**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**Context: Life is now better than it was 100 years ago.**

**FROM PAST TO PRESENT: THE PARADOX OF PROGRESS**

Over the past 100 years, the world has undergone significant changes in technology, medicine, and overall quality of life. Life is now better than it was 100 years ago. This statement may come as a surprise to many, as we often hear about the challenges and difficulties of modern life. However, when we take a closer look at the advancements and changes that have occurred in the last century, it becomes clear that life today is vastly improved compared to a century ago. From advancements in medical treatments to the rise of modern conveniences, it is clear that life in the 21st century is vastly improved compared to 100 years ago. While there are certainly still challenges and issues facing us, it’s undeniable that life has gotten better in many ways over the past century.

One of the most significant improvements in life over the past 100 years is the advancements in medicine and healthcare. In the early 20th century, diseases such as polio, tuberculosis, and influenza were widespread and often deadly. Today, thanks to vaccines and modern medicine, these diseases are either non-existent or easily treatable. People are living longer and healthier lives due to improved healthcare, with the average life expectancy increasing from around 50 years in 1920 to over 70 years today. Additionally, the accessibility and affordability of healthcare have significantly improved. A hundred years ago, medical treatment was expensive, and only the wealthy could afford it. Today, with the availability of public healthcare programs and insurance, medical treatment is much more affordable for the general public. Moreover, medical technology has advanced to such an extent that complex surgeries and procedures can now be performed, saving countless lives. With the discovery of antibiotics and vaccines, various diseases have been largely eradicated. Medical technology and treatments have quite advanced significantly, leading to better and more efficient healthcare. People today have access to treatments and cures that were once unimaginable, extending their lifespan and improving their overall quality of life. Moreover, advancements in medical technology have also led to the development of better sanitation and hygiene practices, further reducing the spread of diseases and improving our well-being.

Moreover, the introduction of modern technology has revolutionized the way we live. The internet, which has only been around for a little over 30 years, has transformed the way we communicate, gather information, and do business. With the click of a button, we can now connect with people from all over the world, access an endless amount of knowledge, and complete tasks that would have taken hours, or even days, to complete 100 years ago. The standard of living has also significantly improved in the past century. With the development of industries, job opportunities have increased, and people have access to better-paying jobs. This has led to an overall improvement in the standard of living, allowing individuals to afford better food, clothing, housing, and lifestyle choices. Additionally, modern transportation and infrastructure have also made it easier to travel and commute, opening up opportunities for people to explore and experience different cultures and places. Advancements in technology have transformed the way we live and work. 100 years ago, people did not have access to many of the conveniences that are now considered necessities. Today, we have access to computers, smart phones, and the internet, which have made our lives more efficient and connected than ever before. Communication has become more accessible, and distance is no longer a barrier. Technologies such as artificial intelligence and automation have also made various tasks easier and more efficient.

In addition to technology, modern conveniences such as electricity, plumbing, and appliances have made our lives significantly easier. Can you imagine living without electricity and having to do everything by candlelight? Thanks to the power grid, we have access to light, heat, and appliances that make daily tasks faster and more efficient. People no longer have to spend hours washing clothes by hand or cooking meals over an open fire. These luxuries, which we often take for granted, have greatly improved our quality of life. Transportation has also undergone a tremendous transformation, making it easier and more convenient to travel. A hundred years ago, traveling long distances was a difficult and time-consuming task. Today, with modern transportation such as airplanes and cars, people can travel to distant places in a matter of hours. Moreover, education has also improved drastically over the last 100 years. A century ago, only a small percentage of the population had access to education, and it was often limited to a certain social class or gender. Today, education is widely available, and there are various options for people of all ages and backgrounds. The rise of technology has also made education more accessible with online courses and resources available to anyone with an internet connection. This has not only increased the literacy rate but has also allowed for the development of new skills and career opportunities.

Furthermore, there has been a significant improvement in gender equality and women’s rights over the past century. Gender equality, or the equal treatment and opportunities for people of all genders, has been a long-standing issue in society. Historically, women were considered inferior to men, and their roles were confined to the household. 100 years ago, it was not common for women to receive a formal education beyond primary school. The majority of women were expected to stay at home and take care of the domestic duties, while men were encouraged to pursue higher education and have successful careers. However, over the past 100 years, there has been a significant shift towards achieving more equitable treatment for all genders. In 1920, women were just gaining the right to vote in many countries, and their roles in society were often limited. Today, women have equal access to education, and in some countries, they even outnumber men in higher education institutions. This has lead to a rise in female professionals, entrepreneurs, and leaders, breaking the traditional gender roles that were once set in stone. This has led to a more balanced and equal society, where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full potential regardless of their gender.

One of the most significant changes that have occurred in the last century is the protection and recognition of human rights. 100 years ago, many countries did not have laws in place to safeguard the rights of their citizens. Discrimination and segregation were prevalent, and basic rights such as the right to education, employment, and suffrage were not equally available to everyone. However, today, due to the efforts of various human rights activists and the establishment of international organizations like the United Nations, there is a heightened awareness of human rights and their protection. Discrimination based on race, gender, religion, and sexual orientation is now considered unacceptable, and laws have been put in place to protect against it. This has resulted in a more inclusive and tolerant society, making life better for everyone. On a global scale, there has also been progress in terms of human rights, with many countries abolishing slavery and fighting against discrimination based on race, religion, or sexual orientation. While there is still much work to be done in this area, it’s clear that society has come a long way in valuing the rights and dignity of all individuals.

Another area where society has greatly progressed is in the workforce. 100 years ago, there were limited job opportunities for women, and they were often limited to low-paying, domestic jobs. Discrimination based on gender was prevalent, and it was not uncommon for women to be paid less than their male counterparts for the same work. Fast forward to today, and we see a significant increase in the number of female CEOs, politicians, and leaders in various industries. Women have proven themselves to be just as capable as men in the workforce, and this has opened up doors for more opportunities and equal pay. Moreover, the concept of marriage and family has also evolved to be more equal and inclusive. In the past, women were expected to get married at a young age and start a family, while men were encouraged to pursue their careers and provide for their families. However, today, we see a rise in dual-income families, where both partners share the responsibility of providing for their household. The notion that men are the sole breadwinners and women are the caregivers is gradually fading away, and partnerships are becoming more equal.

In conclusion, it is true that we still face many challenges and problems today, such as poverty, inequality, and environmental issues. However, it is undeniable that life today is much better than it was a hundred years ago. With advancements in medicine, technology, and society, we have made significant strides towards a better and more comfortable life. While there are still challenges and issues to be addressed, it’s important to recognize and appreciate the progress that has been made and continue to strive for a better and brighter future. As we continue to progress and face new challenges, it is important to appreciate how far we have come and continue to work towards making our world an even better place for future generations.