

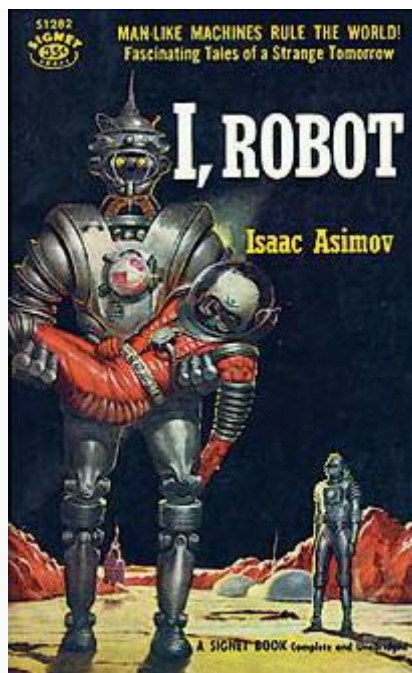
Three Laws of Robotics

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The Three Laws of Robotics (often shortened to **The Three Laws** or **Three Laws**) are a set of rules devised by the [science fiction](#) author [Isaac Asimov](#). The rules were introduced in his 1942 short story "[Runaround](#)", although they had been foreshadowed in a few earlier stories. The Three Laws are:

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 Laws.

These form an organizing principle and unifying theme for Asimov's [robotic](#)-based fiction, appearing in his [Robot series](#), the stories linked to it, and his [Lucky Starr series](#) of [young-adult fiction](#). The Laws are incorporated into almost all of the [positronic robots](#) appearing in his fiction, and cannot be bypassed, being intended as a safety feature. Many of Asimov's robot-focused stories involve robots behaving in unusual and counter-intuitive ways as an unintended consequence of how the robot applies the Three Laws to the situation in which it finds itself. Other authors working in Asimov's fictional universe have adopted them and references, often [parodic](#), appear throughout science fiction as well as in other genres.



This cover of *I, Robot* illustrates the story "Runaround", the first to list all Three Laws of Robotics.

Laws of robotics

Three Laws of Robotics

by Isaac Asimov

(in culture)

Tilden's Laws of Robotics

by Mark Tilden

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The original laws have been altered and elaborated on by Asimov and other authors. Asimov himself made slight modifications to the first three in various books and short stories to further develop how robots would interact with humans and each other. In later fiction where robots had taken responsibility for government of whole planets and human civilizations, Asimov also added a fourth, or [zeroth](#) law, to precede the others:

0. A robot may not harm humanity, or, by inaction, allow humanity to come to harm.

The Three Laws, and the zeroth, have pervaded science fiction and are referred to in many books, films, and other media.