

Hannah Jones looks into the future

I love talking about the future - and I am not the only one. Over the centuries, people have always wondered about the future. Some like to read fantasy stories and imagine what the world will be like in 10, 50 or even 1,000 years' time. Others write about the future themselves. In the 18th and 19th centuries, especially the latter, the most common theme in science fiction novels was the future. Some authors even predicted things that have since happened, for example, landing on the moon! But for some people, thinking about the future is not just for fun. They plan the future of the world for a living. These people are called futurologists.

This weekend, hundreds of futurologists are meeting at Newcastle University. The seminar starts on Friday and the experts will be discussing the endless possibilities of the future. The future is now big business and many people will attend the seminar with dreams of starting new enterprises based on the predictions they will hear this weekend. I clicked into the websites of a few futurologists and here's what they're predicting:

- In the next few years, computers will become handier. Shortly all of us are going to use our voices to give instructions to computers. We will be able to download any file or update our computers just by saying a few words.
- By the year 2015, the clothing industry will have produced new types of material that will remain stainless no matter what you spill on them. Red wine stains will no longer ruin clothes. Garments will also be so strong that they will never get old and worn.
- By the year 2025, no one will die of starvation because there will be food for everyone. No one will have to live on welfare as everyone will have jobs and discrimination will be a part of the past. There will therefore no longer be any conflict and people will be able to live together in peace and equality.
- By the year 2030, development in biochemistry and medical science will have made it theoretically possible for us to live for at least 150 years. Tiny, insect-like robots may be sent around the cells of our bodies to assess our health and carry out repairs to keep us healthy.
- By the middle of the century, computers that are millions of times smarter than us will have been developed. We will be linking our brains to these computers and a huge database. A new type of electronic human might have developed!

- By the end of the century, we will have discovered other places in our solar system suitable for living and we will have discovered ways to go further into space.

I'll be there in Newcastle this weekend. At nine o'clock on Saturday morning, I'll be sitting in the front row and listening to the great Professor Willard talking about the future of my brain. If you can't beat the future, join it - it's the dawn of a new world.

Exercise 1:

Read the article and choose the best title for it.

- From the Past to the Future
- The Future Business
- Tomorrow's World
- A Perfect Future?

Exercise 2:

Read the article and complete the table

When	Predictions about...

Exercise 7:

Which of the tenses below refers to:

- something that will finish before a certain time in the future
- something that will be in progress at a certain time in the future

Future Perfect

By the end of the century, we **will have discovered** other places in our solar system...

Future Continuous

At nine o'clock on Saturday morning, I'll **be sitting** in the front row and **listening to** the great Professor Willard.