

Alongside an Imperfect CHEF

Text Type: Short story
Suggested finishing time: 15 mins



Listen!

Let's Think! 

1. Do you think robots are helpful to humans?
2. In what aspects are robots used in modern society?

Ramsey receives the news over the phone from his younger-by-3-years sister that he is to have a new colleague. 'I'm sure he'll be your right-hand man,' Ruby says. He is at a loss as to what it means, but he knows his sister has once again created something their parents would feel proud of, something that his new dishes cannot compare to. Then the next day Ruby comes to Ramsey's workplace. So does a young man, who stands behind her. 'His name's Ian. The latest product of my lab. I've written for him all the codes needed for preparing whatever is on the menu, so you may now not only slack on the job sometimes, but also have somebody to run errands for you.'

Since Ramsey takes a rather commonsensical view about robots, namely as giant metallic barrels with cylindrical limbs, he is held in awe by what now appears to be a perfectly proportioned human being. At this very moment, Ian is already in chef's uniform, ready to take orders. 'Let's start with something easy,' Ramsey thinks to himself. 'Ian, prepare a serving of Caesar salad,' he orders. 'Yes, Chef Walker,' Ian replies swiftly. Throughout the whole process, Ramsey stays by Ian's side, watching every move of his and waiting expectantly for the moment when the knife is held improperly, the olive oil is forgotten, sugar is mistaken for salt, etc. To his wonderment and delight, none of these happens. 'Chef Walker, to whom may I serve the dish?' With his gaze fixed on it, Ramsey says, 'Just leave it here. Then proceed to prepare two trays of lasagna and four pizzas.'

Ian's involvement somehow makes Ramsey feel that time passes slower than ever before. Instead of working by the stove, he now spends most of the time lingering back and forth the aisles, just to see if anyone needs help and to seek feedback on the food from customers, while Ian manages all the cooking. 'What am I doing here as a chef? Is it the life I want as a 35-year-old?' Questions of this sort start to consume him, and at the same time, he would conjure up images of the days when he first designed the menu for the restaurant: fruitful, well-spent days. 'Maybe it's time that I came up with some novel dishes.'

To Ramsey, Ian's infinite stamina and cooking prowess initially comes off as a source of tension, but, later, as something entirely different. In less than 48 hours, he has come up with three recipes. 'Ian, on this note are the instructions on how to make the new dishes. Prepare one serving of each.' Upon taking the note, Ian stands immobile and at last utters, 'Sorry. Relevant codes are missing.' 'I'll show you how then.' 'Sorry. Relevant codes are missing,' Ian repeats. Anxious, he phones Ruby on the spot, 'There's something amiss with Ian. He's not following my new recipes.' 'Take him and your recipes to my laboratory. He simply needs some computerised tutorials.' 'Oh, I think we will frequent your place from now on.'

~510 words

Looking into Grammar

We use the sentence pattern '...not only...but also...' to indicate the surprising linkage between two related ideas.

✓ He **not only** refused to apologise, **but also** (✗ and) said a few insulting words!

? Underline a similarly structured clause in the short story.

More to Take Away

In 2014, Stephen Hawking expressed his view that artificial intelligence, if used incautiously, could end the human race.

Part A Multiple Choice Questions

Answer the following questions based on the information provided in the short story. Choose the best answer by blackening the appropriate circle.

1. Ian is NOT sent to Ramsey's restaurant by Ruby to _____.
- A. help reduce Ramsey's workload
 - B. be Ramsey's personal assistant
 - C. provide an extra person to deal with the orders
 - D. show that robots are more competent than humans
2. In line 7, the word 'commonsensical' means _____.
- 2** Try to break down the word.
- A. relating to everyday life
 - B. displaying sound practical sense
 - C. connected with physical senses
 - D. fantastical
3. Which of the following is NOT what leaves Ramsey in awe?
- I. Ian's atypicality of his features
 - II. Ian's prompt responsiveness
 - III. Ian's voice
 - IV. Ian's precision in rule-following
- A. II only
- B. II and III
- C. I, II and IV
- D. none of the above
- Q3: From Ramsey's point of view, it is atypical of Ian to have bodily features that highly resemble a human's, as he believes that robots are 'metallic' and made up of 'cylindrical limbs'.*
4. Ian's _____ seems _____ Ramsey.
- A. talent...to have frightened
 - B. expertise...not to have pleased
 - C. competence...not to have disappointed
 - D. compliance...to have amazed
- 4** The word choice used here may be different from that used in the short story.
5. To Ramsey, time appears to pass slower due to _____.
- A. his cooperation with Ian
 - B. his disappointment with himself
 - C. the worsened business conditions
 - D. the reduced amount of work
6. In line 17, the word 'here' refers to the space _____.
- A. inside the kitchen
 - B. beside the stove
 - C. in the restaurant
 - D. near the kitchen
7. Ramsey and Ian will frequent Ruby's place probably since _____.
- A. the siblings would like to meet up on a regular basis
 - B. Ruby needs to assess Ian's performance more often
 - C. Ian is not intelligent enough
 - D. Ramsey is expecting Ian to learn to prepare more new dishes
8. Which of the following adjectives may NOT serve to describe Ramsey?
- A. reflective
 - B. resilient
 - C. indecisive
 - D. creative
- Q8: The fact that Ramsey manages to recover from the change brought forth by the arrival of Ian, and to find his worth, or his role, once again in the restaurant proves him a reflective person who manifests his resilience, while his pursuit of new dishes shows his creativity.*



Self-evaluation Checklist

Please scan the QR code on P.6 to access the checklist for evaluating your own reading progress.

Part B Pre-HKDSE Questions

Answer the following questions based on the information provided in the short story. For questions 1 and 4, answer in complete sentences.

1. In your opinion, why does Ramsey think that his new dishes cannot compare to Ruby's work?
(Any reasonable answers)
I think it is because Ramsey's parents probably think that inventions, compared to dishes, have greater significance.

2. Look for words or phrases in the short story to match the definitions below.

(i)	<u>errands</u>	(para. 1-2)	(n.)	short trips with little tasks as goals
(ii)	<u>somehow</u>	(para. 2-3)	(adv.)	in some unknown way
(iii)	<u>conjure up</u>	(para. 2-3)	(phr. v.)	to bring to mind by imagination
(iv)	<u>prowess</u>	(para. 3-4)	(n.)	great skill at doing something
(v)	<u>utters</u>	(para. 3-4)	(v.)	says clearly


-  3. Look at the following pronouns and answer who/what they refer to in the short story.

Pronoun	Line	Reference
his	line 12	(i) Ramsey's
him	line 18	(ii) Ramsey
each	line 23	(iii) every new dish

Q4: Explain to students that through those questions, Ramsey seems to be examining his position, his role and his life. As a result, the questions can be seen as introspective.

4. In line 18, what are 'Questions of this sort' about? Explain your answer.
(Any reasonable answers)

I think 'Questions of this sort' are introspective questions that Ramsey asks himself.

-  5. What is the background information about the siblings? Complete the summary table below. Some of the details have been completed to help you. *(Any reasonable answers)*

	The brother	The sister
Full name	(i) <u>Ramsey Walker</u>	(ii) <u>Ruby Walker</u>
Age	(iii) <u>35</u>	(iv) <u>32</u>
Occupation	(v) <u>chef</u>	(vi) <u>inventor</u>
Workplace	(vii) <u>a restaurant</u>	a laboratory

6. Look for a word in the short story that may replace 'computerised tutorials (lines 26-27)'.

codes

6 What does a robot need?

Part C Vocabulary Bank

Label the pictures below with the applications of artificial intelligence from the word box.

surveillance

telecoms

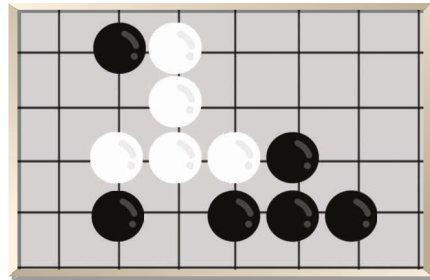
chess-playing algorithm

bomb disposal

identity verification

speech recognition

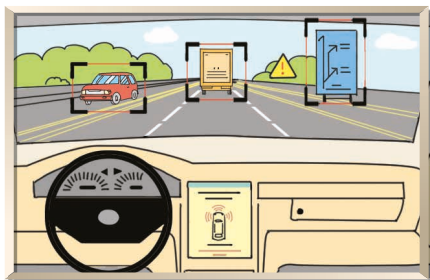
autonomous vehicle



1. chess-playing algorithm

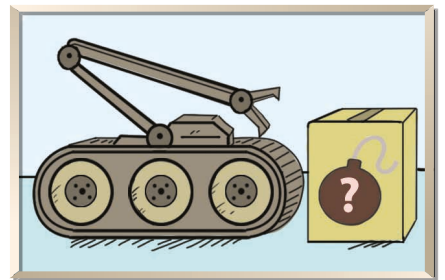


2. telecoms

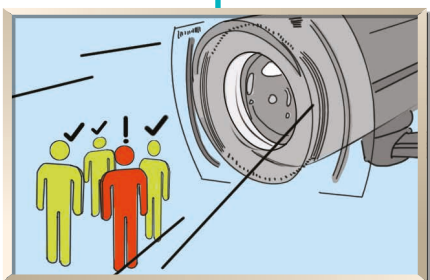


3. autonomous vehicle

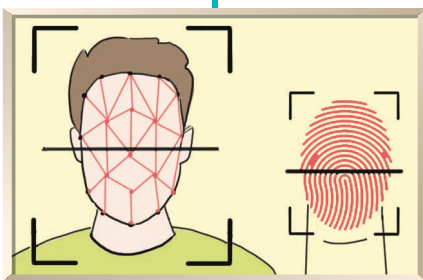
Artificial intelligence



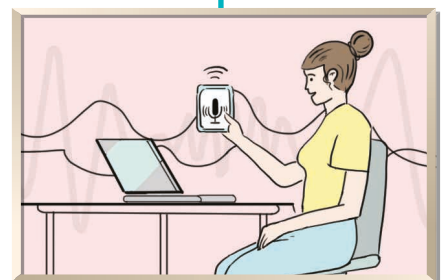
4. bomb disposal



5. surveillance



6. identity verification



7. speech recognition

Word Craft

Frequent (Refer to P.138.)

e.g. frequent hospitals due to chronic diseases
frequent the restaurant for its daily special

Let's Discuss!

1. How does artificial intelligence bring convenience to our lives?
2. Do you agree that artificial intelligence raises a host of ethical concerns? Share your thoughts.