Second Prompt: You are on an expedition to found a colony on Mars, when from a nearby crater, a group of Martians suddenly emerges. They seem eager to communicate, but they're the impatient kind and demand you represent the human race in one song, image, memory, proof, or other idea. What do you share with them to show that humanity is worth their time? (650 words)

* Something that promotes our intellectuality -
* Something that shows our ability to coexist -
* Something that shows dependability and loyalty

Enigma of the mind - book by Robert Campbell

Brain scan of a depressed person

Sweating furiously, I have come to realise that the pressure was solely on me. The fate of future voyages lie in my hand; depicted in a single object that may or may not please the Martians just right.

A wall of an unknown material stood in front of me, almost like a mirage you would see half dead walking through a desert. Something retreated behind this cloudy barrier… I could only catch a glimpse of the creature. Silence enveloped the area until a faint beeping emerged from the darkness. Suddenly, a loud voice echoed through my space suit, “what do you have for us?”. The ominous query made me tremble.

Slowly I took out a folded picture from my back pocket. I chose a brain scan of a depressed person. Now this may seem quite unusual given the circumstance but I think it represents humanity perfectly and encourages aliens to interact with us in a positive manner.

The scan is able to depict how a mental state can shift the brain’s biological processes to deactivate activity. While forms of literature can express the creativity in humans, an academic interpretation of the intangible concept of depression is more attractive and displays a potential benefit to collaborating with us. The scan implies how sensitive we humans are to external stimuli. This vulnerability would reduce the chances Martians perceive us as threatening. It's a sufficient yet very humbling image that explicitly states both our physical weaknesses and our technological strengths.

Advancements in technology serve the purpose of alleviating humans from problems that inhibit our future ambitions and longings. Our influence escalated up to a point where complete dominance against other species was not only possible but happening at an expeditious rate. So why is it that both suicide and stress levels have been at an all time high. During this era, nations are globalising, which in turn gradually accept a wider body of ideals and perspectives, yet acculturative stress has been an increasingly huge problem for some humans. Human beings aren't just conquerors who salvage every piece of resource we find and completely lay waste to it. As complex as we think we are, all of us face the same problem: finding purpose. In essence, we are social creatures that search for greater meaning behind our actions through limitless interrelations with our world and others. Abstract concepts like the afterlife were created to fit our need for fulfilment. As Russian Psychologist Lev Vygotsky mentions, “ Through others, we become ourselves.” No person is who they are because they were born a particular way.

After a while the shadow behind the rock began to take form. Unbeknownst to me, the boundless barrier had already dissipated. A hand reached from the darkness and I was going to take it.

Hi Amos,

After rearranging some of your sentences, I see that the essay has become more effective. I really like your insights into the complexity of human beings. To make your essay even more memorable and impactful, I think it’s a good idea to clarify one or two reasons why the Martians should give humans a chance. I feel that your reasoning for using the scan as a sign of weakness actually undermines the point you’re trying to make, which is that humans are infinitely curious & complex. I suggest rewriting this part, especially as portraying mental illness as a weakness is probably not what you want to do as a potential psychology major!

Once you’ve rewritten the argument for your scan, think about this: how would this representation of humanity appeal to the Martians? You mentioned that humans need to find a purpose in life. Are they intrigued about our insatiable desire to explore despite our vulnerabilities? This is a chance for you to show what YOU think is valuable about humanity.

Don’t forget that the prompt is asking you to show an object that shows humanity is worth the aliens’ time. This means showing our strengths, not our weaknesses. Good luck on your revisions!

Best wishes,

Melinda & Chiara