boredom."

In reality, machines are certainly taking human jobs, but there are still a lot of jobs.

Adapted from The Independent, Friday, 03 January 2014, by James Vincent

Which predictions was Asimov right about? Which predictions did he get wrong? Why?

4 Grammar -- will/won't + infinitive (predictions)

Look at the following sentences from the article:

People will continue to live further away from nature.

In the future, people won't work.

We use **will/won't + infinitive** to make future predictions -- in other words, to say things we think, guess or know about the future.

affirmative forms	negative forms	questions
I will ('ll) work	I will not (won't) work	Will I work?
You will ('ll) work	You will not (won't) work	Will you work?
He/she/it will ('ll) work	He/she/it will not (won't) work	Will he/she/it work?
We will ('ll) work	We will not (won't) work	Will we work?
You will ('ll) work	You will not (won't) work	Will you work?
They will ('ll) work	They will not (won't) work	Will they work?

Short answers

Yes, I will. / Yes, you will. ...

No, I won't. / No, you won't. ...

Things to remember

- We often use **I think / I don't think + will**:

I think he'll pass the exam.

I don't think he'll fail the exam.

- We can also use **going to + infinitive** to predict something that you know or see is going to happen:

Look at the sky! **It's going to rain.**

5 Practice 1 -- In 10 years' time ...

Complete the sentences about you in 10 years' time with 'will' or 'won't' + infinitive. Compare your answers with a partner. Who is more optimistic about the future?

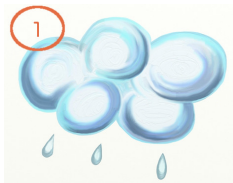
- In ten years' time, I will/won't speak many languages.
- _____ drive a really good car.
- _____ be fluent in English.
- _____ have the same job.
- _____ have many new friends.
- _____ work very hard.
- _____ have a lot of free time.

In the future

GENERAL ISSUES

6 Practice 2 -- I think/I don't think + will

Look at the pictures and complete the sentences with 'I think/I don't think + will' like in the example. Use contractions where you can.



1. I think it'll rain (it/rain).
2. _____ (she/lose) the race.
3. _____ (there/be) a lot of traffic.
4. _____ (it/be) sunny.
5. _____ (they/be) rich.
6. _____ (I/find) a job.
7. _____ (he/pass) his exams.
8. _____ (I/buy) a new camera.

7 Speaking

In pairs or groups, make 5 predictions about what the world will be like in 50 years' time. Discuss them with your partner or group. Use the expressions below to respond to other people's predictions. Report you partner's/group's predictions to the class.

That will definitely happen. That might happen. I don't think that will happen.
I'm sure that won't happen. There's no way that will happen!