

- updates yourself by checking the website for new placement alerts. Your mentor is supposed to keep you informed, but you can't rely on that.
- TIM: I don't suppose it's a good idea to get in touch with companies directly, is it?
- LAURA: Not really ... But it is the company who notifies you if they want you to go for an interview. You get a letter of invitation or an email from personnel departments. Q28
- TIM: And do I reply directly to them?
- LAURA: Yes, you do. STEP only gets involved again once you've been made a job offer.
- TIM: Right ... So, once you've had an interview you should let your mentor know what the outcome is? I mean whether you're offered a job, and whether you've decided to accept it? Q29
- LAURA: That's right. They'll inform the careers office once a placement has been agreed, so you don't have to do that.
- TIM: Is that all then?
- LAURA: More or less. Only once you've accepted an offer you'll probably have to supply a reference, because the placement will be conditional on that. And that's something you should ask your own tutor to provide. He knows Q30 about your academic ability and also about your qualities, like reliability.
- TIM: Well, thanks very much for the information – I'm starting to look forward ...

## SECTION 4

Today we're going to look at an important area of science, namely nanotechnology. So what is it? Nano means tiny, so it's science and engineering on the scale of atoms and molecules. The idea is that by controlling and rearranging atoms, you can literally create anything. However, as we'll see, the science of the small has some big implications affecting us in many ways.

There's no doubt that nanotechnology promises so much for civilisation. However, all new technologies have their teething problems. And with nanotechnology, society often gets the wrong idea about its capabilities. Numerous science-fiction books and movies have raised people's fears about nanotechnology – with scenarios such as inserting little nano-robots into your body that monitor everything you do without you realising it, or self-replicating nano-robots that eventually take over the world. Q31

So how do we safeguard such a potentially powerful technology? Some scientists recommend that nano-particles be treated as new chemicals with separate safety tests and clear labelling. They believe that greater care should also be taken with nano-particles in laboratories and factories. Others have called for a withdrawal of new nano products such as cosmetics and a temporary halt to many kinds of nanotech research. Q32

But as far as I'm concerned there's a need to plough ahead with the discoveries and applications of nanotechnology. I really believe that most scientists would welcome a way to guard against unethical uses of such technology. We can't go around thinking that all innovation is bad, all advancement is bad. As with the debate about any new technology, it is how you use it that's important. So let's look at some of its possible uses. Q33