

2020 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Children's Category – Honorable Mention]

## **Our future reimagined: A letter from 2030**

(Original)

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*(Age 13, U.S.A. <Living in India>)*

*Bala Vidya Mandir*

Dear Shashank,

This is a letter from the future! I am the future "You" and I am writing to tell you all about what is coming and also some things I wish I knew back in 2020!

I am writing to you in 2030 and you should be reading this in 2020. Things have changed a LOT in ten years. The roads and highways are magnetic and vehicles zip around, by sipping electricity and hovering. They are driven automatically without a driver and move very quick and there are no traffic accidents on the roads! For covering long distances there are many fast transport options including hyperloop trains which travel through tubes with low air pressure making movement free of air resistance and friction. But the fastest mode of transport are the electric power jets which fly at very high speeds of over 20,000 kilometers per hour. You can get from Chennai to New York in 2 hours! But it can carry only 10 passengers and is terribly expensive.

Houses are a lot more high tech – the house comes up with whole schedule for the day, based on what it observes with sensors! Cooking and even "Butlering" is automated – the Kitchen Butler buys ingredients by placing orders automatically on Amazon, making life a lot easier with both parents working! Most tasks and errands are done by robots around the house.

The education system have also changed significantly – We don't use textbooks and note books but use 'telebooks' instead. Tests are answered on a "Technotablet" and you can speak your answers instead of typing! Even the governments use artificial intelligence to make decisions about citizen services. The health care systems have improved and people rarely get sick. Most intricate operations and surgeries which are hard to do are done by robots. The world is at peace with no threat of wars.

Jobs pay a much more money and the cost of most things which require human labor

has gone up exponentially. Work mostly revolves around technology - like designing fast electronic hardware and sophisticated software algorithms to power AI. Although nations don't compete by waging wars, they do compete in other ways like technology, advancement of education, space, health care and social development. The Heads of State of most countries are elected democratically and there are very few dictatorships left.

While so much is exciting, there are some things that could have made our world even better, had we done things differently in 2020. The planet has warmed by 0.5 degrees in the last 10 years and this has caused devastation for people living in low lying areas. Many island nations have almost disappeared. The difference in incomes between the rich and poor has grown three-fold in the last 10 years, causing frequent riots and disturbances in many parts of the world, as poor people protest against what they see as an unjust system. AI algorithms that do so many things that affect people's lives but they are seen unjust and biased in many ways. For example, the algorithms which select and recruit employees for companies, are seen to be biased based on many factors such as appearances of people, their gender, social backgrounds etc.

I would encourage you to think of how you can make a difference in these areas. The power to make a difference is with youth of your age. Please try to raise awareness and action on global warming in your local community and school. Please develop an interest in public policy and workings of the economy and government, so that you can do your bit to end inequality and poverty. Also, make sure you are questioning decisions made by "AI" and try to make AI systems you and your friends develop be more ethical and objective and able to clearly explain the rationale for the decisions it takes.

I have finished university and with good grades which means so will you. I have a good job in Tech but I am not married yet. The future looks good for you! But you still must work hard to drive positive change in the world and make it a better place for the future generations.

Affectionately,  
Shashank