

2020 International Essay Contest for Young People

【Children's Category – 3rd Prize】

A letter from myself in 2030

(Original)

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Dear Talise,

I am your future self from 2030. This is my first attempt at sending out an email through time. You might find this unbelievable, but please read on.

Last December, my team and I found a code that could send emails through time. Cool? Now, we are emailing to our past-selves and future-selves. Knowing you inside out, I am sure your curiosity has been pricked now.

Let me tell you about your future. Our parents are still alive and working tirelessly. Knowing our father, this is definitely not the life he wants, but the cost of living now is higher than in 2020. Unlike ten years ago, senior citizens now are as productive as the younger workers. However, the senior generation is no longer working as cleaners in food courts anymore. The culture of clearing our own plates has taken root in our country and consumers help keep the place neat and clean.

Remember that we used to be paranoid that robots might take over the world? Well, it is now happening. Food courts and hawker centres are fully automated, so robots do most of the manual work or preparing and selling food. I remember that our mother used to order delivered food via FoodPanda and Deliveroo apps. In 2030, drones are used for food delivery. Many jobs have been taken over by robots and automation. Thankfully, jobs that require human touch and human judgement are still retained in the hands of mankind.

You might be wondering why senior citizens are still working now. After COVID19, a lot of money was spent to research cures for different kinds of viruses and illnesses such as flu, dementia, cancer and diabetes. Humans have also adapted and now usually live to around a hundred years old and work till they are around 85. Since most of the senior generation remains healthy, they remain in the workforce longer. The workforce also needs them as the rate of birth globally is declining. There is also more flexibility in work choices. We can

choose to work from home or in the office.

Luckily the luxury of staying home is not a choice for children as they need to learn social skills. To make learning more interesting, all students bring hologram iPads to school instead of bags full of books. Also, all major annual examinations for primary school students were scrapped in 2025. In other words, we now sit for only the Primary Graduation Examination (PGE), which was formerly known as the PSLE (Primary School Leaving Examination).

With or without examinations, we still made it to university. My friends and I decided to enrol in a coding and engineering course. My deepest worry had always been robots taking over the world. I figured that an inventor's job can help to stay ahead of technology and not be easily replaced. For my first project, my friends and I are inventing a code to send emails through time. I have worked as an intern before university and hence have some hands-on knowledge in coding and engineering. Anyway, these are all trivial compared to the last change that has been made to the human world.

You are experiencing COVID19 in your time, right? I remember vividly that we were terrified of the virus. However, there is a silver lining to every cloud. After the virus ended people became nicer, kinder, more accepting and more forgiving. After being stuck at home for very long, people started to appreciate everything that we had taken for granted. They missed the simple pleasure of going out, talking to friends and working in teams. They realised that life was very vulnerable and everyone should live life to the fullest and treasure lives.

The virus was indeed a wake-up call to the people in Singapore. We learnt that we must be self-sufficient and not just rely on other countries for our supply of food and necessities. When you are 15 fifteen years old, you will see many gardens sprouting up everywhere that used to be empty spaces, such as rooftops, vacant car parks, and in schools.

I will write to you again. Meanwhile, please ask Mother to start growing vegetables.

Love,

2030 Talise Chan