

## The notion of progress (*L'idée de progrès*)

### 1 Read the definitions carefully.

What definition(s) does your document illustrate?

#### PROGRESS

1. forward movement • advance • development
2. gradual betterment; especially: the progressive development of humankind

### 2 Brainstorming

Here is a list of questions you can ask yourself about the notion. Read them carefully.

- a. **What type of progress:** technical, scientific, social?
- b. **Who are the people** concerned by progress: individuals (scientific laboratories), scientists, private agencies, companies, governments...?
- c. **Where** is the action set: in an (imaginary) society or real (town, country, continent) place?
- d. **Which period of time** is concerned (the past, the present, the future)?
- e. What is **at stake** in the document (medical problems, physical performances, domination, dehumanization, innovations, inequalities in economic, technical, scientific development, globalization, ...)?
- f. What are the **advantages and drawbacks**?
  - Is it profitable / beneficial or is it a potential danger for human beings? Why?
  - What are the dangers associated with technical progress?
  - What is the impact (positive/negative)? For whom?
- g. What are the author's **intentions**:
  - positive (praise: *faire l'éloge*)
  - negative (question: *remettre en cause*)
  - ambivalent (does the author have mixed feelings)?
- h. **Utopia or Dystopia?**

Focus on the following definitions:

  - **Utopia:** an ideally perfect place especially in its social, political and moral aspect
  - **Dystopia:** an imaginary place or state in which the living conditions are appalling (deprivation, oppression, terror, ...)
  - Does the author describe an idealized and a perfect world? (Utopia)
  - Is the action set in a repressive and controlled State? Is man's life controlled by technology?
  - Has technology evolved too rapidly? (Dystopia)

### 3 Build up your vocabulary

Using a separate sheet of paper, complete this grid during the year with words referring to the notion.

Advantages	Progress	Drawbacks
<i>cure diseases...</i>	Scientific progress	<i>cross boundaries • ethical problems...</i>
<i>upgrade education...</i>	Social progress	
<i>enable sb to do sth...</i>	Technical progress	<i>dehumanize • cut off from the real world...</i>