

# Let Me Out!

## Aims

- To introduce students to the themes of the story.

1 Ask students what they know about robots. Ask them if they've seen any films (e.g. *Starwars* with CP3O and R2D2) or read any books with robots in them. Ask them to think about why people want robots. Call back ideas and start a class discussion.

2 Ask students if they've seen any of the robots which are currently on sale around the world, e.g. the Honda *Asimo*, the iRobot Create, the Sony *Aibo* (dog), the *Wowee Robosapien*, the Yujin Robot *iRobiQ*, the Erector *Spyke*. If they have, get them to tell the class about them and what they can do.

3 Tell students that in the story *Let Me Out!* John invents a robot called Nolan. Ask them to read Extracts 1 and find out what Nolan says he can do. Are they the same things as students suggested the robots can do in Activity 2?

**Answers:** he can do household jobs; he controls the electronic/computerised house; he can hear and speak.

4 Ask students to read Extracts 2 and decide what they tell you about Nolan.

**Answers:** he has feelings (he is 'happy', 'angry', and can 'hate'); he likes/dislikes.

Ask them if this surprises them. If so, why?

**Possible answers:** Yes, because a robot isn't a person, it is a machine made of metal and plastic and controlled by circuits. How can a machine feel emotions?

5 Ask students to make a list of animals that people commonly keep in their homes as pets. Call back answers from the whole class and list them on the board. If necessary, students could use a bilingual dictionary.

**Possible answers:** dog, cat, rabbit, guinea pig, mouse, hamster, fish, etc.

Ask them to work in pairs and put the class list in order of popularity.

6 Ask students to discuss in their pairs why they think people keep pets.

**Possible answers:** for company; for the pleasure of caring for something; because they are beautiful or interesting.

Ask students to tell you how people treat their dogs (e.g. they talk to them, they let them sleep on their beds).

**Possible answers:** People often treat their dogs as members of the family, almost as if they were human: they buy them presents; even take them to beauty salons, buy them clothes, have them buried in pet cemeteries.

Ask students if they think it's possible to be jealous of a pet, and if so why?

**Possible answer:** Yes, because pet owners sometimes give more attention to their animals than they do to other people.

7 Tell students that John has a dog called Sam. Ask them to look at Extracts 3 and decide who says which thing about Sam

**Answers:** Nolan: a, b, d, f; John: c, e.

8 Ask students to read Extracts 3 again. Ask them to find out about John's and Nolan's feelings towards Sam. Also ask them how Sam feels about Nolan.

**Answers:** Nolan doesn't understand or like Sam and wants him to leave the apartment; Sam doesn't like Nolan; John loves Sam.

9 Ask students to write a few sentences saying what they know about the story: e.g. John invents a robot called Nolan. Nolan works around the house for John, but he also feels happy or angry. John has a dog called Sam. John loves his dog. Nolan doesn't like Sam.

10 Based on what they have learned from the extracts, ask students what they think is going to happen in this story.

**Optional extra:** Ask students to think about the future of robots in our homes. Ask them to write a paragraph detailing what their perfect home robot would do. Alternatively, ask them to draw a picture and label the robot, explaining its special features.

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## Extracts 1

- a Every day I clean John's apartment. I wash his jeans and shirts in the washing machine. I iron his jeans and shirts. I make his food.
- b I control the apartment. I can open the doors and the windows and I can close the doors and the windows. At night I lock the doors . . . I can make things go on and off. I can control the iron.
- c I make coffee at ten o'clock. I clean the apartment at ten-thirty.
- d 'I can hear you,' I say. I can speak too.

## Extracts 2

- a I never go out with John. John never asks me. I'm not happy.
- b I *can* feel. I feel angry. I can hate.
- c I can hear John and Mr. Peters. They're laughing and laughing. I don't like it.
- d I must work. Work makes me happy.

## Extracts 3

- a I tell the dog things, but the dog doesn't do them.
- b The dog is wrong. He doesn't work well.
- c He thinks you're a boy. He doesn't like boys.
- d I control this apartment, but I can't control him.
- e I love Sam. He's my family.
- f The dog is dirty. The dog must go out.