



Asimov's

Laws

In 1942, Science Fiction writer Isaac Asimov wrote a story called "Runaround". In it, he outlined three laws that robots would have to follow. Here are the laws:

1. A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.
2. A robot must obey the orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.
3. A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Laws.

Since then, Asimov has added one more law, which is known as the Zero-th Law. It states: A robot may not harm humanity, or, by inaction, allow humanity to come to harm.

The laws were designed to protect both humans and robots and make sure that robots never took over the world or harmed people.

With a partner or in a group of three, use the Laws of Robotics to answer the questions on the next sheet. Be prepared to hand in your answers!

Robotic Laws Question Sheet

1. Which law do you think is the most important? Why?
2. Do you agree with the first law?
3. According to this law, is it ethical (relating to right and wrong) to have robotic soldiers?
4. Can the military ever use any robots ethically?
5. Do you think robots should ever be allowed to program themselves or rewrite the programs humans put in them?
6. What does the third law mean?

When you have answered all of the questions, you have a choice of two things to do:

1. Read an annotated (shortened) version of Asimov's story Runaround. You can find it here:
<https://genius.com/Isaac-asimov-runaround-annotated>

2. OR Develop a logo that could be used to represent the Three Laws.
This logo would be put on all robots as a reminder to them and use about the laws.



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