

Dear Family Member,

Welcome to our next unit of study, “Technology for Tomorrow.”

As we begin our fifth unit of study in the Benchmark Advance program, we are approaching the halfway mark! As with the previous units, I am providing suggested activities you and your child can do together at home to build on the work we’re doing in class.

The selections in our fifth unit of study, “Technology for Tomorrow” will get us thinking about technology and its benefits and drawbacks. For example, we’ll read arguments for and against drone regulations. We’ll also look into the latest developments in robotics. The selections include a variety of genres such as opinion texts in the form of letters to an editor, realistic fiction, and poetry.

This thought-provoking unit will engage both you and your child in weighing the pros and cons of robots in the work place, as well as driverless cars.

As always, should you have any questions about our reading program or about your child’s progress, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Technology for Tomorrow

In this unit, we'll read selections about technology to understand its pros and cons and think about the question "How do we make decisions about developing new technology?" Here are some activities to continue the conversation about technology and to build on skills and concepts your child has learned in school. How do you and your family incorporate technology into your lives?

Topic Connection

Robots in Your City

Students are exploring the pros and cons of workplace robots. Research with your child if any robots are used in businesses in your city, such as in department or grocery stores. You can also inquire if robots are used in the local hospital or manufacturing plants. Describe how the robot is used in the workplace. If no robots are used locally, write a suggestion for where robots would be useful, such as in the park cleaning up litter.

Vocabulary Connection

Word Association

In school, your child is learning words related to technology. These words include **automation, assembly, navigate, terrain, aviation, complex, procedure, vehicle, transform, and remotely**. Play a word association game to help your child understand how these words are related to other, more familiar words or phrases. You say one of the words, and your child says something that relates to the word, such as "fly" or "airplane" to communicate the word *aviation*. Take turns guessing and giving clues. Provide as many hints as needed!

Comprehension Connection

Driverless Car Rules

In this unit, students think about what a world with driverless cars would look like. However, the technology is still new, so there aren't many laws or rules associated with driverless cars yet. Work with your child to create a list of rules that people should follow when "driving" a driverless car. Try to think of rules that would promote safety for both the driver and others on the road.

Word Study Connections

Zoom In on a Word

One of the most helpful words that students are learning during this unit is *automation*. Zoom in on that word to focus on its meaning, and relate it to the understanding of advancing technology. Make a list of ways that technology helps automate our lives. Include any examples where people use automated technology throughout the day. Then summarize the current state of automation in today's society and the ways it impacts our lives now and how it will impact our lives in the future.