**Unit 1**

**Activity 4**

My country has two very famous buildings called the Petronas Towers. The buildings are made of glass, steel, and concrete. They were designed by an American architect, but he used a Malaysian style. They were finished in 1998, and they were the tallest buildings in the world at that time. Each tower has 88 floors, and is 452 meters high. I really like the Petronas Towers. They show both the modern and the traditional side of my country.

Modern buildings: We love them, We hate them

The world-famous Louvre Museum in Paris is almost 500 years old, and it faced a very modern problem: There simply wasn't enough space for six million visitors each year. In 1989, American architect I.M. Pei designed a striking glass pyramid in the building's center to be a visitor entrance and shopping arcade. But he also started an angry debate. Some people felt his glass building was a piece of art, like the ones inside the museum. Others said it was just an ugly, modern mistake.

Kyoto, Japan, is the country's ancient capital, and the heart of its culture. Its railroad station was too small for the millions of visitors. In 1997, the city completed a new station in a huge shopping center, right in the oldest part of the city. Designed by Hiroshi Hara, the building also contains a hotel and department store. Before it was built, critics said that the high, wide, modern building would destroy the city's traditional look. On the other hand, supporters said it would bring new life into the city center.

**Unit 2**

**Activity 4**

In today’s report, we look at a new technology called pervasive computing.

Pervasive computing means putting tiny computers into everyday electronic appliances, such as toasters and microwaves. With pervasive computing, appliances can communicate with their users – and with other appliances!

Some companies now sell pervasive computing products like a “smart” toaster. It remembers your favourite kind of toast: light or dark. Companies are designing a “smart” coffee maker and a “smart” clock. The coffee maker can measure the water and coffee. It can even put milk in your breakfast coffee and make black coffee in the afternoon. The clock will check the time on other clocks in your house, and give information about other appliances. For example, it can tell you, “Your coffee maker needs more water.”

And that’s only the beginning. One company is now advertising “Save time – phone your washing machine!” engineers are making a “smart” house. In this house, the lights, heater, and air conditioner change automatically when family members come home. This makes the home comfortable, and it saves a lot of energy. Pervasive computing could change many parts of our daily lives.

But do people really want pervasive computing? Do they really need technology everywhere? One company asked people about their opinions on “smart” appliances. There were surprises. A “smart” refrigerator can buy more food on the internet, but people didn’t want it, because it might make mistakes.

“Pervasive computing is as important as a telephone,” says Rebecca Blair, president of InnoTech Corporation. But some of these products are not useful, or even practical. Companies should learn more about the technology that people really want.

**Activity 5**

Local girl rescued

She may have a broken leg, but she can’t be happier. Morgan Bailey, 11, is happy to be alive.

Tuesday was like any other day for Morgan. She was at school. It was fourth period, and she was the first student to arrive in the gymnasium for her physical education class.

Suddenly there was a loud noise.

“There was a sharp cracking noise and then a loud boom. After that, I don’t remember anything,” said Morgan.

The roof of the gymnasium had collapsed under the heavy snow. Morgan was trapped underneath. She couldn’t escape.

“I woke up and there was a big piece of wood on my leg. I couldn’t move it. I was starting to get cold.”

Fortunately, help was nearby. A new program using “rescue robots” was tried for the first time.

“We were nervous about using the robot,” said Derrick Sneed, the man in charge of the program. “But in the end, the robot gave us reliable information. It went extremely well.”

The rescue robot was able to go into the gym and locate Morgan’s exact position.

“We send in robots first because it may not be safe for humans,” said Mr. Sneed. “Human beings are not as useful as robots in some situations. A gas leak, for example, could kill you or me but wouldn’t hurt a robot.”

Although it didn’t happen in Morgan’s case, some rescue robots can bring fresh air or water to people who are trapped.

Rescue robots go into rough, dangerous places. They work in life or death situations. They have to be durable.

Doctors say that Morgan is doing well. She should be going home in two or three days. What is the first thing she wants to do after she gets out of the hospital?

“I want to meet my hero,” laughs Morgan. “That little robot that saved my life!”

**Unit 3**

**Activity 5**

Nutty news

1. Lulu is a kangaroo. For 10 years she has lived with the Richards family. Lulu was adopted by the family after they found her next to her dead mother.

Mr. Ken Richards is a farmer. He was working on his farm when a heavy tree branch suddenly fell on top of him.

Lulu stood next to Mr. Richards’ body. She started barking and didn’t leave Mr. Richards’ side.

I’ve never heard Lulu bark like that---she sounded like a dog. She barked and barked and she didn’t stop, “said Celeste, Mr. Richards’ daughter.

After 15 minutes, the Richards family went to investigate. They found Ken on the ground and he was unconscious.

“Lulu is a hero, “said Celeste. “She saved my father.”

Mr. Middleton, an expert veterinarian, said that Lulu’s story is rare. “I have never seen a kangaroo act like that. Maybe lulu helped Ken Richards because the Richards family is the only family she has ever known.”

Lulu has always followed Ken around the farm. She’s a loyal, friendly, and very intelligent kangaroo. After Ken leaves the hospital, he is planning to go everywhere with Lulu.

2. Approximately 175,000 people live in the Republic of Vanuatu, an island chain east of Australia. It is a popular tourist destination because there’s a lot to do there: you can visit waterfalls, go horseback riding, take an aerial tour, or visit a traditional Ni-Vanuatu village. Vanuatu is most famous for its scuba diving and snorkeling.

In an effort to draw attention to these popular water sports, Vanuatu has created a world’s “first”: the government has opened an underwater post office. You have to be a certified scuba driver to work there. The office is three meters below the surface in an area on the outskirts of Port Vila, the capital city. So far, the post office has hired four workers. They will work in a room surrounded by the beauty of Vanuatu’s underwater world. Customers will buy waterproof postcards on land and then drive down to the post office to receive a special waterproof stamp.

**Unit 4**

**Activity 4**

You’ve never met Melissa Hayes, and you don’t know her name, but you know her voice. Mellissa record information messages for the telephone company. When you hear the number you called has been changed…--that’s Mellissa!

“Yes, it’s true,” she say. “I’m the voice talent for Nation Telephone.” At least 50000 people hear her voice every day. “I try to sound warm and friendly, even when I’m saying, I’m sorry, that number is incorrect. Please try again.”

Melissa works only three days a week, but she has to practice a lot. “My voice has to sound the same at the end of eight hours.” She’s very careful about her voice. “I don’t drink lots of water with honey. I can’t g to horror movies because I always scream, and I might hurt my voice!”

How did she get her job? “A friend told me about it. I listened to all the telephone company messages on my phone, and then I recorded a cassette of those messages. After I sent it to the company, I called them every day for a month!”

She’s done this work for three years now, and she loves it. “It’s fun! And I’m helping people by using my voice.” Plus, people are always surprised when they hear about Melissa’s job. They say, “You’re a real person? I thought it was a computer!”

**Unit 5**

**Activity 4**

A different kind of holiday: shop less, live more!

Advertising is everywhere. It’s on race cars and subway trains, on T-shirts and billboards. Every day, you see hundreds of ads, and each advertiser wants you to buy their product. But do we really need all these products?

A group in Canada says “No.” In 1991, they stared an event called Buy Nothing Day, to protest against consumerism and waste. Every year, on the last Friday in November, no one should spend any money for 24 hours. The event has spread to over 15 countries around the world, including Japan, Australia, and the United Kingdom.

In the United States, Buy Nothing Day takes place on the Friday after the Thanksgiving holiday. This is usually the busiest day of the year in department stores and shopping malls. Traditionally, it’s the first day of the Christmas shopping season, when Americans buy gifts for family and close friends.

However, this “season” has grown longer every year. Now some stores put up their Christmas window displays in the middle of October, and Americans are pressured to buy gifts for every one of their relatives, for all of their coworkers, and for everyone they do business with. Many people feel that they are forgetting the real significance of the holidays, because companies just want them to spend more money.

Of course, Buy Nothing Day supporters don’t want to change just one day. They want the change to continue all year. But if we take a break from shopping on one day, we can start thinking about what we really need in life. Michael Smith, British organizer of Buy Nothing Day, says: “Our message is clear: Shop less, live more!”

**Activity 5**

Ad or no ad?

Is advertising really necessary? Billions of dollars are spent on it every year, so it must be important. After all, it’s a busy world. You have to advertise, sell products, and make money!

Not every company thinks that way. The NO-AD company (“no-ad” stands for “not advertised”) avoids big advertising campaigns. The company was started in 1960 and is successful today. Their products are still affordable because the company saves money on advertising. They also use their savings to support a drug and alcohol awareness program to educate high school students.

NO-AD sells by word of mouth. “Word-of-mouth advertising” happens when a person tells another person about a good experience with a product or service. That second person then tells another friend, family member, or colleague. And so a chain of information is created.

Typically, advertisers talk about how good their product is. Although they say things like, “Students show that our product is the best,” or “Everyone loves this product,” it can sound insincere or unconvincing. It’s much more believable to hear about a product from someone who did not make it. Our friends’ opinions are very important to us, so we often listen to their advice about a product.

Word-of-mouth advertising has other advantages, too. It’s cost-effective (after all, it’s free) and a company doesn’t have to create a complex business plan to do it. Here is some advice for small business about word-of-mouth advertising:

* Be prepared to talk about your company at any time. You never know who you will meet. Always carry business cards.
* Only say positive things about your company. Don’t say negative things about your company.
* Help other companies by referring people to them. The more you help others, the more good fortune will come back to you.

**Unit 6**

**Activity 4 Vacation every day: The peaceful life Mary Larson has wished for**

Mary Larson was 43 when she got divorced. It was a new life for her, and she started considering what was really important in her life. She was working 60 hours a week as a banker to pay for a big house, expensive furniture, a new car, and all the other “important’ things in life. But she had no time for what she really enjoyed: going out on her old houseboat.

One day, she realized she could live on the boat, and forget about the mortgage payments. She sold her house and all her furniture. For the last six years, she and her dog Buddy have lived on the boat, which is only a fraction of the size of her old house. Her “home” is a marina on the river, and the rent costs only $200 a month, including water and electricity.

Inside the boat is one room, about 5 meters by 4 meters. It’s divided in two parts by a curtain. One part is Mary’s bedroom; the other is the living room and kitchen.

There’s also a small bathroom with a shower. “I used to spend every weekend cleaning and maintaining my house. Now, it takes me two or three hours a month,” Mary says.

“My friends think I’m crazy,” she says. “But I wake up in the morning and hear ducks and birds. I can go fishing from my living room.” Now, she works only part time. She uses all the extra hours for writing stories, bicycling, volunteering, and visiting friends. On weekends, she goes along the river on her boat, exploring new places.

“Would I go back to my old life? Never,” she says, “It’s so peaceful here. It’s like being on vacation every day.”

**Activity 5 Money from unexpected sources**

The San people live in southern Africa. Scientists say that they may have been living there for as long as 40,000 years, hunting animals and gathering plants. Until recently, the once mighty San were broke and unemployed. They had lost their land and were no longer engaged in traditional activities, such as hunting. The few young San people with jobs were working as farm laborers. They were not learning about their ancient culture and language.

That may all change. The San have struck it rich. They recently signed an agreement with a large drug company. The San have traditional knowledge about plants. The drug company is especially interested in a particular cactus and how the San use it.

The San used to go on hunting trips. While away from home, they chewed on the cactus to suppress their appetite--- they no longer felt hungry afterwards. Using the San’s knowledge, the drug company plans to make a new drug from this plant. For people around the world who eat too much and have weight problems, this new drug could really help them by suppressing their appetites.

The San have a positive plan for this new wealth. Their first step will be to get jobs for their people. Their next priority will be education. Through education, they hope to save their culture and language for future generations.

When you think of a monk, you might think of a quiet man living in an isolated place. The “free monks” of Greece do live in a monastery, but they are anything but quiet. In fact, they sing. They have been recording their songs and selling many records in Greece.

Young music listeners love to listen to the “free monks.” Their songs are recorded in different styles (digital keyboard and rock, for example), and the themes are not only religious. The brothers also sing abut problems like drugs and globalization.

The monks haven’t made a fortune from their record sales. But they have made a profit. They use the money to pay for summer camps for teenagers. At the camps, the teens can play soccer and go horseback riding. The monks also donate money to other social programs that help people.