



What is a Robot?

Fact

- A robot is a machine that is controlled by a computer program to complete a series of actions.
- The most basic robots are programmed to perform and complete the most basic actions over and over again. Basic robots are used in factories to do the things humans would find boring doing over and over again, like picking up things and moving them from one place to another.
- Robots are getting more and more sophisticated all the time as the programs are getting more complicated.

Do you know

- Some robots are programmed to venture into places like space where it would be far too dangerous to send a human. Robots are also being developed to help surgeons perform difficult operations.
- Scientists have not yet developed a robot that can truly think for itself. Robots rely on their computer programs and the programmer who writes the program.
- The word robot comes from the Czechoslovakian word “robota” which basically means “having to do work”.

Experiments you can do

Play a board game where you have to through a dice and you follow the instructions on the board or card to find out where to move the playing piece. Snakes and ladders is a good example.

While you're playing think about the rules and instructions. When you come to a ladder what do you have to do? What about a snake? When you roll the dice and it lands on a 4 how many spaces do you have to move?

You have to do what the rules say or you're cheating. Well robots can't cheat. They can only do what the instructions tell them to do. Even if it meant they were going to crash into a wall or fall off a cliff if they are programmed to do that then that is what they do.

Other Investigations

Have a look around your house for the different kinds of robots you have. Maybe the garage door opener or washing machine. They perform certain tasks automatically when you tell them too. What else is programmed to do things around your house?

Jokes

Why did the robot go mad? He had a screw loose.
From Joshua Greaves.