

The idea of progress

Document 1

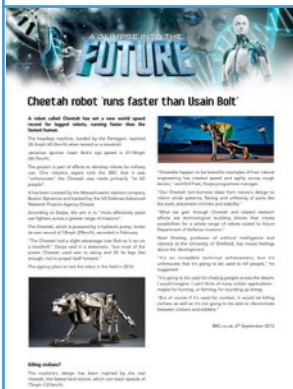
We can see the evolution of mankind through a special point of view. Indeed, tools represent labor and its alienation. The monkey stand up to become a complete man, but finally, because of the weight of labor, this man turns into something that looks like the first monkey. It depicts progress through the use of tools and its negative effects on humans.

Document 2

This represents the evolution of phones. From the left to the right, we can see that they are becoming smaller and smaller. They also do more things. This is clearly a **technological progress** for those who use them.

Document 3

It is a caricature showing two scenes: one in the past and the other is set in the present. At the top we can see people talking together in the prehistoric age whereas in the second we can see people talking through phones, tablets, computers etc. They turn their back on each other and the fire is put out. It shows that **technological progress** has faded out real human relations.



The Google car

The Google Car is a tremendous **progress in terms of smart car engineering**. It is capable of scanning everything around it and make it a complete autonomous driving car. It is a great example of what cars might become in a few years.

Darpa & Boston Dynamics

The robots designed by DARPA and Boston Dynamics are a proof that robots can do impressive tasks. They can replace human labor for tasks that might be dangerous or boring. They represent a **technological progress** that might one day work hand in hand with humans.

Cheetah is an incredible machine capable of running faster than Usain Bolt. At least, this is what it might be doing since it's not really running autonomously but on a treadmill.

It represents a major advance in robotics. The progress shown here is that of a pure **re-creation of nature**. In other words, robotics gets its inspiration from a real model which is the cheetah. It means that technological progress might just be about **understanding what we have in front of our eyes**. In other terms, it is some kind of **reverse engineering** from a living animal to a robotic creature.

It is also a great progress for militaries who will be able to use this as a weapon on the battlefield and probably diminish casualties on their side.

This discovery represents a huge **medical progress** since it makes possible to heal mice from very serious diseases.

The real question asked here is to know whether this discovery might be used for the human being. If it were possible, that would open up new possibilities such as curing cancer, dementia or other age-related diseases which might just be a great **medical and human progress**.

The other question raised in these documents is: « *what would happen for the elderly people?* » Would they be able to live like young people? Would that change society as we know it today? It would certainly allow people to live longer and in better health condition which is a **real improvement and so, a great progress**.



Bicentennial Man - The movie / part 1

1. Introduce the document.
2. Can you explain the document?
3. What type of document is it? How was it created? How was it used?
4. What is the main message of the document?
5. What is the main message of the document about the future?
6. What is the main message of the document about the robot?
7. Identify and explain these ideas.
8. In this document, what happens between the robot and the human?

Bicentennial Man - The movie / part 2

1. Introduce the document.
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8. In this document, what happens between the robot and the human?

Through this first video extract, we can witness the arrival of a NDR-114 in the house of a rich family. It shows that in a near future, we might be able to order domestic robots to help us with daily tasks. This would represent **a great progress since it would allow to spend more time on other things that would be more important or more more entertaining.**

It also shows what robotics could accomplish in the future if we pursue in that direction. With this movie, we can see another use of robots; **something that would be as groundbreaking as the arrival of the first smartphones or the development of the internet.**

In the second video extract, we can see Andrew capable of carving beautiful objects. The question raised here is: would robots surpass humans? If yes, then what would become of humans if our own existence is no longer a necessity? **So, with making great technological progress, trying to imitate life, what would happen if we really succeeded in that task? Wouldn't that mean the end of humanity?**

Bicentennial Man

Andrew is a robot who has been made to look like a human. He is a very intelligent robot who can think and feel like a human. He has been made to look like a human so that he can live with humans and help them. He is a very special robot because he is the first robot to be made to look like a human. He is a very special robot because he is the first robot to be made to look like a human. He is a very special robot because he is the first robot to be made to look like a human.

In this extract from the novel « The Bicentennial Man » we can witness a great progress about Andrew the robot. He looks just like a human being, talks like a human being and feels the same. Knowing it's just a machine, we see a **tremendous technological progress in the evolution of this machine.**

He is also **capable of high level thinking** since he is questioning himself about the essence of humanity and what makes him different for everybody.

There is also another type of progress at stake here. Andrew is **asking for humanity.** He wants to cease being a robot and start an existence of human being. To his eyes, this would represent **a giant progress in the way people would see him.** It is similar to a slave asking for his freedom. It's the need to be seen for who we really are. So, to a certain extent, **Andrew is asking for social progress.**

SPACE Discovery

to boldly go where no man has gone before

AN AMERICAN FRONTIER

Richard Nixon, 1961

Richard Nixon, 1961

Throughout his speech, Kennedy uses several times **the word « frontier ».** It **symbolizes the very idea of progress.** It means that we mustn't feel comfortable with what we already have but we must be in constant need for something else. In other words, he says that in order to stay a powerful country, Americans must find their new challenges and face them.

Kennedy symbolizes a complete new style of presidency which at that time was seen as progress.

SPACE Discovery

THE UNCHARTED SPACE

THE EXPEDITION OF LEWIS & CLARK

THE AMERICAN REPUBLICS

The principal idea of this expedition was to find a water route that would cross the entire American continent. This would allow the Americans to trade easily with orient. **It represents a progress because the idea was to improve commercial communication.**

There is **another form of progress in this expedition: knowledge.** The idea was to be better informed after the expedition and to confront the prejudices with reality.

WE CHOOSE TO GO TO THE MOON
BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY

John F. Kennedy, September 12, 1961

1. Introduce the document.
2. What is the main idea?
3. What is the main purpose?
4. What is the main message?
5. What is the main goal?
6. What is the main challenge?
7. What is the main obstacle?
8. What is the main difficulty?
9. What is the main problem?
10. What is the main issue?

Progress is seen through the idea of becoming better through difficult goals. It means that nobody can progress with only simple tasks. Kennedy explains that if the USA are to progress, they must aim at very difficult goals and to forget about their comfort.

There is also the idea of **scientific and technological progress**. Kennedy mentions « new metal alloys, some of which have not yet been invented ». It means that it will be necessary to invent, to create if they want to succeed. **So, progress is necessary in order to succeed this mission.**

SPUTNIK SETS UP A NEW DEAL
THE USA IS SCARED AND CHALLENGED

October 4, 1957

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Sputnik is a huge progress for humanity. It is the first object sent in space by humans. It sets the start of a new age, that of humans breaking free of their own planet.

THE MERCURY PROJECT
ALAN SHEPARD'S MISSION

May 15, 1961

1. Introduce the document.
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The USA have finally put a man in space. **It represents a huge progress for them.** They follow the Soviets in the space race. This is a technological progress and a political progress as well since the USA are not completely ridiculous.

GEMINI
A BRIDGE TO THE MOON

November 1961

1. Introduce the document.
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8. What is the main difficulty?
9. What is the main problem?
10. What is the main issue?

After the Mercury Project, Gemini has a different goal. The purpose of this NASA project is to learn, to practice, to test, to invent... in other words, to progress in every area to be ready to go to the Moon.



Kennedy's challenge is almost done. Americans are now capable of going to the Moon. **It represents a great progress for mankind.** It also proves that the Americans have been capable or progressing in science and technology to achieve such a tour de force.

The photo « Earthrise » is also synonymous of progress since it allows billions of people across the world to see the Earth as it really is for the first time in human history.



Humans are now capable of conquering other worlds. The mission Apollo 11 shows that humans have now the technology to break free of their own planet. It is a great progress.

Neil Armstrong said it was « the beginning of a new age » because to him, there is a « before » and an « after » Apollo 11. **It opens up new possibilities for what was considered pure science fiction.**



Anakin and Shmi, his mother, are slaves. They hope that one day they will be freed. This would represent a social progress.

When Anakin is freed by Qui-Gon, he instantly goes through social progress since he is offered the possibility to quit his planet to become a Jedi Knight, which is a way of climbing the social ladder.

We can also see the **technological progress** that allows people to built up entire cyborgs to help them with daily tasks.