Teacher's Key

The Robot Olympics: Progress, Limits, and Everyday Life (Level C1)

Vocabulary Matching

1 showcase = **N**
2 benchmark = **A**
3 comparable = **H**
4 spectacle = **L**
5 dexterity = **G**
6 bottleneck = **M**
7 autonomy = **I**
8 stumble = **E**
9 robust = **D**
10 deploy = **O**
11 tangible = **J**
12 supervision = **K**
13 skeptical = **B**
14 hype = **C**
15 envision = **F**

Fill in the Blank

1 showcase
2 benchmark
3 comparable
4 spectacle
5 dexterity
6 bottleneck
7 autonomy
8 robust
9 deploy
10 tangible
11 supervision
12 skeptical
13 hype
14 envisions

True or False

1 **True.** There were also more teams and robots.
2 **False.** Thirty were sporting contests and 21 were scenario-based.
3 **True.** But the results are not directly comparable.
4 **False.** They noted that the rules, classes, and conditions differ.
5 **True.** The eight dexterity events tested this kind of skill.
6 **False.** They still allowed remote control.
7 **True.** Almost all the runners in that final were carried away on stretchers.
8 **False.** It says the net profit fell sharply in the first quarter of 2026.
9 **True.** The figure comes from the International Federation of Robotics.
10 **False.** It says robots will probably enter workplaces before homes, though none of the trends is certain.

Language Focus: Signaling Contrast and Caution: Yet, Although, and Framing Phrases

Example answer: The robot ran faster than the human record, **yet** the result cannot be fairly compared.

Comprehension Questions: Model Answers

1 The 2026 Games had 666 teams and 2,056 robots against 280 teams and about 500 robots in 2025, and 51 events against 26. The program had 30 sporting contests and 21 scenario-based events (factories, hotels, homes, shops).

2 The winning 100-meter time fell from 21.50 seconds (2025) to 8.64 seconds (2026 final), after 9.39 and 8.86 earlier. News agencies say the rules, robot classes, and conditions differ from human athletics, so the results are not directly comparable.

3 The scenario events tested sorting books, serving food, fire response, and charging vehicles, with eight dexterity events (lids, tools, cables, beans with tweezers). Hand skills appeared to lag behind running, which suggests that fine manipulation is a bottleneck.

4 Running, football, table tennis, and dance required autonomy; weightlifting, kickboxing, and jumping allowed remote control, and remote scenario tasks earned half the points. It matters because remote control shows mainly hardware, not the ability to act alone, so results from different events should not be compared directly.

5 Falls: the record-setting robot crashed into a padded barrier after finishing, and almost all the runners in the final were carried away on stretchers. Hong: the key questions are safe moving and stopping, recognizing obstacles, and recovering. Hurst: progress means humanoids working autonomously for hours and creating economic value.

6 The strongest tangible results are in narrow, structured tasks; 1X plans first US deliveries of NEO ($20,000 or $499 a month) in 2026 and says its staff can guide the robot remotely on unfamiliar tasks; Unitree listed in Shanghai, yet its first-quarter 2026 net profit fell sharply as spending rose. Skeptical analysts also doubt claims of tens of thousands of deployed units.

7 Robots will probably enter workplaces before homes (structured, easier to control); geopolitics will shape the market (China's 54 percent of installations, the FCC's block on new foreign-made humanoid models); the industry must separate hype from evidence (the organizers say 2027 will be more practical).

8 Open answer. The writer uses “hype” to describe exaggerated claims; the 2027 Games leaning toward practical tasks would test whether household robots can meet the promises companies envision.

9 Open answer. Best supported: event numbers and rules, the record times reported by news agencies and expert comments. More dependent on organizers or companies: the plans for the 2027 Games, 1X's delivery plans, and deployment figures.

10 False. The reading says running, football, table tennis, and dance required autonomy; only some events allowed remote control.

11 Yes. In the last paragraph the writer says that robots will probably enter workplaces before homes, because factories and warehouses are structured and easier to control, although none of the three trends is certain.

12 To show the speed records as real progress first and then the limits, so the reader sees the achievements and the caution together and is less likely to accept the headline uncritically.

Notes on the Evidence

- Sources checked (27 September 2026). Games facts: Gizmodo (24 August 2026: 666 teams, 2,056 robots, 51 events, 30 sports and 21 scenario events, autonomy rules, eight dexterity events, half credit for remote tasks); Reuters, 23 August 2026 (headline on outrunning humans and plugging in a cable; 51 events; Huawei says more than 40 percent of events required full autonomy); AP, 25 and 26 August 2026 (9.39, 8.86 and 8.64 seconds; Dennis Hong of UCLA; Jonathan Hurst of Oregon State; crashes into the padded barrier, fire extinguishers, most runners carried off on stretchers; AP first misreported the final as 8.84 seconds and corrected it); Al Jazeera, 25 August 2026 (2025 winning time 21.50 seconds; developer named as the Beijing Humanoid Robot Innovation Center); Live Science (400 m in 38.15 seconds and 1,500 m in 2:21.6, among four robot results that beat human records; human 1,500 m record 3:26.00, El Guerrouj, 1998); AFP via Kurdistan24 (results not comparable under the same conditions). 2025 edition: Al Jazeera and AFP-based reports (280 teams, about 500 robots, 26 events, falls in football).
- Industry and policy. 1X: orders opened October 2025 at $20,000 or $499 a month; the company says first US customer deliveries are planned for 2026 and that a 1X expert can remotely supervise NEO on unfamiliar tasks (company statements reported by Robotics 24/7, heise and others; no delivery confirmed in sources seen on 27 September 2026). Unitree: STAR Market debut 19 August 2026 (Xinhua); first-half 2026 revenue up about 48.5 percent (Xinhua); first-quarter 2026 net profit down 47.7 percent according to a Caixin summary, 52 percent according to Technology.org, so the reading says only that it fell sharply. IFR World Robotics 2025: 295,000 industrial robot installations in China in 2024, 54 percent of the world total; the 2026 report may replace these figures. FCC: foreign-produced advanced robotic devices added to the Covered List on 28 July 2026 (Public Notice DA 26-786); it blocks new equipment authorizations, not devices already approved, and allows conditional approvals. The plan for more practical tasks at the 2027 Games comes from Asia Times and was not re-checked.
- Evidence limits. Robot and human times are not directly comparable, as the reading says. A Reuters report gave 39.7 seconds for an early 400 m run; 38.15 seconds is the final. The high-jump record claimed in the earlier version was not confirmed and was removed. Deployment figures vary widely between sources, so the reading gives none. Costs, safety regulation, employment effects and privacy were not researched. The Hindi and Arabic translations have not been checked by a native speaker.
- Revision (27 September 2026, fix mode). Spelling changed to American throughout (meters, program, center). Paragraph 2: developer named; 400 m and 1,500 m results attributed to Live Science; unconfirmed high-jump claim removed. Paragraph 4: 'demonstrates hardware, not intelligence' softened, and the last sentence corrected (the headline sprint records were autonomous, so the point is that results from different events should not be compared). Paragraph 5: 'padded wall' corrected to barrier; the unverified 400 m stretcher incident replaced with AP's report on the 100 m final; Hong's university added. Paragraph 6: 1X claim reattributed to the company and dated; unverified 'shipments grew' replaced with Caixin's profit report; Technology.org named. Paragraph 7: IFR named as the source of the 54 percent figure; the US measure identified as the FCC action. The IELTS Yes/No/Not Given item was replaced because the old statement had no clear answer; one Reading Comp item, three True/False explanations, four model answers, the Language Focus quote and one resource description were updated; several Reading Comp distractors were lengthened so the correct option is not usually the longest.