

1. Can the Computer Learn from Experience

计算机总结经验吗

- 1 Computers have been taught to play not only checkers, but also championship chess, which is a fairly accurate yardstick for measuring the computer's progress in the ability to learn from experience.
- 2 Because the game requires logical reasoning, chess would seem to be perfectly suited to the computer. All a programmer has to do is give the computer a program evaluating the consequences of every possible response to every possible move, and the computer will win every time. In theory this is a sensible approach; in practice it is impossible. Today, a powerful computer can analyze 40 000 moves a second. That is an impressive speed. But there are an astronomical number of possible moves in chess—literally trillions. Even if such a program were written (and in theory it could be, given enough people and enough time), there is no computer capable of holding that much data.
- 3 Therefore, if the computer is to compete at championship levels, it must be programmed to function with less than complete data. It must be able to learn from experience, to modify its own program, to deal with a relatively unstructured situation—in a word, to “think” for itself. In fact, this can be done. Chess-playing computers have yet to defeat world champion chess players, but several have beaten human players of only slightly lower ranks. The computers have had programs to carry them through the early, mechanical stages of their chess games. But they have gone on from there to reason and learn, and sometimes to win the game.
- 4 There are other proofs that computers can be programmed to learn, but this example is sufficient to demonstrate the point. Granted, winning a game of chess is not an earthshaking event even when a computer does it. But there are many serious human problems which can be fruitfully approached as games. The Defense Department uses computers to play war games and work out strategies for dealing with international tensions. Other problems—international and interpersonal relations, ecology and economics, and the ever-increasing threat of world famine—can perhaps be solved by the joint efforts of human beings and truly intelligent computers.

Notes

1. check: a game played on a checkerboard by two players, each using 12 pieces
2. ecology: the relationship between organisms and their environment 生态关系, 生态学

Reading comprehension

- 1 The purpose of creating chess-playing computers is _____
 A to win the world chess champion
 B to pave the way for further intelligent computers
 C to work out strategies for international wars
 D to find an accurate yardstick for measuring computer progress

-
- 2 Today , a chess-playing computer can be programmed to _____
A give trillions of responses in a second to each possible move and win the game
B function with complete data and beat the best players
C learn from chess-playing in the early stage and go on to win the game
D evaluate every possible move but may fail to give the right response each time
- 3 For a computer to “think” , it is necessary to _____
A manage to process as much data as possible in a second
B program it so that it can learn from its experiences
C prepare it for chess-playing first
D enable it to deal with unstructured situations
- 4 The author’s attitude towards the Defense Department is _____
A critical B unconcerned C positive D negative
- 5 In the author’s opinion, _____
A winning a chess game is an unimportant event
B serious human problems shouldn’t be regarded as playing a game
C ecological problems are more urgent to be solved
D there is hope for more intelligent computers

1 b 2 c 3 b 4 c 5 d

2 You Call This a Good Economy

这能称之为上佳经验

- 1 You have to have lived in the 1950s and 1960s to have experienced a good economy. In the period between 1950 and 1970 it was the rule—rather than the exception—that an ordinary family, without higher education, could sustain itself decently on the income of a single breadwinner (养家糊口的人). In 1955, when I was 19 and living in Brooklyn, N. Y., my father, who had a sixth-grade education, maintained our family of five on a wage of \$82 a week as a bookbinder. My mother taught us fairness and compassion; my father, discipline and enterprise.
- 2 The U. S. economy in those years was good. Then where did this good economy go? It was inflated away. The price of gold, which I take as proxy for the prices of all goods, was \$35 an ounce in those years. It is at roughly ten times that price today.
- 3 There is another answer, though: inflation caused the entire work force to be moved into higher tax groups, thus reducing after-tax purchasing power. That is, my father’s bindery job in 1954 paid \$82 a week, with \$80 after deductions; today, at \$ 820 per week the net would be

\$662.

- 4 To ordinary people, the economy doesn't look very good at all. After-tax incomes continue to decrease in purchasing power. The jobs offered in the employment ads pay only a little more than the minimum wage, maybe \$5 an hour, which, after payroll deductions, yields \$4 an hour. Compare that with minimum-wage jobs of the early 1950s, when 75 cents was worth today's \$7.50 before and after taxes.

Notes

1 Brooklyn: a district of New York city

2 inflate: 通货膨胀

3 proxy: the authority to act for another

4 payroll: a list of employees and the wages due to each

Reading Comprehension

- 1 In the author's opinion, a good economy, to ordinary people can be expressed in terms of _____
 - a. the amount of wage
 - b. after-tax income
 - c. the actual purchasing power
 - d. the minimum wage per hour
- 2 In the period between 1950 and 1970, _____
 - a. there was not much difference in the living standards between people of higher and lower education
 - b. an ordinary family of five without exception could live on one person income
 - c. the income of an ordinary family was more than enough for buying food
 - d. for an average family the income was sufficient to support all the members
- 3 Today a bookbinder's wage is ten times that of the 1950's but its income tax rate has increased _____.

a. 50 times b. 60 times c. 70 times d. 80 times
- 4 The worsening of a bookbinder's livelihood results from _____.
 - a. his low education and the amount of wage
 - b. the high-taxation and the income deductions
 - c. the high taxation and cost of living
 - d. the low wage and higher prices
- 5 The passage implies that while the cost of living is getting higher _____.
 - a. the value of labor actually is shrinking
 - b. the minimum wage level is increasing likewise
 - c. the income tax rate is rising along
 - d. the employment ads naturally offer a higher minimum wage

-
- 6 The author's tone in writing the article is _____.
a. ironical b. subjective c. high-sounding d. convincing
- 7 the article aims to _____.
a. help control the rapidly increasing prices
b. give some advice to the policy-makers
c. impress the younger generation with some basic facts
d. call upon the society's attention against inflation

1 c 2 b 3 d 4 c 5 a 6 d 7 c

3 Are Experts Always Right

专家总是对的吗

- 1 The world has become so complicated that we've lost confidence in our ability to understand and deal with it. But common sense is useful now as it ever was. No amount of expertise substitutes for an intimate knowledge of a person or a situation. At times you just have to trust your own judgement.
- 2 It almost cost me my life to learn that. I was reading a book one day, idly scratching the back of my head, when I noticed that, in one particular spot, the scratching echoed inside my head like fingernails on an empty cardboard carton, I rushed off to my doctor.
- 3 "Got a hole in your head, have you?" he teased. "It's nothing—just one of those little scalp nerves sounding off."
- 4 Two years and four doctors later, I was still being told it was nothing. To the fifth doctor. I said, almost in desperation, "But I live in this body. I know something's different."
- 5 "If you won't take my word for it, I'll take an X-ray and prove it to you," he said.
- 6 Well, there it was, of course, the tumor that had made a hole as big as an eye socket in the back of my skull. After the operation, a young resident paused by my bed. "It's a good thing you're so smart," he said. "Most patients die of these tumors because we don't know they're there until it is too late."
- 7 I'm really not so smart. And I'm too docile in the face of authority. I should have been more aggressive with those first four doctors. It's hard to question opinions delivered with absolute certainty.
- 8 Experts always sound so sure. Neville Chamberlain, the British prime minister, was positive, just before the start of World War II, that there would be "peace for our time." Producer Irving Thalberg did not hesitate to advise Louis B. Mayer against buying the

rights to *Gone With the Wind* because “no Civil War picture ever made a nickel.” Even Abraham Lincoln surely believed it when he said in his Gettysburg Address:” The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here...”

- 9 We should not, therefore, be intimidated by experts. When it’s an area we really know about—our bodies, our families, our houses—let’s listen to what the experts say, then make up our own minds.

Notes

- 1 cardboard carton: a box or container made of a stiff pasteboard of paper
- 2 scalp: the skin covering the head
- 3 tumor: 肿瘤
- 4 eye socket: the opening or cavity in which the eye fits
- 5 docile: easily managed or taught

reading comprehension

1. “It” in “...deal with it”(para.1) refers to _____
a. confidence b. the world c. ability d. complication
2. “Expertise” in para.1 means _____
a. common sense b. expert skill or knowledge c. unusual ability to appreciate
d. personal experience
3. We have to trust our own judgement since _____
a. not all of us have acquired reliable expertise
b. experts often lose their common sense
c. experts may sometimes fail to give good advice
d. intimate knowledge of a person is not to be substituted for by expertise
- 4 “That” in “it almost cost me my life to learn that”(para. 2) refers to _____
a. I can learn to trust my judgement
b. I can acquire an intimate knowledge of myself
c. common sense is not as useful as knowledge
d. expertise may not be reliable
- 5 While reading one day, the author _____
a. found a hole at the back of his head
b. heard a scratching sound from a carton
c. noticed some echo from his head where he was scratching
d. noticed a sound coming out from his head

-
- 6 "tease" in paragraph 3 means_____
- a. to make fun of b. to comfort c. to reply d. to disbelieve
- 7 "if you won't take my word for it" in para.5 may be paraphrased_____
- a. if you don't think my word is worth anything
b. if you don't listen to my advice
c. if you don't believe my judgement
d. if you prefer actions to words
- 8 "Skull" in para.6 most probably means_____
- a. the bony framework of the head
b. the surface skin of the head
c. the nerve system inside the head
d. the top part of the head
- 9 The author didn't think he was smart(para.7)because_____
- a. he had already suffered for two years
b. he had not been able to put up with the pain
c. he had believed too much in expertise
d. he had formed too strong an opinion of himself
- 10 It happens that the examples given by the author_____
- a. all concern with wars
b. are taken from modern American history
c. have become popular themes in movies
d. have American Civil War as the background
- 11 In the last paragraph, the work "intimidate" may mean_____
- a. deceive b. frighten c. make timid d. encourage
- 1 b 2 b 3 c 4 d 5 c 6 a 7 c 8 a 9 c 10 a 11 c

4 Just Call Me Mister

1 On cold days people in Manhattan like to take their children to PlaySpace, an indoor playground full of wonderful climbing and sliding contraptions. There's just one irritating detail: when you pay your money, the cashier pulls out a felt-tip marker and an adhesive lapel tag and asks you your name.

"Frum," I say.

"No, your first name."

"What do you need my first name for?"

"To write on the tag, so all the children and the staff will know what to call you."

"In that case, write 'Mr. Frum.'"

2 At which I am shot a look as if I had asked to be called to Duke of Plaza Toro.

3 In encouraging five-year-olds to address grownups by their first names, PlaySpace is only slightly ahead of the times. As a journalist, I faithfully report that the custom of addressing strangers formally is as dead as the practice of leaving a visiting card.

4 There's hardly a secretary left who does not reply, when I give a message from her boss, "I'll tell him you called, David." Or a public relations agent, whether in Bangor or Bangkok, who does not begin his telephonic spiel with a cheerful "Hello, David!"

5 You don't have to be a journalist to collect amazing first-name stories. Place a collect call, and the operator first-names you. The teenager behind the counter at a fast-food restaurant asks a 70-year-old customer for his first name before taking his order.

6 Habitual first-names claim they are motivated by nothing worse than uncontrollably high-spirited friendliness. I don't believe it. If I asked the fast-food order-takers to lend me \$50, their friendliness would vanish in a whoosh. The PR man drops all his cheerfulness the moment he hears I won't go along with his story idea. No, it's not friendliness that drives first-namers; it's aggression. The PR agents who call me David uninvited would never, if they could somehow get him on the phone, address press baron Rupert Murdoch that way. The woman at the bank who called me David would never first-name the bank's chairman. Like the mock-cheery staff at PlaySpace, they are engaged in a smiley-faced act of belittlement, an assertion of power disguised as good cheer.

Notes

1 contraptions:(informal)mechanical devices;gadgets

2 felt-tip marker:软笔尖的颜色笔

3 adhesive lapel tag:不干胶标牌

4 Duke of Plaza Toro: Duke is a nobleman with the highest hereditary rank, especially in Britain.

Plaza Tora is Spanish, something like "Bull Fighting Ring" in English

5 Bangor:City of South central Maine

6 Bangkok:Capital of Thailand,曼谷

7 spiel(slang) a lengthy, usually extravagant, speech or argument intended to be persuasive

8 collect call:a telephone call with payment to be made by the receiver

9 press baron:Baron is the lowest male rank of nobility, but here it stands for a man with great power in press

10 mock: simulated

11 cheery:cheerful

Reading comprehension

- 1 The author apparently regrets ____
 - a. having to take his children to PlaySpace
 - b. being first-named

-
- c. being approached so frequently by PR agents
d. having to put on an adhesive lapel tag
- 2 “PR” in paragraph 6 stands for ____
a. personal request b. personal respect
c. public relations d. public review
- 3 When the author, as a journalist, speaks on the phone ____
a. he is usually very formal and faithful
b. he does not know whether a grownup or a child is speaking at the other end
c. he finds people address each other formally
d. he finds the secretary is often willing to pass a message
- 4 He often finds secretaries ____
a. irresponsible in answering phone calls
b. trustworthy in passing messages
c. not only friendly but also careful
d. calling him David
- 5 The author thinks that addressing a stranger by his first name is being ____
a. cheerful b. friendly c. disrespectful d. light-hearted
- 6 “As dead as” in paragraph 3 may be paraphrased as ____
a. as firmly fixed as b. as useless as
c. as out of fashion as d. as unmistakably as
- 7 Habitual first-namers’ claim amounts to saying ____
a. there’s nothing that can be worse than high-spirited friendliness
b. their attitude should be acceptable
c. they are sometimes too high-spirited to control themselves
d. one should control oneself while speaking to a stranger
- 8 The so-called high-spirited friendliness(para. 6) is actually ____
a. cheerfulness in appearance but mockery in reality
b. out and out insult
c. a well-accepted skill in public relations
d. an act of outward warmth
- 9 “In a whoosh” in paragraph 6 means ____
a. by all means b. in the end c. in a second d. in reality
- 10 “I won’t go along with...” in paragraph 6 may be paraphrased as
a. I won’t believe..... b. I won’t go on listening.....
c. I won’t agree with.... D. I won’t stick to.....

1 b 2 c 3 c 4 d 5 c 6 a 7 b 8 a 9 c 10 b

5 The Development of Civilization

1 The first two stages in the development of civilized man were probably the invention of primitive weapons and the discovery of fire, although no body knows exactly when he acquired the use of the latter

2 The origin of language is also obscure. No doubt it began very gradually Animals have a few cries that serve as signals, but even the highest apes have not been found able to pronounce words, even with the most intensive professional instruction. The superior brain of man is apparently a necessity for the mastering of speech. When man became sufficiently intelligent, we must suppose that he gradually increased the number of cries for different purposes. It was a great day when he discovered that speech could be used for narrative. There are those who think in this respect picture language preceded oral language. A man could draw a picture on the wall of his cave to show in which direction he had gone, or what prey he hoped to catch. Probably picture language and oral language developed side by side. I am inclined to think that language has been the most important single factor in the development of man.

3 Two important stages came not so long before the dawn of written history. The first was the domestication of animals; the second was agriculture. Agriculture was a step in human progress to which subsequently there was nothing comparable until our own machine age. Agriculture made possible an immense increase in the number of the human species in the regions where it could be successfully practiced. These were, at first, only those in which nature fertilized the soil after each harvest. Agriculture met with violent resistance from the pastoral nomads, but the agricultural way of life prevailed in the end because of the physical comforts it provided.

4 Another fundamental technical advance was writing, which, like spoken language, developed out of pictures, but as soon as it had reached a certain stage, it was possible to keep records and transmit information to people who were not present when the information was given.

5 These inventions and discoveries—fire, speech, weapons, domestic animals, agriculture, and writing—made the existence of civilized communities possible. From about 3000 B. C. until the beginning of the Industrial Revolution less than two hundred years ago there was no technical advance comparable to these. During this long period man had time to become accustomed to his technique, and to develop the beliefs and political organizations appropriate to it There was, of course, an immense extension in the area of civilized life. At first it had been confined to the Nile, the Euphrates, the Tigris and the Indus, but at the end of the period in question it covered much the greater part of the inhabitable globe. I do not mean to suggest that there was no technical progress during this long time; there was progress—there were even two inventions of very great importance, namely gunpowder and the mariner's compass—but neither of these can be compared in their power to such things as speech and writing and agriculture.

Notes

1 ape: any monkey

2 narrative: a story or description of actual or fictional events; to narrate is to give an account or commentary

3 prey: an animal hunted or caught for food

4 pastoral: of or pertaining to shepherds, herdsmen, etc.

5 nomad: one of a group of people who have no permanent home and move about from place

to place

6 the Nile: the longest river in the world flowing through East Africa,尼罗河

7 the Tigris: river of Southwest Asia, joining the Euphrates in South Iraq

8 the Euphrates: river of Southwest Asia,幼发拉底河

9 the Indus: river of South Central Asia, rising from Southwest Tibet, flowing through Pakistan to the Arabian Sea

Reading Comprehension

- 1 which one of the following, according to the author, was first discovered or invented in human civilization?
a. written language b. oral language c. fire d. domestication
- 2 The author does not state clearly but implies that in the development of man ____
a. human speech developed along with other human faculties
b. picture language and written language developed side by side
c. oral language preceded the use of fire
d. the ape might be taught to master speech
- 3 According to the passage picture language was found most useful when ____
a. people didn't want to use speech in communication
b. oral language was not fully developed
c. people went hunting or traveling somewhere
d. people were inhabiting in caves
- 4 It is the author's view that in human civilization agriculture _____.
a. is the most important step man has ever made
b. is only less important than the domestication of animals
c. had long been practiced as stated in written history
d. can be ranked in importance with the invention of machines
- 5 In the 3rd paragraph, "... in the regions where it could be practiced...", here, "it" refers to _____
a. increase b. number c. agriculture d. species
- 6 The pastoral nomads would not have yielded to the agricultural way of life ____
a. if it had not been for the benefits brought about by agriculture
b. unless agriculture could provide them with sufficient domesticated animals
c. if agriculture had taken up too large a number of their pastures
d. if they had not found setbacks in their pastoral way of life
- 7 Written language in its initial stage was found more advantageous in that ____
a. it could communicate more accurately than the oral language
b. it had developed from picture language
c. information could be recorded and transmitted
d. it was easier to learn than picture language
- 8 The following conditions except one made it possible for civilized communities to

exist. The exception is _____

- a. writing b. agriculture c. fire d. caves

9 The word "it" in "... to develop the beliefs and political organizations appropriate to it."(paragraph 5) stands for _____

- a. technique b. time c. long period d. Industrial Revolution

10 The author means to say that human civilized life originated from _____

- a. South Europe b. North Africa c. East Asia d. river areas

1 c 2 a 3 b 4 d 5 c 6 a 7 c 8 d 9 a 10 d