

# Robo-Characters

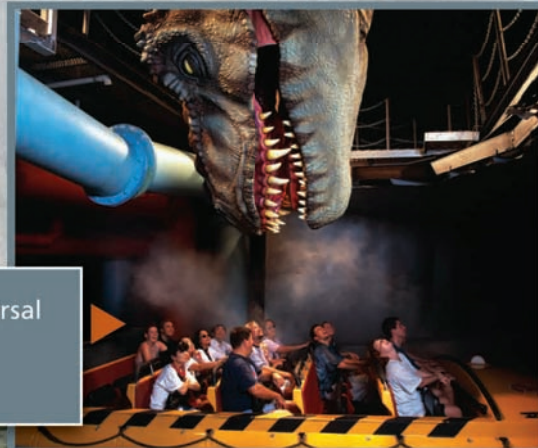
**M**aid? Companion? Superhero? Villain? Robot characters are part of popular culture. Most have special strengths, such as the ability to run faster or hear or see better. Whether friendly and helpful or **menacing** and destructive, robots have been entertaining us and frightening us in books and films since the 1920s.



Probably the most well-known robot characters in film history are R2-D2 and **android** C-3PO from the Star Wars series.



The Jurassic Park ride at Universal Studios, California, features a robotic Tyrannosaurus rex.



Some fantasy characters that you see in films, museums and amusement parks are controlled by robotics. **Animatronics** is the name for advanced puppetry combined with robotics. The term comes from the word **audio-animatronics**, first used in the 1960s to describe the moving models on display at Disneyland. In film-making during this time, mechanical models used basic robot technology. As the making of special effects has grown into a billion-pound industry, animatronics have become much more **sophisticated**. Animatronic robots usually cannot move on their own. Their motions are controlled by human puppeteers, but they look and act like living creatures.

Hi-tech animatronics were used for the close-ups of King Kong and the dinosaur in the 2005 film *King Kong*.



## Robot Rules

Isaac Asimov was a science fiction and popular science writer. He wrote or edited more than 500 fiction and non-fiction books. His 1950 series, *I, Robot* featured The Three Laws of Robotics. This list greatly influenced other science-fiction writers.

The Three Laws of Robotics:

- 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 to 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 Law.