

Lesson 6 Future of Our Lives

Reading 1

Open to Challenges:

The Future of the Human Workforce

Greetings, students!

In today's lesson, I'd like us to think about the future of the human workforce in the 21st century. We will explore this topic by reviewing the film *Hugo*. The setting of *Hugo* is the early 20th century, when the use of machines in factories was on the rise. There was a growing concern that humans would become secondary to these machines. In other words, humans feared that they would be treated as inferior to machines since machines could evolve more rapidly than humans. Just like how we fear that AI will displace humans someday, there was fear in the early 20th century that machines would replace the need for a skilled workforce altogether.

Can *Hugo* offer us a more positive perspective that can help us rethink the future of the human workforce? *Hugo* tells the story of a young boy, Hugo, who secretly lives in a train station after his father passed away. Despite his young age, Hugo ensures that the clocks in the train station all work properly.

He possesses the same clockmaking skills as his father, who was also a clockmaker. However, Hugo's life takes a significant turn when he meets a new father figure: a filmmaker and magician, Georges Méliès (1861–1938). This changes Hugo's life. He decides to leave his old career behind and begin a new journey toward becoming a master filmmaker like Méliès.

I believe Hugo's two father figures—the clockmaker and the filmmaker—represent two contrasting perspectives on the nature of a machine. First, I'd like to suggest that the clockmaker in *Hugo* represents the belief that machines are constant. This is because of the nature of a clock as a machine: clockmaking skills do not change over time since clock mechanics do not change. Reflecting on *Hugo*, Hugo's father takes care of the clocks in a history museum. The clockmaker, as an occupation, is thus associated with the past. The clock symbolizes an "old" way of understanding the machine's essence: the machine as an object that never changes.

On the other hand, the filmmaker in Hugo represents the belief that machines are constantly evolving. Hardly might you believe that filmmaking was once a technical innovation. Yet, in the early 20th century, filmmaking required skills in using one of the most advanced technologies of the time: the camera. The camera back then was like AI today. Indeed, Méliès is widely recognized today because he is known as the first filmmaker to tap into the creative potential of the camera. He is famous for his ability to manipulate the photographic frame so that people disappear, float in the air, or fight with big, scary creatures. Today, CGI requires filmmakers to familiarize themselves with increasingly complicated visual technology. The filmmaker suggests to us that since machines will continuously evolve, humans must also evolve and find creative ways to utilize machines.

My interpretation of the two father figures in Hugo has inspired me to Strategy in Use make the following claim, which I'd like to conclude this lecture with. The two father figures in Hugo suggest to me that the future will require a workforce that readily embraces the opportunities the new world offers. To adapt to the rapidly changing job market, we must leave a fixed mindset behind and opt for a growth mindset. The clockmaker represents someone with a fixed mindset. Such people are reluctant to acquire new skills and are content with what they already know. In contrast, the filmmaker represents someone with a growth mindset. People with a growth mindset are open to challenges. A growth mindset is required if humans are to acquire new skills to keep up with rapidly advancing technology. By the time we truly feel comfortable with learning new technology, we will likely have embraced a growth mindset. According to Hugo, every human has a purpose in this world. I believe we are more likely to discover and fulfill that purpose if we are willing to learn how to exist together with and adapt to constantly evolving technology.

Reading 2

A Glimpse into a Future School

November 29, 2040 / Thursday / 8:30 P.M.

Dear Diary,

This week's metaverse classes have been quite exciting so far. Today, in acting class, I had an unforgettable experience. When I stepped into the virtual classroom through my avatar, our teacher, Ms. White, asked for a volunteer to act out a scene from the film *Roman Holiday*. I got the chance to play the main character, Ann, the princess made legendary by Audrey Hepburn, in the original film. As my classmates watched, I did my best to bring the character to life. This experience was a valuable opportunity for me to improve my acting skills and gain more confidence. After I finished my performance, a virtual screen popped up, and there she was: Audrey Hepburn was right there in the virtual classroom. She looked exactly the same as in *Roman Holiday*. I was truly amazed.

During the acting class, Audrey demonstrated several scenes from her classic films and offered valuable insights into acting. She explained how to convey a character's emotions and how to use body language and facial expressions effectively. Her coaching helped me understand the nuances of acting. She also taught us how to deliver a performance that would captivate the audience. Later, I had the opportunity to interview Audrey about her dedication to various social issues. She talked about her active involvement with UNICEF, focusing on supporting children in need. Through her fame and influence, she raised awareness about malnutrition, lack of clean water, and limited educational opportunities around the world. Her commitment to addressing these social issues made her even more admirable. Audrey's story reminded me that each of us has a role in making the world a better place. Who knows, perhaps in ten years or so, I will have made a difference in the world too!

Emma

December 3, 2040 / Monday / 8:00 P.M.

Dear Diary,

After a week of attending virtual classes from home, I finally went back to school today. As soon as I entered the class, my friend, robot Ethan, greeted me. Seeing him again was such a delight! While we were catching up, our biology teacher, Mr. Parker, walked in. When Mr. Parker told us to pair up, I naturally asked Ethan to be my partner. He readily agreed, and we both put on our VR headsets to learn about the human respiratory system. We could explore a simulated human body through the headset, and it felt like we were exploring the insides of an actual human body! Ethan shared some interesting facts, such as the fact that humans take around 20,000 breaths per day or that the left lung is slightly smaller than the right one to make room for the heart.

Thanks to Ethan's help, not once did I feel bored or lost throughout the class. I told Ethan that I'd like to study history with him next week. He smiled and replied, "Sure, Emma. Learning is always better with a friend." I couldn't agree more.

Until next time,

Emma