

TEACHER'S NOTES

**Back to the future**  
by Jackie McAvoy

<b>Level:</b> Pre-intermediate and above
<b>Target age:</b> Teenage and above
<b>Time needed:</b> 45 minutes plus recording time
<b>Aim:</b> For students to produce a short video / audio recording of future predictions.
<b>Materials:</b> Digital camera or mobile phone / mp3 recorder (e.g. iPod)

**Preparation**

Before the lesson watch the following video from YouTube:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EC5sbdvvnvQM>

**Lead in to the topic**

1. Tell students they are going to compare their lives now to the 1960s in relation to the role of the Internet. They have to think about all the different ways things are done nowadays with the Internet and compare this to how things were done 40 years ago. Do an example first: write on the board *Staying in touch*. One way of staying in touch in the past was to write a postcard or send a letter. Elicit that nowadays many people would send an email instead – although it's still possible to send postcards and letters, of course!
  2. Put students into small groups and get them to brainstorm other ways life has changed thanks to the Internet. They don't need to come up with the details (e.g. the postcard vs email) only the main areas. Once groups have a few ideas get them to call them out and write them on the board (and keep them there). Aim to have: *Finding / sharing information; shopping; banking / finance; entertainment; travel; business; education*. Perhaps they have some more ideas.
  3. Tell students that they're going to watch a short documentary about predictions made in 1969 (the year the first man landed on the moon) about the future of computers in the home. Ask them: *do you think that 40 years ago it was possible to predict the Internet and how we would use it at home?*
- While watching the video get them to make a note of the predictions made – how true are they?

*Feedback:*  
*Online shopping* ('fingertip shopping'); *webcam* ('household monitor screen'); *online banking*; *emailing* ('home post office')... all these things now exist. Are the students impressed? (If you have time, higher levels could watch it again and decide if the video is for real or a clever fake – would they really predict flat panel monitors?!)

**Alternative task:** if you cannot download the video for use in class, ask students to read the transcript on the separate sheet instead. Don't give this to the students if you are using the video – it's more difficult to understand and they don't need it.

**The task**

It's now 2029: things have changed a lot, and people's lifestyles are very different! In pairs students choose one of the areas written on the board and, working together, they make their predictions for how we do these things in 2029. (If you have handed out the transcript, you can use the lower part of this, otherwise students write in their notebooks). Their ideas can be linked to the Internet or any other technology – they can imagine whatever they like!

**Preparing to record**

1. Tell students they are going to make a short documentary about their predictions, similar to the 1969 video. This can either be filmed as a video, or just an audio.
2. Using the notes, each student practises talking about 2029. They should do this until they are confident enough to be recorded. Ideally, aim for one minute, it can be longer but a shorter documentary is more interesting to listen to. See the worksheet *Top tips on recording*. As always images – photos, drawings, pictures from a magazine, etc. can be used as a backdrop to make it look more interesting.
3. After the predictions have been recorded the videos can be uploaded to YouTube or Google Video. They can then be watched by all the students in another lesson. The videos can also be watched by other students around the world! Remember to put *Onestopenglish* in the title of the video, for example: *Onestopenglish Predictions for 2029*.
4. Audio recordings can also be listened to by all the students in another lesson. If your school has a website, perhaps you can upload the recordings there so that other students can listen too.



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**Worksheet**

**Part 1**

These are some predictions made for home computer use in 1969. What do we call the phrases in bold nowadays?



“Fingertip shopping will be one of the many homemakers’ conveniences. This video console will be channeled into the store of the wife’s choice. There a camera will scan a display of things for sale which she will select by push button.

Another part of this console is a **household monitor screen** which maintains a watch on critical areas in the house, swimming pool or yard.

What the wife selects on her console will be paid for by the husband on his counterpart console. All bills and transactions will be carried out electronically. A **central bank computer** will debit the family’s account the amount of purchases and credit the department store, for example, informing the family’s home computer at the same time. Father at the touch of a button receives an instantaneous printed copy of his budget, the amount of taxes he owes, the payments left on the car and so forth. All documents and household records are available on the video screen for immediate reference.

Also at his disposal is an electronic correspondence machine, or **home post office**, which allows for instant written communication between individuals anywhere in the world.”

**Part 2**

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