**Read the following texts, then write a synthesis essay of approximately 220 words.**

1. **When a Smart Home Is Too Smart for its Own Good**

**Ashley 2014**

Smart-home systems can control everything from the lighting to the temperature to the music, but they don’t always make life easier for homeowners.

By the end of this year, some 20 million households in the U.S. will have some form of smart-home device, double the number in 2012, according to a Strategy Analytics Inc., a global technology market-research firm based in Newton, Mass. Apple, Google and Samsung are rolling out rapidly evolving platforms for a range of home-automation products. Home builders are increasingly including preprogrammed systems and apps so that owners can remotely control lighting, blinds, music, door locks, security cameras and appliances. Even some rental apartments are coming outfitted with smart-home systems now.

But some homeowners find themselves frustrated by the proliferation of smart-home technology. They complain of complex systems for once-simple tasks like turning on the light, “learning algorithms” that get their preferences wrong and systems that simply go on the fritz too often. As a result, they’re being more selective about what technological amenities they’re installing.

Paul Wright is no techno-dummy. And he cares about saving energy. As the director of the Berkeley Energy and Climate Institute and a professor of Mechanical Engineering at UC Berkeley, his research includes smart materials, intelligent objects and the design of wireless sensor systems.

Mike Fitzpatrick, a 53-year-old furniture maker and home renovation contractor in West Borough, Mass., estimates that he has spent $60,000 over the past few years—as well as hundreds of hours of angst—on a system by the home-automation and smart-home control company Control that is supposed to let him control the lights, audio/video systems, temperature and security at his 5,000-square-foot house. wsj.com.com 06 Aug. 2017

1. **'Smart Homes' Are Still Catching Up to Cloud Living**

**Brinkley 2016**

In an era when cars can parallel park themselves, cell phones can talk and drones can take video, it’s not surprising that “smart homes” might be the next step in our “connected” lives.

Smart home gadgets are poised to be the next big things—sales of smart gadgets are expected to exceed 36 million units in the next two years, according to Park Associates Research Firm.

But can the technology used to turn our homes into wireless nerve centers stand up to the challenge?

Tech writer Stacey Higginbotham lives in a “smart home” in Texas. Her devices and appliances are all connected to each other and to the Internet, which means she can control them remotely from her phone.

Her side door is wired to a keypad -- though Higginbotham still carries keys with her in case the keypad goes on the fritz. Her gadgets are voice activated. She has a robotic vacuum cleaner, a touch-sensitive kitchen sink and window shades that close on command. She has an app that will open and close her garage door, and even alert her if she left it open, and then close it for her from miles away. Even her light bulbs are “smart,” and could be set to all sorts of colors from “deep sea” to “sunset.”

“You have to buy a starter kit with three light bulbs and a little bridge that you plug into the router and that’s $200, and each additional light bulb is $60,” Higginbotham said, noting the bulbs last 22 years. "They’re LEDS. They save you energy.”

Higginbotham also has a wearable device that looks like a ring on her finger called “Ringly,” which can alert her when she has a call or a text, among other things.

But while living in a smart home has its perks, not all the features in Higginbotham’s home worked perfectly every time. One of the voice-command devices she uses is the AmazonEcho. Cloud-connected, it’s designed to turn on music, look up email and various other tasks through a “personality” called Alexa. When asked about “Nightline,” Alexa instantly provided a correct response, but when asked what the stock market is doing, she drew a blank.

“If you live in a smart home, you have got to be prepared to live in a home that is a bit of trial and error process,” Higginbotham said. “I spend probably an hour a week just troubleshooting my house, and that’s because I have a good 40 gadgets in here.” abcnews.go.com 03 August. 2017