

February 2

DIXON DAILY

Science

Genre

Newspaper Articles tell about current events or trends. They answer the questions *who, what, where, when, why* and *how*.

Text Features

A **Headline** is a short title about an event or subject that is designed to grab the reader's attention. A **Byline** tells who wrote the article.

Content Vocabulary

mechanical
repetitive
limitless

Robots Today & Tomorrow



by *William Brackman*
Dixon Daily Staff Writer

In 1939, millions of people flocked to the World's Fair in New York. Among the major attractions was a huge mechanical man named Elektro. Many visitors believed that a **mechanical** creature called a robot would do all kinds of work for humans in the future.

Today robots are used in many industries. A robot is any machine with

moving parts that performs tasks on command. Most robots are used in factories. There they do tasks that are **repetitive**, or ones that are done in the same manner each time. Robots put parts together and move materials. They sometimes do work that is dangerous for humans. For example, they may work deep in the ocean or inside tanks filled with dangerous fumes. These

robots are more than just moving mechanical parts because they actually seem to "think."

Thinking Machines

How can metal think? Robots are programmed to do certain jobs. A program is a set of computer instructions that tell the robot what to do. Complex robots do many things. In fact two complex robots are now on Mars, studying the planet.

These robots, called the Mars Exploration Rovers, have metal or plastic bodies that protect their mechanical parts. Computers in these robots act as their brains and cameras act as their eyes. These robots have sent photos and information about the surface of Mars back to Earth.

Future Robots

What will robots do in the future? One kind of robot will be able to

recognize your voice and talk with you. It is being designed to be part companion and part security guard. Another robot will carry packages and open doors. It will walk forward and backward, turn easily without stopping, and climb stairs. It can also keep its balance on uneven ground.

The future for robots is **limitless**. They may clean our

homes, fly airplanes, and maybe even help us learn. Robots are not meant to replace humans, but they are meant to make difficult tasks easier.



Connect and Compare



1. After reading the headline what facts did you expect to find in this article? Explain your answer. **Reading a Headline**
2. How do you think robots will help humans in the future? **Analyze**
3. Think about this article and *Zathura*. If the boys in *Zathura* could design a personal robot, what might it do? How might their robot be different from robots that are planned for the future?

Reading/Writing Across Texts



Science Activity

Do research about robots that have been used on recent space missions. Make a list of their special features and jobs.



Find out more about robots at www.macmillanmh.com

Writer's Craft

Transition Words

Transition words in sentences can help you connect your ideas and make your writing flow more smoothly. Transition words can also help to show cause and effect.

Write a Diary Entry

Dear Diary 

October 25

Dear Diary,

The transition word "because" explains why Danny usually bothers Walter.

Tonight was the weirdest night of my life. As usual, Mom and Dad made me stay with Danny. I hate being left alone with him because he is such a pest! But tonight we weren't exactly alone.

The phrase "as a result" helps connect my ideas.

First, our house was launched into space, where a meteor shower hit us. Then, I lost my gravity and, as a result, almost got sucked into outer space. Next, a robot appeared and started to make trouble.

At this point, I lost hope. Danny never did, though. He tried to make everything right. Finally, I woke up in the park. I was so happy when I realized Danny was with me, alive and well.

Your Turn

Write a diary entry from the point of view of a fictional character. Select an event from the story to describe in detail. Remember to tell about the event using the character's voice. Use the writer's checklist to check your writing.



Writer's Checklist

- Ideas and Content:** Are the ideas I included those of the character?
- Organization:** Does my description of the event unfold in a way that is easy to follow?
- Voice:** Does the diary entry sound like the character is talking?
- Word Choice:** Did I choose **transition words** that help to show cause and effect?
- Sentence Fluency:** Did I start the sentences with words that show the order of events?
- Conventions:** Did I use the correct verb forms and spell them correctly? Did I check my spelling?