

Predicting the future – fact or fiction?

A Cambridge Global Perspectives® Challenge

Skill focus: Evaluation	Stage: 8	Age: 12–13	Topic: Digital world
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Learning objectives	Success criteria
Evaluation	
Evaluate sources, considering the author and purpose, recognising that some sources may be biased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners are constantly questioning and debating the relevance and accuracy of their sources, asking for teacher support when necessary Learners are able to explain how they distinguish between fact and opinion in the sources they use Learners can identify the author(s) of a source and draw conclusions about purpose, accuracy and relevance to future research Learners demonstrate concise note-taking from their sources and, when asked, are able to summarise the main points they have gleaned from each source
Analysis	
Explain causes of a local or global issue and consequences on others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners can use the outcomes of research to make reasoned predictions about the future Learners can identify the consequences of technological change on learning and schools Learners can consider different perspectives on technological change, e.g. who has access to it and who does not

Challenge summary
By the end of this Challenge, learners will have developed their evaluation skills by comparing film, media and statistical material as evidence for predicting the future. Learners will explore recent developments in digital and other technologies through film, media and internet research. They will design a school for the future in the light of recent trends in computer and other technological change.

Activities (sequence)

How are computers and digital technology changing?

Learners watch several clips from science fiction depicting the future, for example early science fiction programmes (suggestions are included in Teacher Resource – Predicting the future T8.1).

They identify examples of technology in the clips that were:

- not invented when the programme was made but are widely available now e.g. mobile telephones; personal computers
- not invented when the programme was made and not yet invented e.g. transporters; scanning devices for the body.

Lead a class discussion to illustrate:

- the power of science fiction and literature to imagine and predict the future based on trends in science and technology
- the rapidity of developments in technology and their potential to change our lives.

Show learners clips from science fiction films or other media which portray contrasting visions of the future – good and bad, utopian and dystopian. Use these alternative visions to illustrate that technology may have benefits and dangers and that different groups of people view the impact of technological change in different ways e.g. for progress or harm.

Possible extension activities:

- Develop these ideas with additional or alternative local clips from science fiction films or media material. Literature for children and young people has many opportunities for exploration of different visions of the future – utopian and dystopian.
- Discuss the value of science fiction and the arts as evidence for making predictions about the future.



How do I use computers and technology in everyday life?

Lead a class discussion of learners' experience of using the internet. A possible survey form is provided as Learner Resource – Predicting the future L8.2. In small groups learners survey the class (and possibly other learners) about:

- How many times they use the internet each day?
- Where they use the internet and how it is accessed (computer, mobile, TV etc.)?
- What they use the internet for?
- How much time they use the internet per day, week and year?

Learners discuss their results in small groups and as a whole class. Questions to consider include:

- What are the main uses of the internet? What are the main benefits of the internet?
- Are learners using the internet more? Is internet usage likely to grow? Why is internet usage growing so fast?
- Are the results typical of the wider population?



What are the worldwide trends in internet usage?

Provide learners with statistical data about the growth of the internet (e.g. from sources such as <http://www.internetworldstats.com/emarketing.htm>).

Learners use the information to summarise worldwide trends in internet usage. They should summarise the information individually in a structured way using graphs and diagrams.

Lead a discussion of the findings of the analysis of sources and statistical data. Key questions for consideration:



- What are the main trends in internet usage?
- Which groups of people have the most and least usage? Why?
- What are the reasons for the accelerating growth of internet usage?

Lead a discussion on the reliability of different types of information as evidence, and whether the learners found anomalies in the information from different sources. Key question:

- Which type of information is the most reliable as evidence for predicting the future – film and media, survey by learners or statistical material from research?

Does the use of computers and digital technology affect learning?

Introduce the activity, explaining that many claims have been made for the internet and learning, both positive and negative. Learners suggest aspects of learning which may be affected by the internet. You could support this activity using sources that explore this issue. Key questions for discussion:



- How might the internet help learning?
- How might the internet restrict learning?

If learners require additional support, this discussion could begin with small group activity in which learners write their initial ideas onto sticky labels and post these onto a flipchart table.

Will computers and technology change learning in schools?

Learners explore how internet and other digital technologies may shape learning and education in the future. The challenge is to design a school for the future based on internet and other related digital technologies. To stimulate learners' interest, show several video clips and provide different 'images' or 'visions' of the future of schools based on local availability and interests (Teacher Resource – Predicting the future T8.3).



Learners in groups design a school for the future. They should use internet research into different visions of the future of schools as part of the design exercise. Learners should answer the following questions during the preparatory research:

- What are the main trends in the internet and digital technology taking place today?
- How will these trends affect what and how children learn?

Learners produce an outline design of a school for the future, thinking about the following aspects:

- buildings, facilities and resources
- learning inside school, at home and in the wider community
- what staff will be needed – teachers, technicians and others
- the best way for learners to develop skills
- the subjects learners should study
- how learners might develop personal qualities and character.

Learners may present the design in whatever way is suitable. Encourage them to be imaginative using plans, pictures, models and diagrams. Learners should create a name and design a logo that symbolises the character of the school. A possible title: ‘Looking Forward to Change – A School for the Future’.

Learners present their designs to the class or another appropriate audience. The designs should be evaluated either by peer or teacher assessment. Learners needing extra support could be given a plan or diagram of a school to label with their ideas about how technology will be used in the learning in the future.

Each learner reflects on their own learning and produces a written summary of the design, photographs of plans or models if appropriate, and a full explanation. This should include the main features of the school design and how it will support learning using internet and digital technologies.

Challenge resources

Provided by Cambridge

Teacher Resource – Predicting the future T8.1
Teacher Resource – Predicting the future T8.3

Learner Resource – Predicting the future L8.2

Other resources

Video clips from science fiction films/series depicting the future, and contrasting visions of the future
Sources and statistical data about the growth of the internet
Sources about the effect of technology on learning (optional)
Sticky labels and flipchart (optional)
Internet access for research
Creative materials/software tools for presenting designs
Plan or diagram of a school



Personal



Local



Global

This Global Perspectives Challenge has been designed to be flexible and should be adapted to school requirements and the needs of your learners. Further guidance and support for planning is given in the Teacher Guide.

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