

Amazon Alexa to reward kids who say 'Please'

28th April, 2018



Picture: www.amazon.com

Technology is now helping to teach children to be polite. Amazon will soon start selling a children's version of its virtual assistant Alexa. The new digital assistant will be called "FreeTime". The child-friendly device will

include what Amazon calls a "Magic Word" feature. Of course, there are two magic words: "Please," and: "Thank you." The smart software is programmed to encourage children to say "please" and "thank you" when they ask the device questions. An example of this is if a child asks FreeTime: "What is the capital city of Australia?" Alexa will answer and end its response with: "Thank you for asking so nicely." Amazon hopes this will encourage children to copy the device and be more polite.

Amazon says the new Magic Word feature is to answer the many customers who said technology was teaching children to be rude. Many smart devices simply give out sentences without using any polite words. Parents said children copy this way of speaking and forget to say "please" or "thank you". Children also got used to asking smart devices questions without being polite. Not everyone is happy with this new technology. Josh Golin, executive director of Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, said: "AI devices...interfere with the face-to-face interactions and child-driven play that children need to grow." He believes parents should spend more time with children and teach them politeness.

Sources: slate.com / usatoday.com / bbc.com

Writing

It is great that technology is teaching children to be polite. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

technology / polite / virtual / assistant / child-friendly / device / capital city / copy / feature / answer / sentences / questions / happy / interaction / campaign / parents

True / False

- Amazon is opening up an online politeness school for children. T / F
- Software called Magic Word will encourage children to say "please". T / F
- The software doesn't know what the capital city of Australia is. T / F
- The software will use polite words when answering children's questions. T / F
- Amazon customers said technology taught children to be rude. T / F
- Parents said many devices talked to children without polite words. T / F
- Everyone is happy with Amazon's new software. T / F
- A campaign group said children should spend more time with technology. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. polite | a. naturally |
| 2. assistant | b. thinks |
| 3. of course | c. mimic |
| 4. example | d. pleased |
| 5. copy | e. illustration |
| 6. rude | f. get in the way |
| 7. happy | g. well-mannered |
| 8. interfere | h. direct |
| 9. face-to-face | i. helper |
| 10. believes | j. impolite |

Discussion – Student A

- How important is politeness?
- Who should teach us about politeness?
- What do you think of virtual assistants like Alexa?
- How important are the words "please" and "thank you"?
- Are some cultures more polite than others?
- Do you always say "please" and "thank you"?
- How important is face-to-face interaction?
- Who is the rudest person you've ever met?

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Phrase Match

- | | |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Technology is now helping to teach | a. asking so nicely |
| 2. virtual | b. time with children |
| 3. the capital | c. to copy the device |
| 4. Thank you for | d. rude |
| 5. encourage children | e. of speaking |
| 6. the new Magic Word | f. children to be polite |
| 7. teaching children to be | g. interactions |
| 8. Parents said children copy this way | h. city of Australia |
| 9. interfere with the face-to-face | i. assistant |
| 10. parents should spend more | j. feature |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- How polite are you?
- Should technology teach children to be polite?
- Why are people rude?
- What do you find rude about tourists visiting your country?
- Do you ever say things to rude people?
- What do you think of a virtual assistant teaching children manners
- What questions would you like to ask Amazon's boss?

Spelling

- teach children to be oetipl
- start selling a children's orvsien
- The new digital taitssnsa
- eceuarong children to say "please"
- An eplmexa of this
- answer the many etumorcscs
- the new Magic Word eurafet
- simply give out sncetsen
- reotgf to say "please"
- executive drtrecoi
- AI devices fetrirene
- face-to-face intanctrsoei

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. i	3. a	4. e	5. c
6. g	7. d	8. f	9. h	10. b

Role Play

Role A – Spitting

You think spitting is the rudest thing. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so rude. Also, tell the others which is the least rude of these (and why): using bad language, putting your shoes on seats or not saying 'thank you'.

Role B – Using Bad Language

You think using bad language is the rudest thing. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so rude. Also, tell the others which is the least rude of these (and why): spitting, putting your shoes on seats or not saying 'thank you'.

Role C – Shoes on Seats

You think putting your shoes on seats is the rudest thing. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so rude. Also, tell the others which is the least rude of these (and why): using bad language, spitting or not saying 'thank you'.

Role D – Not Saying 'Thank You'

You think not saying 'thank you' is the rudest thing. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't so rude. Also, tell the others which is the least rude of these (and why): using bad language, putting your shoes on seats or spitting.

Speaking – Rude

Rank these with your partner. Put the rudest things at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| • cutting in line | • spitting |
| • ignoring someone | • bad language |
| • not saying 'thank you' | • talking loudly |
| • using phone at dinner table | • shoes on seats |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	F	d	T	e	T	f	T	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.