CASIO RELEASES AI PET



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1KA2-P1L1-DD2

1 Warm up

Look at the pictures below. Why do people have these kinds of pets? Which type of pet do you think requires the least amount of work? Can a relationship with a pet replace human relationships? Would you like to have a robotic pet, or would you prefer a real one? Discuss the questions in pairs.



picture A



picture B



picture C



picture D

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2 Pre-listening task: general vocabulary

Part A: Match words with the correct definitions.

Group 1:

1.	creature (n)	a.	a living thing, real or imaginary, that can move around, such as an animal
2.	bond (n)	b.	made to appear to exist by the use of computer software, for example on the internet
3.	anxiety (n)	c.	needing a lot of your time, attention or effort
4.	virtual (adj.)	d.	used to say that something may develop into something
5.	demanding (adj.)	e.	to or in a foreign country, especially those separated from your country by the sea or ocean
6.	overseas (adv.)	f.	fix the price of something at a particular level
7.	price (v)	g.	an interest, experience, or feeling that makes two people feel connected
8.	potentially (adv.)	h.	the state of feeling nervous or worried that something bad is going to happen

Group 2:

1.	display (v)	a.	a place where people live and are cared for when they cannot live at home or look after themselves
2.	stock (v)	b.	covered with fur
3.	furry (adj.)	c.	a pet
4.	companion animal (n)	d.	look like or be similar to another person or thing
5.	resemble (v)	e.	a feeling of being unhappy because you have no friends or people to talk to
6.	care home (n)	f.	helping to cure a disease or improve your health
7.	loneliness (n)	g.	(of a shop) keep a supply of a particular type of goods to sell
8.	therapeutic (adj.)	h.	(of a computer, etc.) show information



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Part B: Discuss these questions in pairs.

1. Why do you think people started having companion animals instead of using animals for work?
2. Can a pet help with loneliness? Why/why not?
3. In which ways could owning a pet be therapeutic?
4. Do you think it would be a good idea to give robotic pets to older people in care homes? Why/why not?
5. If a robotic pet resembles a real animal, are users more likely to treat it like a real pet?
6. Are dogs or cats more demanding? What is the least demanding type of real pet you can own?
7. Do you think it would be possible to form a bond with a robotic pet? Why/why not?

3 Listening for specific information

Part A: Listen to the report. Tick the items you hear mentioned. Which three items were not mentioned in the audio?

1. ☐ solution
2. ☐ rabbit
3. ☐ machine
4. ☐ plans
5. ☐ computer
6. ☐ device
7. ☐ screen
8. ☐ app
9. ☐ robot
10. ☐ society

Part B: Look at the underlined phrase in the sentence below. What do you think the phrase means? Have you followed in the footsteps of your parents? Discuss in pairs.

It's unlikely that another animal on Earth will ever ***follow in our footsteps****.*

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4 Listening comprehension

For each question, select the answer that most accurately reflects the information given in the audio. Listen to the report again to check your answers.

Group 1:

1. Where is Casio based?
   a. South Korea
   b. Japan
   c. United States of America

2. What did Casio make its name producing?
   a. computers and video games
   b. products for pets
   c. calculators and digital watches

3. How much does the Moflin cost?
   a. 54,900 yen b. 59,400 yen c. 94,500 yen

4. What is Aibo?
   a. a digital watch b. a video game c. a robotic dog

5. When was Aibo released?
   a. 1999 b. 2009 c. 2023

Group 2:

1. Who produced the Tamagotchi?
   a. Sony b. Bandai Namco c. Casio

2. Which animals does the Moflin resemble?
   a. a rabbit or a chinchilla
   b. a hamster or a guinea pig
   c. a cat or a duck

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3. How can Moflins communicate with their owners?
   a. by making noises or through an app
   b. with a camera and a small LCD screen
   c. through a series of flashing lights

4. How many pet cats live in Japan?
   a. 7.1 million b. 9.7 million c. 8.9 million

5. What type of animal is Paro?
   a. a robotic cat b. a robotic seal c. a robotic hamster

5 Pre-reading task: general vocabulary

Part A: You are going to read an article in which four individuals share their opinions on robotic and AI pets. Scan the text quickly and find words that match the synonyms and definitions below in each paragraph.

Group 1:

1. _____ (v, para. 1): damage the surface of something, especially by accident, by making thin shallow marks on it
2. _____ (v, para. 1): bother
3. _____ (adj., para. 1): remaining constant in your support of somebody/something
4. _____ (v, para. 2): (of dogs) making a short, loud sound
5. _____ (v, para. 2): moved your hand gently and slowly over an animal's fur or hair



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Group 2:

1. _____ (adj., para. 3): furry
2. _____ (n, para. 4): a scientist who studies and is trained in psychology
3. _____ (adj., para. 4): not real
4. _____ (n, para. 4): a medical condition in which a person feels very sad, anxious and without hope and often has physical symptoms such as being unable to sleep, etc.
5. _____ (adj., para 4): needing or wanting something very much

Part B: Look at the underlined phrase in the sentence below. What do you think the phrase means? Can you think of a time when you tried to do something even though you thought you would probably fail? Discuss in pairs.

> *I'm going to take the exam anyway, even though I haven't studied much, as I think it's* ***worth a shot****.*

Are robot pets here to stay?

Four individuals share their opinions

1. **Chris, 42**

My marriage broke down last year, and I found myself spending a lot of time alone. My wife took the dog, which was fair enough, as she used to walk him every day, but I still felt like I was missing something. Friends suggested getting a new pet, but I have quite a busy working life, so I thought it wouldn't be fair on the animal. That's when I found Jossy, from RealityEX. Jossy is about the size of a small cat and covered in fur. She moves around the apartment with her robotic legs. She makes cat-like noises when she wants attention, but I don't need to feed her or anything like that. Jossy doesn't scratch the furniture or disturb the neighbours. She's loyal to me, which is what I need at the moment.

2. **Fiona, 21**

We've always been a dog family, although we did have a cat when I was very young. We've had our current dog, Jack, for twelve years now. He's a bit slower than he used to be, but just as loving. When he was a puppy, he went through a phase of barking a lot, but he's generally very well-behaved. Jack likes to watch football on TV. He loves to be stroked behind the ears. I can't imagine replacing him with a machine. When he's no longer with us, we'll all miss him a lot, but the memories we'll have of his silly old face will last us for our whole lives.

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3. **Rachael, 38**

My father has Alzheimer's disease. He tends to get a little confused when my brother and I visit, and often talks about our old dog, Bryan, who died over two decades ago. My brother, Dan, saw an advert by chance about robotic pets for people with dementia. When we discussed it with dad's medical team, they thought it was worth a shot. We bought him an AI pet called Rex-9, which looks a bit like a dog. It's soft and fluffy but can move around a little bit and make noises. My father seems a lot calmer since Rex-9 arrived, although he does still ask about Bryan, sometimes.

4. **Michael, 27**

A friend from school, Billy, posted on social media about his new AI dog. I sent him a message and it turns out Billy spends most of his time playing video games. He works from home and rarely leaves his bedroom. Now, I'm not a psychologist, but I don't think a fake pet is going to help him. A real dog would get him out of the house. A living, breathing cat would be better for him than a virtual one! Studies have shown that having a pet can help with depression and anxiety. AI pets, on the other hand, are just taking advantage of lonely, desperate people. I invited Billy out for a drink, but he said he was busy with his robot dog.

Sources: BBC, The Guardian, The Verge

6 Reading comprehension

Part A: Read the article again. Match statements with the correct speakers. Some statements can be matched to more than one speaker. One of the statements cannot be matched to any of the speakers and should be marked 'not given'.

Chris Fiona Michael Michael not given Rachael

i. They know somebody who has an AI or robotic pet. → Rachael and _____

ii. They think AI pets are dangerous. → _____

iii. They own an AI or robotic pet. → _____

iv. They own a real pet. → _____

v. They are worried about somebody who owns an AI or robotic pet. → _____

Part B: For each question, choose the answer you believe best suits the speaker.

1. What does Chris like the most about Jossy?

   a. that she gives him attention

   b. that she's loyal

   c. that she looks like a real cat

2. What does Fiona's dog like to do?

   a. bark a lot b. play football in the park c. watch sports on TV

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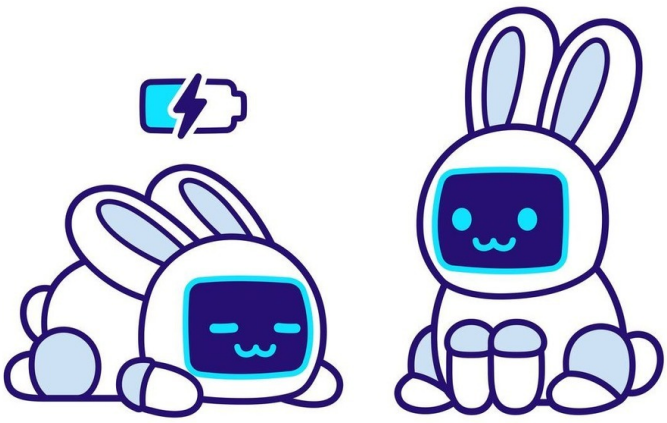
3. What does Rachael's father talk about when she visits him?
   a. a robotic dog called Rex-9
   b. a friend called Bryan
   c. a dog called Bryan

4. Why does Michael think that a real dog would be more helpful for Billy than an AI pet?
   a. he thinks it would get him out of the house
   b. he thinks that it would remind Billy of his old dog
   c. he believes it would help him to meet a new girlfriend

7 Talking point

In pairs or small groups, discuss the following questions.

1. Why do you think some people would prefer a robotic pet to a real one?
2. In the future, will robotic pets completely replace real companion animals? Why/why not?
3. Do you think it's a good idea to give children robotic pets or toys? Could anything go wrong?
4. Can caring for a real pet teach us things that we can't learn from robots? If so, what can they teach us?
5. Why might robotic pets be more suitable than real ones for people with dementia?
6. Do you think that robots will ever be as intelligent as humans? Should we try to achieve this?
7. Why do you think that there are more pets in Japan than children under fifteen? Is this something to be worried about?



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8 Extension activity: essay and group presentation

Task A: Write an opinion essay on ONE of the topics below. Your essay should agree with or disagree with the statement, and should be between 240 – 280 words.

- Caring for a living creature teaches children about life.
- Inviting a robot into your home is a terrible idea, no matter how fluffy the product appears to be.

Task B: Split into groups. Your group has been tasked with designing a new robotic or AI pet. Think of a name for your pet, and decide what it will look like. Will it be fluffy? Will it resemble a particular animal? Will it exist on a computer or phone screen, or will it be a robot with a special app that customers can use to communicate with it? Who will the pet be aimed at? Will it have any therapeutic uses? How much will it cost? After designing your new pet, present it to the class.

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