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Since the dawn of human ingenuity, people have devised ever more cunning tools to cope with work that is dangerous, boring, burdensome, or just plain nasty. That compulsion has resulted in roboticsthe science of conferring various human capabilities on machines. And if scientists have yet to create the mechanical version of science fiction, they have begun to come close.As a result, the modern world is increasingly populated by intelligent gizmos whose presence we barely notice but whose universal existence has removed much human labor. Our factories hum to the rhythm of robot assembly arms. Our banking is done at automated teller terminals that thank us with mechanical politeness for the transaction. Our subway trains are controlled by tireless robo-drivers. And thanks to the continual miniaturization of electronics and micro-mechanics, there are already robot systems that can perform some kinds of brain and bone surgery with submillimeter accuracyfar greater precision than highly skilled physicians can achieve with their hands alone.But if robots are to reach the next stage of laborsaving utility, they will have to operate with less human supervision and be able to make at least a few decisions for themselvesgoals that pose a real challenge. "While we know how to tell a robot to handle a specific error," says Dave Lavery, manager of a robotics program at NASA, "we cant yet give a robot enough common sense to reliably interact with a dynamic

world." Indeed the quest for true artificial intelligence has produced very mixed results. Despite a spell of initial optimism in the 1960s and 1970s when it appeared that transistor circuits and microprocessors might be able to copy the action of the human brain by the year 2010, researchers lately have begun to extend that forecast by decades if not centuries. What they found, in attempting to model thought, is that the human brains roughly one hundred billion nerve cells are much more talentedand human perception far more complicatedthan previously imagined. They have built robots that can recognize the error of a machine panel by a fraction of a millimeter in a controlled factory environment. But the human mind can glimpse a rapidly changing scene and immediately disregard the 98 percent that is irrelevant, instantaneously focusing on the monkey at the side of a winding forest road or the single suspicious face in a big crowd. The most advanced computer systems on Earth cant approach that kind of ability, and neuroscientists still dont know quite how we do it. 1. Human ingenuity was initially demonstrated in .A. the use of machines to produce science fictionB. the wide use of machines in manufacturing industryC. the invention of tools for difficult and dangerous workD. the elites cunning tackling of dangerous and boring work2. The word "gizmos" (line 1, paragraph 2) most probably means .A. programs B. experts C. devices D. creatures3. According to the text, what is beyond mans ability now is to design a robot thatcan .A. fulfill delicate tasks like performing brain surgeryB. interact with human beings verballyC. have a little common senseD. respond independently to a changing world4.

Besides reducing human labor, robots can also .A. make a few decisions for themselvesB. deal with some errors with human interventionC. improve factory environmentsD. cultivate human creativity5. The author uses the example of a monkey to argue that robots are .A. expected to copy human brain in internal structureB. able to perceive abnormalities immediatelyC. far less able than human brain in focusing on relevant informationD. best used in a controlled environment 100Test