

WHAT MAKES US HUMAN?

Cover image: Hands at the [Cuevas de las Manos](#) upon *Río Pinturas*, near the town of Perito Moreno in [Santa Cruz Province, Argentina](#). By Mariano - [Own work, Public Domain](#). The cave is named for the hundreds of [paintings](#) of hands [stenciled](#), in multiple collages, on the rock walls created in several waves between 7,300 BC and AD 700.

Editorial

In this year's Tandem IMS magazine, we take a closer look at our society and inside ourselves by exploring the question of what makes us human.

In the past few weeks, we reflected on our way of living and our emotions. At Tandem IMS each and everyone's values are equally important, and after taking the time to express our ideas and feelings, we've created this magazine through teamwork. Both Pro and Kurzgymi classes in our school worked together, in "tandem", and wrote one or more articles for the magazine, showing great teamwork spirit. We have an article about inventions, one about AI, one about languages and one about poetry. Moreover, at the start of February, we dived deeper into these topics during a special "Anthropology Week", where we had the honor of meeting Christo Brand, Nelson Mandela's prison warden. In the final pages of the magazine, you will find the article with the interview we did with Brand, with a QR code so you can listen to it, too!

The topics covered in this magazine were chosen because they allow us to discuss how our own, personal choices have a big impact on the whole of humanity. Our world is in our hands and we have the chance to make a difference, to leave a mark and work towards a better world. As the cave hand-marks on the cover of the magazine show, the desire to leave a mark and a legacy behind is in itself a very human feeling. But all things come with a downside: even something beautiful can have an ugly side. It's important to acknowledge the critical parts of our society and address them. That's why we worked together to address these issues at Tandem IMS, in the hope of creating a better society.

The article "Why Do Humans Need Inventions" is about how deeply inventions shape our lives: how they change the way we live, learn, and communicate. Inventions are essential for human progress, but we should also think critically about how much we depend on them. The article "Is Language Shaping Who We Are?" explores how communication influences human life and, vice versa, how geography, sound, and even the environment can shape how languages develop and how we experience the world. One of the most debated topics today is AI and its influence on communication. The article "Is AI Helping or Ruining Our Ability to Communicate?" explores both the positive and negative sides of this technology. It shows how AI can help us in many ways, but it also raises concerns.

Last but not least poetry reminds us that technology and innovations are only one part of our lives. Poetry helps us to express our emotions, reflect on society, and gives us a way to connect and understand one another. Even in a fast, digital world, poetry shows that feeling, reflection, and empathy remain important aspects of being human.

Finally, we become who we are because of what we create, what we share, and how we connect with others. Everything we've explored, from inventions to language, AI, and poetry, reminds us of that. These are all important and interesting topics that have a big impact on our mindsets and our futures. I hope that we can spark your curiosity and that you enjoy reading!

Elif and Poppy

(Kurzgymi 1)

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Contributors

Progymi 1

Alp is currently a Progymi student at Tandem IMS, where he is learning for the Matura. His hobbies include football, fishing and swimming.

Edric is a very energetic student, who likes to play golf and basketball. He can be naughty sometimes, but also respectful too. He loves to travel and wants to go to many places. He loves trying different foods and eating in general.

Iliana Petropoulos went to Schule Dorf before she came to the Progymi at Tandem IMS. Her dream is to pass the Matura. That's why she is in this school.

Jan Skrobala is currently a Progymi student at Tandem IMS. He is learning for the Matura. His hobbies are swimming and playing video games.

After Jolie finished Kindergarden in a school called “Kids at Lake”, she moved on to Tandem IMS. Now she's a Progymi student and her goal is to pass the Matura. Drawing, reading comic books and playing piano are Jolie's hobbies.

Leopold Gerum is currently a Progymi student at Tandem IMS, where he is learning for the Matura. His hobby is floorball.

Lys grew up in Zürich and is currently 12 years old. She went to d’Insle Montessori Kindergarten. After that she moved on to Primarschule Feldmeilen, where she stayed for 6 years. After her primary years in Feldmeilen she changed to Tandem IMS gymnasium. In her free time, she loves fencing and playing the violin. Her favourite food is pho and bubble tea.

Margarita Mimikou was a primary student at “OBS School”, before moving on to Tandem IMS. She is currently a Progymi student. Her goal is to go to a top university even though she does not know yet what her path will be.

Theo Elbi was a primary school student at “Goldbach” and “ICS” and is currently attending Tandem IMS as a Progym 1 student. His biggest goals are to go to a top university like Dartmouth, an Ivy League College that has an amazing alpine ski team, where he can achieve his biggest goal of becoming an alpine ski racer.

Kurzgymi 1

Elif is a student at Tandem IMS who is working hard to pass the Matura exam and take a step closer towards her future and her dreams. She hopes to become the best version of herself and continue to do what she loves.

Nina is a student that loves art and design and likes to show her ideas in creative ways. She enjoys drawing and making simple designs. In her free time, she practices a lot and looks for new ideas around her. Nina works hard and wants to use her love for art and design in her future job.

Poppy is a student at Tandem IMS who enjoys reading and being creative with her ideas. She likes expressing herself in different ways and wants to continue being herself while growing and learning. She works hard and stays determined because she wants to be successful in life.

Sophia is a student at Tandem IMS who is curious and motivated to learn new things. She enjoys spending her free time exploring her interests, whether it's through creative activities, sports, or discovering new ideas. Sophia works hard in school and always tries to improve herself. Her goal is to build a bright future while doing what she enjoys and staying true to who she is.

Poetry today: Is poetry a thing of the past or can it still help us understand what it means to be human?

By Elif, Sophia, Nina and Poppy (Kurzgymi 1)

Poetry helps us understand what it means to be human by expressing emotions.

I feel that poetry helps me and others feel more included in what we feel or choose to express. Poetry can give people a sense of community and connection to others. Poetry is a symbolic type of writing that awakens emotions and feelings in a person. This helps people think and sometimes reflect on themselves and how they could express their emotions.

Poetry helps us understand ourselves and others because it makes feelings real. Poetry can put messy feelings and thoughts into words like heartbreak, rage or joy. It connects people who feel the same way and can relate and it encourages empathy: poetry makes us care and helps us see the world through someone else's eyes. Us humans often hide, everything becomes surface levelled and our feelings get hidden, less understood and valued. So, poetry is a way to show humanity its hidden value, what it actually means to be human.

Poetry helps us understand what it means to be human by revealing our emotions, struggles, questions, and connections. It shows that to be human is to feel deeply, to search for meaning, and to connect with others. For me personally poetry has always had a calming effect on me.

Is there still a place for poetry in our modern society?

Our society doesn't appreciate poetry as much as we should. In this day and age poetry is a little forgotten and lost to time. Poetry, however, is very helpful for us to understand other people and their views on life. Poetry can be helpful for humans to understand other people. Which makes people more human. I think that poetry makes people come together and can help someone express their feelings and emotions. It brings people

with the same or similar views together and can create a safe and comfortable community.

Poppy chose to read Maggie Smith's poem "Good Bones" (2017), because it explores how even in modern times, sexism is still such a normalized thing. Sexism occurs a lot more than we think, in normal homes, in poorer countries like Afghanistan, Yemen, Chad, Pakistan and Iran. Smith's poem represents all mothers that are going through the motherly desire of wanting to shield her children from the harsh outside world that we live in. In the poem Smith is insinuating that the world isn't a place for children and that they should be shielded from the horrors that go on. The poem is also saying that it's a mother's job to protect her children from the world, which can be seen in a sexist way. Why can't a father do it? Why must a mother do it? How come it's been turned into a mother's job? These are the questions that the author is encouraging us to think about.

"Good Bones" (2017), by Maggie Smith

Life is short, though I keep this from my children.
Life is short, and I've shortened mine
in a thousand delicious, ill-advised ways,
a thousand deliciously ill-advised ways
I'll keep it from my children. The world is at least
fifty percent terrible, and that's a conservative
estimate, though I keep this from my children.
For every bird there is a stone thrown at a bird.
For every loved child, a child broken, bagged,
sunk in a lake. Life is short and the world
is at least half terrible, and for every kind
stranger, there is one who would break you,
though I keep this from my children. I am trying
to sell them the world. Any decent realtor,
walking you through a real shithole, chirps on
about good bones: This place could be beautiful,
right? You could make this place beautiful

While the previous poem highlights the flaws of the world, the poem chosen by Elif from the poetry collection *the sun and her flowers* (2017) by Rupi Kaur, shifts the focus to women's voices and how society expects them to remain silent.

From *the sun and her flowers* (2017) by Rupi Kaur

you tell me to quiet down
cause my opinions make me less beautiful
but i was not made with a fire in my belly so i could be put out
nor was my mouth made to be a dwelling for flowers but a sword for cutting

This poem reflects on the pressure that society often puts on women, and how they are told to keep their voices quiet and agreeable. The poem is like a small protest, standing up for the right to speak honestly rather than just being pretty. This poem is really straightforward and clear—that's part of why I choose this poem. In my opinion, poems that don't have many metaphors convey the emotion and message more clearly and more strongly. This poem gives a sense of a woman's power and her will to fight for her rights, that's what makes it so powerful and loud. These are all reasons why I chose this poem and why I think it has earned its popularity.

A different perspective on modern society is presented in the poem chosen by Nina:

“And the People Stayed Home” (2020), by Kitty O'Meara

And the people healed
And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

The poem suggests that when people were forced to stay home during the pandemic, they finally stopped rushing through life. In the quiet, they began to read, rest, make art, think, and reconnect with themselves and their families. Because people slowed down, both humans and the planet started to heal. Pollution dropped, stress decreased, and people had time to reflect on what truly matters. The poem's message is that even in a crisis, there can be growth. If people learn from this moment, to live more calmly, kindly, and consciously, the world after the pandemic could become better than the one before.

Finally, Sophia chose a poem by Ocean Vuong because it talks about feelings that many teenagers experience.

“Telemachus”, from *Night Sky with Exit Wounds* (2016), by Ocean Vuong

Like any good son, I pull my father out
of the water, drag him by his hair
through white sand, his knuckles carving a trail
the waves rush in to erase. Because the city
beyond the shore is no longer
where we left it. Because the bombed
cathedral is now a cathedral
of trees. I kneel beside him to show how far
I might sink. Do you know who I am,
Ba? But the answer never comes. The answer
is the bullet hole in his back, brimming
with seawater. He is so still I think
he could be anyone’s father, found
the way a green bottle might appear
at a boy’s feet containing a year
he has never touched. I touch
his ears. No use. I turn him
over. To face it. The cathedral
in his sea-black eyes. The face
not mine — but one I will wear
to kiss all my lovers good-night:
the way I seal my father’s lips
with my own & begin
the faithful work of drowning.

The poem focuses on growing up, feeling unsure about yourself, and trying to understand who you are. When I read it, I felt like the poet was describing feelings that I, and many other teenagers, have felt before. Ocean Vuong writes in an honest and emotional way, which makes the poem easy to connect to. I liked this poem because it made me feel understood and reminded me that it is normal to feel confused sometimes. It also showed me that poetry can be a helpful way to express emotions that are hard to talk about. This poem stood out to me because it feels real and shows that modern poetry can reflect real life.

Romantic poetry: can it still mean anything to us?

Although Romantic poetry was written more than 200 years ago, we can still personally connect with it today. Romantic poetry emerged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, during a time of revolution, war, industrialisation, and social change. Poets reacted against their predecessors and against strict rules, logic, and traditional values, believing that reason and strict order were limiting and even dangerous. Instead, they focused on emotions, imagination, individuality, and personal experiences.

Romantic poets often wrote about nature, freedom, and problems in society, and they were very critical of the idea that progress is the only way to reach perfection, no matter how painful it is for people and the earth. Romantic poetry reacted against the negative effects of industrialisation and urbanisation, giving a new place to feelings, a greater emphasis on the individual's experience, and attaching a spiritual value to nature. Through their poems, poets shared their opinions, voiced benefits but also disadvantages of revolutions such as the Industrial Revolution, and spoke up about things they believed were unfair. Modern readers can still identify with Romantic poetry because we are still human, and emotions, hopes, struggles, and the desire for freedom still exist today. The world is still changing quickly, and people continue to use poetry to express feelings, question society, and give a voice to emotions. This is why Romantic poetry remains relevant and meaningful, even more than 200 years later.



Some examples of Romantic poetry still relevant today

This is clearly demonstrated by the London poems written by William Blake and William Wordsworth, in which the two poets present opposite views of the city and of progress.

“London” (1794), by William Blake

I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow.
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man,
In every Infants cry of fear,
In every voice: in every ban,
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear

How the Chimney-sweepers cry
Every blackning Church appalls,
And the hapless Soldiers sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls

But most thro' midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlots curse
Blasts the new-born Infants tear
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse

“Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802”, by William Wordsworth

Earth has not any thing to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

In Blake's poem "London" (1794), the city is shown as a dark and unfair place where people suffer because of industrialisation, authority, and social inequality. The speaker notices misery everywhere, including child labour, social injustice, and the absence of nature, showing that progress causes pain rather than improvement.

In contrast, Wordsworth's poem "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" (1807) presents London as calm and beautiful early in the morning, before industrial activities begin. The city appears peaceful and harmonious, suggesting that it can only be loved when it is free from smoke and noise. This reflects the Romantic belief that nature and tranquillity are essential for inner peace.

Together, the two poems show that progress can have both positive and negative effects. Blake highlights suffering and injustice, while Wordsworth shows a moment of beauty before industrialisation takes over. These different perspectives remain relevant today, as modern society still struggles with the impact of progress on human lives and the environment.

Poetry for all time

Both modern and Romantic poetry show how poets use language to express emotions and comment on the world around them. Romantic poetry, although written over 200 years ago, focuses strongly on feelings, personal experiences, and the effects of progress. This can be seen in the London poems by William Blake and William Wordsworth, which present different perspectives on industrialisation and remind us that progress can bring both positive and negative consequences for people and the environment.

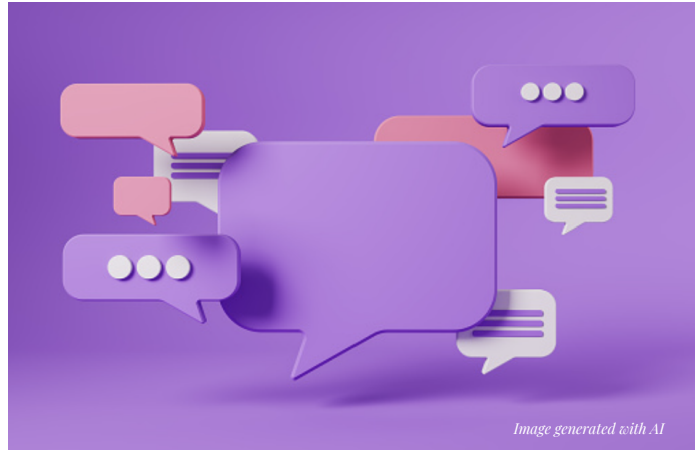
Modern poetry continues this tradition by addressing personal emotions and social issues in a more direct and accessible way. In a world shaped by social media, fast information, and even artificial intelligence, people are constantly exposed to opinions and content, yet often feel overwhelmed or disconnected. Poetry offers a space to slow down, reflect, and understand emotions that are difficult to express otherwise.

Overall, poetry remains a powerful tool to share feelings, question society, and help us understand what it means to be human, showing that it is not a thing of the past, but a timeless art.

Is language shaping who we are?

By Jolie, Jan and Iliana (Progymn 1)

Language and communication are really important to humans. Without it, people wouldn't understand each other. Communication and language can lead people to misunderstandings but can also bring people together. There are different ways one can communicate: speaking, writing, hand signs, face expressions, technology (phones, I-Pad, computer...), eye contact and even images and drawings can be ways of communication.



Does geography influence how a language sounds?

For a long time, people thought that languages change only because of people and history. They believed that the place where people live does not affect how a language sounds. Today some scientists think this idea is not fully correct. New studies show that geography can influence language.

A linguist named Caleb Everett studied languages spoken in many parts of the world. He looked at languages spoken in high mountains. He found that many of these languages use special sounds. These sounds are called “ejective consonants”. They are made with strong short bursts of air. English does not have these sounds.

Everett found that ejective sounds are common in places like the Andes and African highlands. These places are located high above sea level. At high altitude the air pressure is lower. This makes it easier to produce strong air sounds. Because of this people may use these sounds more often. Over time such sounds became part of the language.

Some people say this could be only a coincidence. They say languages may have these sounds because of history not geography. However, the pattern is very strong. Most

languages with ejective sounds are found in high places. Only a few places do not follow this rule.

This research shows that geography can affect language. Language is not only social. It is also connected to the human body and the environment. This idea helps us understand languages in a new way. Such sounds may have influenced also what early people drew on rocks.

The world changes with communication

Communication has changed over time. Thousands of years ago, humans would draw messages to inform other humans about their past experiences and to pass on information about animals. In the article “Study Links Ancient Cave Drawing and Early Human language”, Leisure says: "In this sense, cave and rock [art] would represent a modality of linguistic expression". Here Leisure suggests that cave drawings and rock art are also a way to communicate, just like language is. Not only that: “They don't draw for fun, as if it was their hobby, instead they use drawing to express ideas, meanings and even messages”. People then used symbols and drawings instead of spoken or written language. This shows us that even people in prehistoric times were able to communicate with only drawings and symbols.

Nowell adds: "The acoustic factor is an important one to consider but I don't think it was the only explanation for why people made marks in the places they did." Here Nowell thinks that sound was important too but not the only reason for the markings and images. People had lots of reasons for choosing where to draw or to choose the symbols for their messages. For example, a person who likes quiet places rather than noisy and loud places might draw their messages in an echo-free or calm place.

Now people mainly communicate through spoken language, written language and even through digital media and other technology. It's also much faster and can reach people from all across the world. While reading through articles about language and communication, I have been wondering about how communication has changed people's lives. Communicating with people can lead people to misunderstandings and also led me to think when and why people began to distrust each other. I think communication and language can bring people together, but sadly it can also tear people apart.

Does language really shape what we see?

Well at this exact moment, our eyes are performing what is called “coordinated operation”, that means, light rays are hitting your retina, and your cells are then turning the light into electrical pulses. This process begs the question: at what point does our vision affect our feelings? Well, we know that the integration of vision and feelings happens at some point in the brain. In the 2000’s, researchers found out that if you hear simple sounds, they affect your flashing circles (how nerves travel through your brain). That means, if you would compare a person in front of a lion running towards them, and a person listening to calming music or a simple sound, the person listening to calming music would have more chances to survive, because their brain is calm and it would allow them to think before doing something. The other human’s survival instincts, however, would instantly kick in and they would just start running, meaning there would be a 90% chance they would get eaten. That kind of answers the question: does language affect what we see? Hearing simple sounds like “aaaaaa” will affect your brain, and maybe also affect what we see.

Resources used to write this article:

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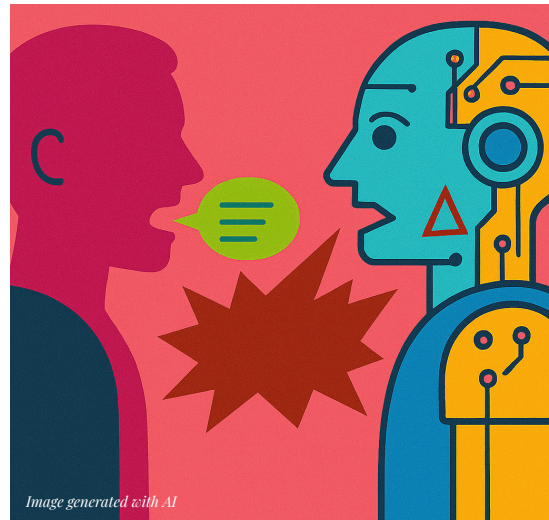
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/does-language-shape-what-we-see>

Is AI helping or ruining our ability to communicate?

By Edric, Leopold, Lys (Progymi 1)

In this article we are going to discuss whether AI is improving our communication or not. Read on to find out how AI can help communication in different ways, for example, by helping us understand animals.

AI can be a helpful tool for research depending on how you use it. For example, if researchers use it for scientific research, then it can be helpful, but if you use it to do your homework then it's not really good (I mean obviously it helps you, but then you have to ask yourself “could I have done that alone?”). AI can also be used to communicate, and it could even help us to communicate with other living species, like our house pets (cats, dogs), wild animals in the jungle or even creatures under the ocean.



What is communication?

As humans, we communicate every day between 7 to over 10 hours. But what exactly is communication? If we had to explain it in our words, we would say that communication is a natural thing we do (almost all living things do), in order to be able to understand each other. Communication doesn't have to be speaking, it can also be body movements, feelings, texts, notes or signs given to each other to signal, express or say something.

Nowadays, technology is essential for communication, with apps and social media playing a particular central role. Almost everybody uses TikTok, YouTube, Facebook or twitter, but what was the original purpose of social media? Its original purpose was to

make communication apps where people could communicate, send videos, text, and share images. Social media was thought of as a way to get to know each other, to talk with friends who lived far apart and to build digital communities. However, today hardly anyone really communicates on social media. On TikTok people post TikTok dances, but what does that have to do with communication? We think that social media is now really more about entertainment, which, in itself, is not a bad thing, but has little to do with communication.

We asked our science teacher, Ms Mirja Bock, if she uses any apps that satisfy her or make her able to communicate more or better. Her answer was: “I use facetime to communicate with my parents. This was very useful when I was living in New Zealand, as phone calls would be expensive.” We also asked our German teacher, Ms Stephanie Fischer, if she uses social media often. She replied: “I do not use social media because it does not play an important role in my daily life. Many platforms are designed to keep our attention for as long as possible, which easily leads to spending a lot of time online. Social media also encourages a culture of comparison, as people usually show only selected parts of their lives. As a result, I may miss certain trends or discussions, for example on Instagram. However, I do not experience this as a loss. Sometimes I wonder whether my relationship with social media would be different if I were younger today. It would probably be harder to choose not to use it, since social media has become omnipresent.”

We asked several students the same questions. Here are their answers. Margarita, one of our classmates, when asked if she is often on social media replied: “No, I don't use social media because I have a life and prefer to watch TV shows like *The Rookie*, but sometimes I look at my friends' stories on Instagram.” Kaiden, from fifth grade, said that he simply uses messages to communicate, not social media. Finally, we asked Thibaut if he uses an app that makes him happy, and he answered: “Yes, I often play Minecraft and use Alexa. If I get a phone, I want games and WhatsApp on it.”

The potential of AI for communication

The way we communicate is constantly evolving. From the invention of the printing press to the rise of the internet, each technological step has redefined the landscape of information sharing and interpersonal connection. “In our modern era, the emergence of artificial intelligence stands poised to propel this evolution to unpredictable heights.” AI was invented by a group of computer scientists that imagined making a three-dimensional brain that could process and give information. This idea was initiated in the 1950s and is still developing. The first time it was made accessible to a larger public was in the 2020s. Today, AI, as for example ChatGPT, is used for work, video editing, picture editing and much more, but the original purpose was to make a machine that could simulate human intelligence.

From personalization to translation to automation, AI methods of communication are unlimited. In 10 years, AI could be an assistant for people who find it hard to speak. Also AI could take over the announcements, for example in an airport or a train station. This would result in fewer or no mistakes. AI can also help with writing by fixing grammar and making messages clearer: AI helped us write this very article. AI can help people communicate across different languages by translating text and speech quickly and accurately. This allows people from different countries and cultures to understand each other better.

Can AI help us understand animals?

A good example of positive use of AI for communication is described in an article from *The National Geographic* entitled “What Are Animals Saying?”. In the article we read that thanks to AI, researchers are one step closer to being able to understand sperm whales thanks to drones that record sound that is then processed by AI.

Is AI transforming our communication?

Yes, it is, but both in a good and in a bad way. On the one hand, AI is helping students to understand French or people to understand languages. People use AI not because they have forgotten how to communicate, or they are getting less and less smart. AI can analyze vast amount of data and so it is able to process information more efficiently than the human brain. AI can for example create targeted advertising campaigns that resonate with specific demographics and interests, leading to more effective marketing strategies and a better user experience. Sometimes, however, AI can generate some incorrect answers.

When is it good to use AI?

So personally, we think that it is okay to use AI to simplify the processing of large amounts of information or to correct a text (grammatically) for school. But we think it is not good to ask AI to do your homework or answer things you actually know, but you are too lazy to do on your own. AI should not replace our voices.

We think that AI can be good and bad, depending on how you use it. We don't know if it's helping us with communication, but we think it's not running it, it's just giving us more opportunities: humans can now speak to AI and not only to other humans.

And you, what do you think? Is AI helping or ruining our communication?

Resources used to write this article:

ChatGPT <https://chatgpt.com/>

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The Future of Communication: How is AI transforming the way we connect? (Capitol Technology University) <https://www.captechu.edu/blog/how-ai-is-transforming-communication>

History of Artificial Intelligence (Wikipedia)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_artificial_intelligence

How does AI work? Basics to know (Coursera)

<https://www.coursera.org/articles/how-does-ai-work>

Why do humans need inventions?

By Alp, Margarita, Theo (Progymi 1)

Humans need inventions because they help us solve problems and make life easier. Throughout history, people have created tools and machines to improve the way we live. Inventions help us communicate, travel, learn, and stay healthy. They also allow us to explore new ideas and make progress in science and technology. Even though we could survive with fewer inventions, our lives would be much harder and less comfortable. Inventions make everyday tasks faster and safer, and they help us understand and improve the world around us. This is why inventions are important for human progress.



Toluca, Mexico. Original public domain image from Wikimedia Commons.

How major inventions transformed everyday life

Inventions have impacted the world we live in, because they have made the way we live, learn, and communicate with other people better. There are some inventions that are more important than others because they altered the lifestyle of people in the past and are still in use today. Among these are the light bulb, the personal computer, medicine, the airplane, and the printing press, all inventions that altered the way we live in society. However, people nowadays take these for granted as we discuss in this article.

The top 5 invention that shaped the world (based on AI and the National Geographic)

Inventions are important because they help people live better and easier lives. Over time, many inventions have changed the world by helping humanity to advance. The first most important invention is the **wheel**, which was invented around 3500 BC. The wheel made it easier to move heavy objects and travel long distances. Without the wheel,

cars, bicycles, and many machines would not exist today. It was one of the earliest human inventions and it's still used everywhere.

The second invention is the **printing press**. The printing press was invented by Johannes Gutenberg around 1440. This invention made it possible to produce multiple copies of written text much faster than before. Instead of copying books by hand, printers could make many copies quickly and without effort. The printing press helped spreading ideas, news, and knowledge to more people. It played a major role in improving education and literacy across the world.

The **light bulb** was invented by Thomas Edison in 1879 and became one of the most important inventions in modern history. Before the light bulb, people depended on candles, fireplaces, and oil lamps for light, which were not very bright and could be dangerous. The light bulb provided a safer, longer-lasting source of light that people could use every day. It allowed families to stay active after sunset, helped children study at night, and made workplaces more productive. Streets and buildings could also be lit, which improved safety in cities. Alongside with **electricity**, which was invented in the 1800s, the light bulb greatly changed how people lived and worked. Electricity powers our homes, schools, and cities and it allows us to use our many electronic devices. Life without electricity would be very difficult in today's world.

One of the first electronic devices invented was the **computer**. The first commercially successful computer was invented by Adam Osborne in 1981. This invention made computers available to all people, not just businessmen and scientists. Personal computers helped students complete homework, write reports, and learn new skills. They also allowed people to play games, store information, and communicate easily. Over time, personal computers became faster, smaller, and more powerful. Today, they are an important part of education, work, and daily life.

The fifth and final invention is **Artificial Intelligence** (AI). Invented in the early 2000s, AI helps machines think and learn like humans. It is used in phones, cars, and even in helping doctors and students. AI is still growing and can help create new inventions in the future.

These top five inventions have greatly changed the world and they show how human creativity can improve life for everyone.

Top 5 inventions according to you (Tandem-IMS students and teachers)

We circulated a survey with questions about the top 5 inventions and how they affect our daily lives. What we discuss here are the answers of eleven people from different age groups. Overall, the answers show that inventions help people live better, safer, and more fun lives.

When asked about why humans need inventions, most people said inventions make life easier and more comfortable. Many answers explained that inventions help solve problems, improve health, and help people live longer. Some people also said inventions are important because they prevent boredom and give us entertainment. Others mentioned that inventions help humans travel, learn new things, communicate, and be creative. In general, everyone agreed that inventions are a big part of modern life.

For the question about the top five inventions that changed daily human life, many people chose similar things. Electricity was one of the most common answers, because it gives us light and power for many devices. Cars, airplanes, and public transport were also popular because they help people travel faster and farther. Computers, phones, and the internet were often mentioned, because they help people communicate, learn, and have fun. Some people also named important inventions like fire, medicine, clean water systems, and vaccinations. A few answers included games, sports equipment, and favourite foods, showing that inventions are not only about survival but also about enjoyment.

When explaining why these inventions are important, people said they help with safety, health, communication, and daily activities. Without them, life would be harder, slower, and less fun. Schools were mentioned as important for learning and getting good jobs.

Can more be invented?

The light bulb, personal computer, medicine, airplane, and printing press are some of the greatest inventions in history. They all make people's lives easier and better. The light bulb allows people to live and work safely in the dark, while medicine keeps people healthy and allows them to live longer. Computers and the printing press reduced the difficulties of learning and spreading information, and the airplane allows people to

travel faster between countries compared to boats or trains. All these inventions revolutionize the way society operates. But can we still invent more?

Resources used to write this article:

ChatGPT <https://chatgpt.com/>

Daniel Stone, "The 10 Inventions that Changed the World", from *National Geographic* (June 2017)
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/article/explore-top-ten-innovations>

“He always believed that one day the people would be free”: interview with Christo Brand, Nelson Mandela’s prison warden.

By Elif, Sophia, Nina and Poppy (Kurzgymi 1)

On Wednesday 4th February, we had the honour of interviewing Christo Brand, Nelson Mandela’s prison warden. We had the pleasure of having him at our school for the full week, and were able to ask questions whenever we wanted. So we had the idea to make a podcast to share all the stories he told us with all of you. He talked about his life, where he grew up, what he thought of the apartheid system, what it was like being Nelson Mandela’s warden, and of course, how their relationship grew into a friendship.

The interview with Christo Brand was a way to see the world through his eyes and answer all our questions regarding his personal journey and his life. The interview did not only give us an insight into Christo Brand’s life; it also gave us an intimate image of Christo Brand’s beloved friend Nelson Mandela. We learned about their lives in South Africa, their values, their way of living, and lots of more interesting things.

Hearing the story of Nelson Mandela from another perspective made him feel more real and human, instead of seeing him as a political leader and a symbol of resistance and power. The most surprising part was that a prison guard and a prisoner could develop such mutual respect and even friendship. Anger, distance, or resentment would have been expected instead. Mandela did not treat people as enemies, even when they were part of a system that oppressed him, and neither did Christo Brand.

We say **forgiving** is important and easy but try forgiving people that imprisoned you and stripped you of your humanity. People are complex, but change is still possible even in hardships. Overall, we learned a lot from the interview and are thankful we got the opportunity to have one. We hope you enjoy it too!

Interview with Christo Brand – Tandem IMS – 4th February 2026

Elif:

Welcome back to our podcast! Today we are joined by Christo Brand, Nelson Mandela's warden, who we are going to have the honour to interview: thank you so much for being with us!

Christo Brand:

I'm very happy to be here with you. I hope I can teach you people something.

Elif:

That's amazing. This is your first time being in Switzerland. How have you found it so far?

Christo Brand:

My first time in Switzerland, in Zurich. Very cold. But I saw the people are very friendly. In the Kantonsschule, they are very active with the projects they're doing.

Elif:

Really good, thank you. You were recently featured in a Swiss article. How do you feel about that?

Christo Brand:

Yeah, I feel really pretty excited. It's an amazing thing.

Elif:

We have prepared a few questions, some are inspired by your book "Doing Life with Mandela: My Prisoner, My Friend", some are more personal and came from our curiosity and desire to get to know you better. All four of us are going to ask some questions, if that's okay.

Christo Brand:

That's perfect.

Elif:

Okay, let's perhaps start with a general question. Since the launch of your book, you have been traveling around the world, meeting people, going to schools, and talking about it. What inspires you and motivates you to do that?

Christo Brand:

You know, firstly I didn't want to write a book. Mandela was the one who put pressure on me to write a book. He wanted people to know how a white man and a black man can become friends. And after my book was finalized, he said to me: "Mr. Brand, now it's time to travel the world. Explain to the people. Go to schools, go to universities, and explain to people the legacy of the past, how we became friends." And that is why I try to keep Mandela's legacy alive today.

Elif:

That's an amazing motivation. Are you glad that you still wrote the book, even though you didn't really want to?

Christo Brand:

Yes, I'm very glad. I never thought I would be speaking in front of crowds of people. That was never a thing in my life. But that is a new excitement for me.

Elif:

That's amazing. We are really glad that you're here too. Your work in schools is very important. And I think it would also be very inspiring if we knew how you were as a kid in school. Can you describe to us what a normal day in the life of a 10-year-old Christo Brand was like?

Christo Brand:

You know, at the age of 10, I grew up on a farm where I was playing with African children. I was the only white child on the farm. Many years later we moved to a city. I didn't know about apartheid, but in the city I didn't have Black friends or mixed-race children to play with. I went to a new school, and that school was a little bit different. In that school we could do some military training also. I didn't know what it was for until I reached the

age of 17 or 18 when I saw people being called up for military service. Then I started realizing some of the things that apartheid was like.

Elif:

Yeah, that's crazy how different situations are in different places. I think it's important that we are all aware of what's happening in life. It must have been a shock to you.

Sophia:

Hi, I'm Sophia, and today I would also like to ask some questions. When you were young, we read that you didn't really know who Mandela was or that apartheid was happening. Was there one exact moment that changed your perspective about Nelson Mandela and the apartheid system?

Christo Brand:

Yes. I can recall the moment. That was the day when I smuggled a baby into the prison. Prisoners were not allowed to see children. When I saw how humble he was, how emotional he became — I could see tears in his eyes — I could not believe that. And that changed my thinking. I realized apartheid was wrong.

Sophia:

That's a very inspiring and interesting moment. Were you able to keep in touch with Mandela after he was released from prison?

Christo Brand:

After his release, I was in touch with him on many occasions. I even started working in his office in parliament in 1994. Later I worked with the constitution. I stayed in touch with Mandela until he passed away.

Sophia:

That's so nice. Were you very close friends?

Christo Brand:

We became friends in prison, yes. He always said I was his friend. Especially when I wrote my book, people said I can't call my book Mandela: My Prisoner, My Friend.

Ahmed Kathrada, one of his co-accused, said Mandela is too old to become a friend. But Mandela said he wanted a book like that. We were friends.

Sophia:

In your book, in Chapter 2, you talk about how your opinion about Mandela slowly changed while you were working on Robben Island. At first Mandela was seen as dangerous, but quickly you realized that he was calm, kind, and a profound man. Were you ever afraid of showing kindness to Mandela because of the prison rules?

Christo Brand:

That's correct. I was a little bit afraid, but I showed kindness to Mandela especially when other guards were not close by. When we were alone walking to the visiting center, or when I later called him to my office to discuss his studies, I wasn't afraid to talk to him. But in the beginning I was really afraid because I was young. We were told we were going to meet the biggest criminals in the history of South Africa. But I met people who were gentle and treated others with respect.

Nina:

Hi, I'm Nina and I also have some questions. You said Mandela changed your perspective about life in South Africa. How did he inspire people around him, and how did he inspire you?

Christo Brand:

He was a friendly guy who treated people with respect. He always motivated people to educate themselves. Education was very important to him. He was also a family man. He would never talk politics with us in prison. He would always ask about our families — how our parents were doing. He would say: "Send my greetings to your parents."

Nina:

That's very sweet. I wonder how he stayed calm and patient after so many years in prison. Did he ever talk about fear, doubt, or regret?

Christo Brand:

He never talked about fear or doubt. One time I asked him if he hated the white people of the country for what they had done to him. He said: "Mr. Brand, I can never hate the

white people. I can hate the system that was in place.” In prison he tried to change the mindset of the prisoners. He said: “This is not only our prison. This is our university.” **He always believed that one day the people would be free.**

Nina:

You spoke about Mandela’s ability to forgive even after everything he went through. What gave him the strength to forgive those who harmed him?

Christo Brand:

What gave him strength was the belief that the struggle was still continuing outside prison. When he walked out of prison, some comrades wanted revenge on the white people. But Mandela said if they took revenge, the country would never move forward. He said: “Let us take the hands of the enemy and work harder than before to build the country together.” **That was his wisdom — forgiveness.**

Nina:

As young people learning about Mandela in school, what lesson do you think is the most important for us to learn from him?

Christo Brand:

The power of Mandela was his discipline, his leadership skills, and his humility. He always believed in education and encouraged young people to educate themselves so they could become future leaders.

Nina:

Apartheid laws were banned more than 30 years ago, but is there still racism in South Africa? Do you think it is possible to live without racism in the world?

Christo Brand:

I think we can live without racism. We must bring Black and white people together. Mandela said through sports and music you don’t feel colour — you just enjoy life. One day when we visited a school, he looked at children playing together and said: “That is the rainbow nation I want to see develop in my country.”

Ellie:

I have one final question. What does it mean to be human to you?

Christo Brand:

To be human means to reach out to each other, to help people around you, and to make the world a better place for everyone. Mandela always taught respect and discipline. If you see someone struggling with groceries, help them. If someone needs help crossing the street, help them. That humanity and respect — that's what it means to me.

Elif:

Thank you very much for answering all of our questions today. It was truly a pleasure and an honour to have you here with us.

Christo Brand:

Thank you, and I hope you learned something today. And remember — you can always become a better person and one day even a leader.

This interview is also available as a Podcast on Spotify ([4Real@TandemSchool](https://open.spotify.com/show/4Real@TandemSchool)). Scan the QR code below to listen to it!





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