

The view from one of four million surveillance cameras in the United Kingdom. This one, in London, includes tiny wipers to clear the rain.

Wordwise

surveillance: watching of a person or place

presence: when someone or something is in a place

lose consciousness: to not be awake because of an injury

and quietly to the bottom of the pool. Without help, it would have taken him as little as four minutes to die.

Although no human lifeguard saw LeRoy drowning, 12 large machine eyes deep under the water were watching and sending the images to a central computer. Just nine months earlier, a modern electronic surveillance system called Poseidon had been installed. Poseidon covers a pool's entire swimming area, and is able to tell when swimmers are not moving the way they should be. When the computer detects a problem, it sets off an alarm to alert lifeguards. Just 16 seconds after Poseidon noticed that LeRoy was sinking, the lifeguards pulled him from the pool. Poseidon had saved his life.

Although it is useful for fighting crime, many people are still concerned about public surveillance. Norman Siegel, an American lawyer, says that there has been a huge increase in video surveillance in public spaces without any real discussion about the advantages and disadvantages. He believes that people should be asked to vote on whether they agree or disagree with public surveillance.

Whether you agree with it or not, the fact is that we live in a world where surveillance surrounds us all.



Close-Up

When answering multiple-choice questions, ask yourself if each option is true or false based on what is written in the text. This will help you to eliminate options that are clearly wrong.

C Read the text again and choose the answer (a, b, c or d) which fits best according to the text.

- Why does the author refer to the book *1984*?
 - to recommend we read it
 - to give an example of a classic novel
 - to suggest surveillance used to be better
 - to show that public surveillance had been predicted
- Which statement about surveillance is NOT true?
 - Each camera in Britain can watch 15 people.
 - There are cameras on public transport in Paris.
 - France has fewer cameras than Britain.
 - There are cameras at sports events in Britain.
- Using video surveillance cameras to deter criminals
 - is never successful.
 - sometimes works.
 - is not recommended by police.
 - is a good idea on roads.
- Why is Norman Siegel concerned about surveillance?
 - Video cameras never prevent crime.
 - Video cameras can't help the police at all.
 - The public hasn't been asked its opinion.
 - It's not useful in banks and government buildings.
- Who was helped by video surveillance?
 - Norman Siegel
 - Jean-François LeRoy
 - George Orwell
 - the author of this text

Get the meaning!

D Circle the correct words.

- When there are many police officers on the streets, it **deters** / **commits** crime.
- Can you **detect** / **predict** what will happen in the future?
- I don't know how to **vote** / **install** my new car stereo.
- Public** / **People** transport is very expensive in some cities.
- Someone **set off** / **put up** the car alarm, which woke the neighbours.



What do you think?

- Is there video camera surveillance in your area? Where?
- Generally, do you agree or disagree with public surveillance? Would you like to see it anywhere else? Do you think the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?