



Ben's Robot

Robin Stevenson
illustrated by David Parkins

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AR Quiz # 137562

About the Book

Seven-year-old Ben loves pretending to be a robot, but his best friend Jessy is tired of being ordered to oil his knee joints and check his batteries. She says the robot game is boring and she runs off to play with someone else. So Ben decides to build a real robot instead. He's built all kinds of contraptions before: wind generators, solar-powered marble launchers, pinball machines. But none of his inventions have ever really worked.

Until now.

When his robot begins talking, Ben is thrilled. But nothing goes quite the way he thinks it will. Ben's robot is difficult to get along with. He complains a lot. He's bossy. He doesn't ever want to do anything that Ben suggests.

Having a real robot isn't nearly as much fun as Ben thought it would be.

About the Author

Robin Stevenson lives in Victoria, British Columbia, and is the author of a number of novels for older children and teens. Her teen novel, *A Thousand Shades of Blue*, was a finalist for the Governor General's Literary Awards, and she is two-time finalist for the BC Book Prizes. Robin has a background in social work and currently teaches creative writing.

About the Writing

Ben's Robot was inspired by Robin's five-year-old son, Kai, who asked for a story about a robot and who, like Ben, collects junk, listens to opera and used to prefer his bread frozen. The circuit board and solar-powered marble launcher were his ideas too. Robin lives in a part of Victoria that is well known for its fabulous free piles, but she has yet to build a robot that works. *Ben's Robot* is the first book Robin wrote for such a young age group, and it was a very enjoyable story to create. Robin was thrilled to see her characters come to life on the page in David Parkins's wonderful art work. She hopes to write more books for young readers.

Teaching Ideas—Curriculum Connections***Prereading Ideas***

- Ben and Jessy are good friends, but like most friends, sometimes they want to do different things. Ask student what they like to do with their friends? What are some ways that friends can work together to find solutions when they want to do different things?
- Ben has a very vivid imagination. What are some ways in which imagination can help us as individuals and as a society? Are there ever times when a good imagination can lead to difficulties?

Classroom Discussion Questions

In the story, Ben has a goal: to build a robot.

1. What goals do you have?
2. How do you go about trying to achieve a goal?
3. What helps you?
4. What gets in the way and how do you overcome these obstacles?

Suggested Activities

- **Art:** Build a robot from recyclable containers, plastic, cardboard, and any interesting scraps you can find. This can be an individual craft, or the class can work together to design and build a larger creation.
- **Language Arts:** In small groups, with partners, or individually, write a sequel to the story in which Ben's robot returns. Consider: Where did the robot go? What did he learn on his travels? How do Ben and Jessy react when he comes back? What might happen next?

- Science and Technology: Using reference books, find out:
 - ◆ what are some of the actual uses of robots in today's world?
 - ◆ what parts would you need to build a real working robot?
 - ◆ who are some famous robots in movies and books?
 - ◆ what are some of the challenges faced by real life robot designers?
 - ◆ what might the future of robotics look like?
 - ◆ how can kids learn to build real working robots?
- Drama: Act out a scene in which Ben and Jessy argue about what game to play. How might they resolve their conflict? Role-play some different possibilities and see how they might find ways to compromise.

Other Titles and Websites of Interest

A Crazy Case of Robots by Kenneth Oppel

Robot (DK Eyewitness series) by Roger Francis Bridgman

Robots: From Everyday to Out of this World by the editors of YES Magazine

Other Books by the Author from Orca Book Publishers

Big Guy (Orca Soundings)

Dead In the Water (Orca Sports)

Impossible Things (juvenile fiction)

Inferno (teen fiction)

In the Woods (Orca Soundings)

Liars and Fools (juvenile fiction)

Out of Order (teen fiction)

A Thousand Shades of Blue (teen fiction)