

Some History about Robots

Robots in some form have been with human beings for thousands of years. During the Renaissance, Da Vinci built automated machines that could be considered robots today. The Greeks built devices to help them solve problems. The Chinese had automated machines as early as the third century A.D. But when we think of robots today, we think of something more than an automated machine. We associate the word “robot” with a machine that is human-like. It is because they are human-like that many people find the idea of robots disturbing. But where did the word “robot” come from?

The word “robot” was first used by the Czech playwright Karl Capek in his play *R.U.R.*, which debuted on January 25, 1921. *R.U.R.* is an acronym for Rossum’s Universal Robots, which was the company in the play that creates and sells robots that try to replace humans. The play, which was the first work of fiction to portray a world conquered by machines, was performed all over Europe and the United States. The word “robot” comes from the Czech word “robota,” meaning labor, servitude, or slave.

1. What is the difference between a robot and an automated machine?

2. The play *R.U.R.* was the first work of fiction to:

3. Why do some people find the idea of robots disturbing?

4. The word “robot” comes from what language?
