

総合型選抜・特待生選考入試 英文要約

次の英文を読み、180字から220字の日本語で要約しなさい。

Societal Evolution

Our physical, social, work, and financial lifestyles are highly *automated* and we interact daily with unmanned or unstaffed retail and clerkless service providers. Many might think of this automation as a recent development, yet vending machines called ‘automats’ which provide hot meals in waiterless restaurants have existed now for over a century. Parking meters, **laundromats**, electronic train ticket gates, ATMs, self-checkouts at supermarkets, and self-service gasoline stations are all very commonplace.

Many modernized countries are now aiming to become cashless societies by promoting the use of electronic money. Credit cards, and more recently debit cards and IC smart cards, are common means of cashless payment that eliminate the need to handle cash. *Cashless* brings us to the next step in our societal evolution: *contactless* or *touchless*. It is common for a cashless payment to also be contactless. Commuter passes with IC chips and smartphones/smartwatches with ‘digital wallets’ make train and bus travel much smoother without the need to touch buttons, screens, or surfaces.

Contactless technologies are quick and convenient, and during the **COVID-19 pandemic** they became popular as a means of reducing the spread of infection. With ‘contactless dining’ or ‘smart dining’, orders in a restaurant can be made via a touchscreen or smartphone, minimizing the need to interact with staff and line up. A ‘smartstore’ like the futuristic convenience store in Takanawa Gateway Station in Tokyo is unstaffed and there is no scanning of product **barcodes**. The cost is calculated automatically and instantly by AI-controlled video cameras and a contactless payment can be made at the self-checkout, an almost **interactionless** process.

Education and work are another two aspects of our lives that digital technology has transformed. Online learning allows students to study and interact with teachers regardless of their location, and teleworking or telecommuting has also become much more common since the outbreak of COVID-19. Web-based technologies eliminate the need for direct face-to-face contact, a wonderful tool when connecting with someone in a rural location, someone cut off by a natural disaster, or when used to minimize the spread of a disease, but where is this virtual world leading us?

Modern conveniences raise the question: are we coming full circle to another stage of evolution; *inactive* and *noncommunicative*? What evolutionary step comes next? Will *touchless* and *contactless* become *thought-controlled*? Could *virtual* completely replace *social* and *physical*? Will *remote* and *online* cause us to become *relationless*? Could *connected* actually be *disconnected*? Will ***depersonalized*** make us *thoughtless* or *compassionless*?

Is our global society **destined** for dehumanization by technology? Let us hope that our progress does not become a **regression** for the human species and that our evolution is not de-evolution in disguise.

Notes:

societal (adj.)	relating to society or social relations
laundromat (n.)	coin-operated washing machine
COVID-19 pandemic (n.)	outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019
barcode (n.)	machine-readable code on a product
interactionless (adj.)	lack of communication or involvement with someone or something
depersonalized (adj.)	lack of human characteristics
destine (v.)	intended for a special purpose or fate
regression (n.)	a return to an earlier state or a less developed stage