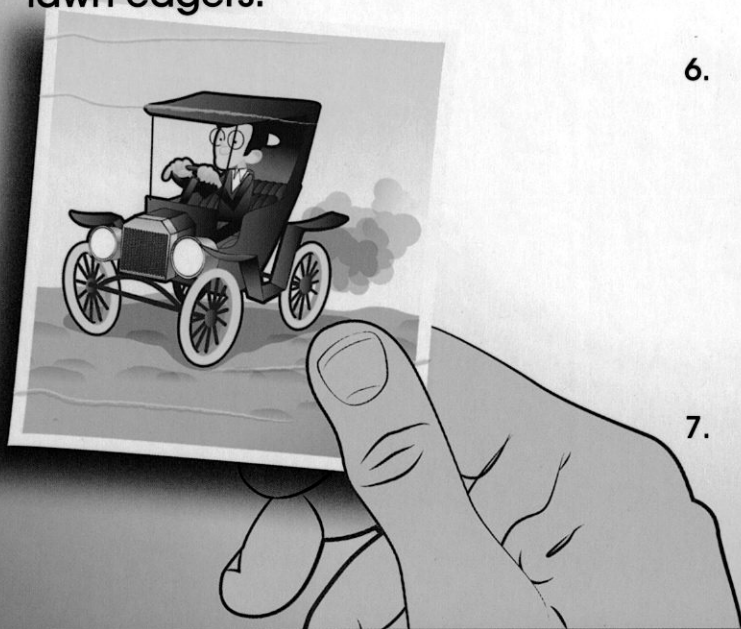


## Are we smart, smarter or the smartest?

1. Most of us think people are getting smarter. It's true, we really believe we're the cleverest generation ever, don't we? Well, my grandfather disagrees! He says we're getting less smart all the time and he's worried about it. When I tell you what he says, you'll have to agree with him. He makes a lot of sense.
2. First, I should tell you a bit about my old grandfather. He uses a mobile phone, goes online and has apps most people don't even know about. Last night he pointed his phone at a plane in the sky and told me where it was going. And of course he surfs the net and Skypes® on his tablet computer and his laptop too.
3. He says technology is amazing, but any fool can use it. It's just a matter of pushing a button or clicking on something and things just happen. It's not you who's clever, it's the smart technology. He says you don't have to think much. In his day things took much longer and needed more organising. A letter took ages to reach someone so you had to think and plan when to send it. You had to use a pen and ink very carefully. If you made a mistake or dropped ink on the page you had to start again. You had to check your own spelling, get a stamp and post it. Talking to someone was even harder. First you needed to find a phone and you often had to book a call. You couldn't hear clearly and it cost a lot.
4. Cars are so much easier to look after and more comfortable now. In his day you had to know how cars worked, so you could work out how to mend them and what you could use as a tool. Cars without indicators, automatic gears, power steering, cruise control and air conditioning were much harder to drive.
5. People had to mend things in their homes too. They had to fix plumbing, repair roofs and even do things with electricity, which was very dangerous. They had to plan and look after their gardens too, without modern tools like powered lawn edgers.



6. People had to entertain themselves by singing or playing an instrument. Now we just press a button. Playing sport needed more thinking too. They didn't have coaches to think for them. Many boys played football without football boots and made their own bats. They had to teach themselves to swim.
7. So how clever are we? Grandfather says many people can do clever things, but it's clever people who can think and work things out. I think he's right, don't you?