

Name _____ Date _____

Fun with Robots

People love the idea of robots. Whether it is a kid avoiding chores or a scientist working in space, people imagine that a robot could do the hard work for them.	16 31
In 1920, an author wrote a play about machines. They did the kind of work that nobody else wanted to do. He called them <i>robots</i> . The term comes from the Czech word <i>robota</i> , which means “forced labor.” At the start of the play, the robots are only machines. When a scientist makes them more like humans, they try to take over the world!	46 60 75 88 94
For many years, robots existed only in fiction. The idea of inventing working robots didn’t become popular until the 1940s. That was when people first started to hear about computers. The idea that machines could “think” faster than humans was exciting. People wondered if someday humans could invent a machine that could think on its own.	107 120 133 145 150
Robots that can think have not yet been invented. All robots designed today get their orders from humans. Robots might be directed by software. They might be directed by radio control. They might be directed from sensors on the robot.	163 176 190
That hasn’t stopped people from imagining robots that have minds of their own. Robots have been popular in the media. Sometimes they are good characters that help humans. Other times they are evil characters that try to harm humans. Thinking robots, however, are still science fiction.	202 215 229 236
What makes a robot a robot? A real robot does work that humans can do. It is more than just a machine or a tool, which must be controlled by a human. A robot has a set of instructions built into its design. It can be left alone to do its job without being run by a human.	253 270 288 294