

Could Artificial Intelligence Become Our Ultimate Companion?

Level 3: Advanced

1 - Warmer

a. Discuss these questions:

1. What are the potential benefits and risks of having AI as a companion in everyday life?
2. Do you think people can form emotional connections with machines? Why or why not?
3. Imagine the ideal AI companion. What features would it have?

2 - Key words

a. Match the correct word to each definition. Then find and highlight them in the article to read them in context.

Algorithm	ethics	predictive	anthropomorphic	companion
sentence	bias	processing	autonomous	interaction

1. a step-by-step process or set of rules for solving a problem
2. giving human characteristics to something non-human
3. able to act and make decisions independently
4. an unfair tendency to prefer one person or group over another
5. someone or something you spend a lot of time with
6. moral principles that influence how you behave
7. communication or direct involvement with someone or something
8. capable of making guesses about future events
9. dealing with data to produce a result or make a decision
10. the capacity to feel, perceive, or experience subjectively

3 - Comprehension Check

a. Answer the questions using information from the article:

1. What does "anthropomorphic" mean, and why is it relevant to AI design?
2. What ethical challenges arise when AI systems develop predictive capabilities?
3. In what ways can AI enhance emotional well-being?
4. How does the concept of sentience differ between humans and AI?
5. What are the risks of allowing AI systems to make autonomous decisions?
6. According to the article, how do biases in algorithms impact their usefulness?

4 - Key Language

a. Decide if the words in bold in these extracts from the article refer to the Present (Pr) or the Past (Pa):

1. ... the system **was designed** to imitate human behavior. (Pr / Pa)
2. AI **has become** increasingly common in household devices. (Pr / Pa)
3. ... the predictive model **is programmed** to anticipate user preferences. (Pr / Pa)
4. Early designs **struggled** to interact naturally with humans. (Pr / Pa)
5. AI systems **are built** to process large amounts of data in seconds. (Pr / Pa)

b. Complete the sentences using the correct words from the box:

empathy	shopping habits	devices	broader
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1. The algorithm, which was **developed last year**, can predict _____.
2. AI systems, which are **commonly used in customer service**, often simulate _____.
3. The program, which is **originally created for language translation**, now has _____ applications.
4. The _____ which were **designed to assist elderly users**, have gained popularity worldwide.

5 - In Your Own Words

a. List the advantages and disadvantages of having AI as a personal companion. Use these questions to guide your ideas:

- What are the proven benefits of AI in daily life?
- Could AI companions replace human interaction, and would that be positive or negative?
- How could these systems evolve to address emotional and social needs?
- Are there risks of over-reliance on AI for mental health and decision-making?

b. Present your ideas to the class. Use these phrases to structure your presentation:

- "An algorithm designed to..."
- "A system capable of predicting..."
- "A technology that enhances..."
- "Challenges arise when..."
- "Unlike humans, AI lacks..."

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By Jane Doe, March 2025

1. Imagine a world where your best friend is not human, but an AI-powered robot. For some, this might sound like science fiction, but it's quickly becoming a reality. AI systems, designed to simulate emotional connection, are now being used to provide companionship to the elderly, support mental health, and even serve as conversational partners for language learners.
2. At the core of these systems is an algorithm capable of learning and adapting to individual preferences. For example, predictive models can analyze speech patterns to provide comforting responses or suggest activities tailored to a user's mood. However, despite these capabilities, critics argue that these systems lack genuine sentience—a fundamental trait of human relationships.
3. One of the key challenges in AI companionship is the risk of anthropomorphism. By attributing human qualities to machines, users may form attachments that the AI cannot reciprocate. This can lead to unrealistic expectations and emotional dependence, particularly in vulnerable individuals.
4. Ethical concerns also arise regarding data privacy and bias. For instance, if an AI system is designed with biased algorithms, it could unintentionally reinforce stereotypes or make unfair decisions. Additionally, the collection and processing of sensitive data, such as emotional states, require stringent regulations to protect users.
5. Despite these challenges, AI companions offer several advantages. They can provide consistent support without judgment, assist individuals with social anxiety, and even reduce loneliness in isolated populations. Unlike humans, AI systems can be available 24/7, offering a unique form of accessibility.
6. Looking ahead, experts believe that AI companionship will continue to evolve. Advanced systems may one day simulate deeper emotional understanding, blurring the lines between human and machine relationships. However, it is crucial to approach this future with caution, ensuring that ethical considerations remain at the forefront of development.

6 - Discussion**a. Discuss these statements:**

- "AI companions could redefine what it means to have relationships."
- "The ethical implications of sentient AI are more significant than the technical challenges."
- "AI should assist but never replace human interaction in areas like therapy or caregiving."

7 - Homework: Write a short essay on the following topic:

"Should society encourage the development of AI companions, or should we prioritize strengthening human connections?" Provide examples from the article to support your argument.