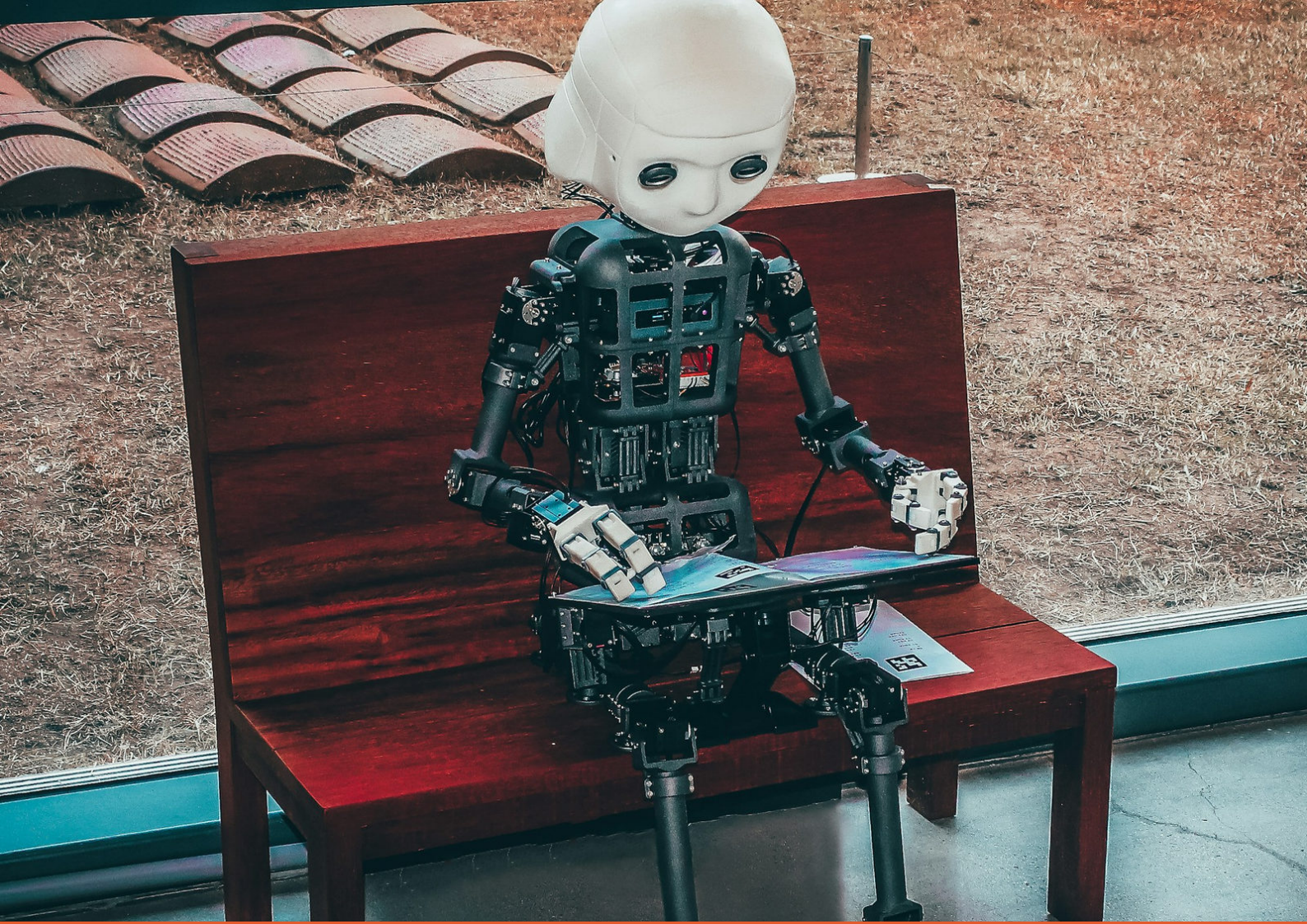




EduTrend Contents

P4C · TECHNOLOGY AND HUMANITY · MIDDLE SCHOOL

Who Is to Blame When a Machine Gets It Wrong?

Responsibility in a world of automation

Ages 11–13

Level: Intermediate

50 minutes

Circle and small groups
· up to 30

Activity 03

Inside: activity at a glance · step-by-step session plan · facilitator notes · 3 student worksheets · assessment checklist

ACTIVITY 03 · AT A GLANCE

Who Is to Blame When a Machine Gets It Wrong?

Students read an invented case: a self-driving delivery robot swerves to avoid a dog and knocks over a stall. Possible people to blame include the programmer, the company, the person who ordered the delivery, the dog's owner and the robot. Students rank responsibility, then create questions and enquire into who should be responsible when machines make decisions.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- analyse responsibility;
- distinguish causing and being responsible;
- reason about automation;
- reach a group judgement.

KEY WORDS

responsible · blame · automation · program · decide · accident

CURRICULUM LINKS

Computing: algorithms.
Citizenship: law and responsibility.
Design and technology: safety.

1

STIMULUS

Share something to think about

2

THINK

Quiet thinking time

3

QUESTION

Create and choose a question

4

ENQUIRE

Reason together

5

BUILD

Agree, disagree, add

6

REFLECT

Last words

Materials (per class)

- Delivery robot case card
- Responsibility cards
- Question and thinking-move cards
- Worksheets 1, 2 and 3

Before the session

- Read the stimulus and note possible concepts.
- Prepare question and thinking-move cards.
- Set out a circle so everyone can see each other.
- Print the worksheets.

SAFETY

Everyone may pass. Discuss ideas, not people, and use the story or invented examples rather than personal situations.

ACTIVITY 03 · SESSION PLAN

Step by step

Stay neutral: ask for reasons, examples and counter-examples rather than giving your own view.

Time	What happens	Say or ask
0–8 min Stimulus	Read the delivery robot case.	<i>"What did you notice?"</i>
8–20 min Questions	Students create questions in pairs and vote on one.	<i>"Which question is most interesting to talk about?"</i>
20–44 min Enquiry	Enquire into the chosen question, building on each other's ideas.	<i>"Who is to blame when a machine gets it wrong?"</i>
44–50 min Last words	Each person says one last thought or passes.	<i>"Has your thinking changed?"</i>

CHALLENGE CARD (print or copy onto the board)

Argue who is most responsible and why.

ACTIVITY 03 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The philosophy in brief

Philosophers distinguish causing something from being morally responsible for it.

Automated systems raise new questions because decisions are shared between people and machines.

Common ideas to listen for

- “The robot is to blame.” Most say machines cannot be morally responsible.
- “The programmer is always to blame.” Many people are involved.
- “Accidents mean nobody is responsible.” Responsibility can still be shared.

Adapting the activity

Support

Rank three people.

Stretch

Write a rule for companies that use delivery robots.

WORKSHEET 1

Our questions

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Write questions the stimulus makes you wonder about.

Our questions

Question	Who asked	Votes

WORKSHEET 2

Who is responsible?

Rank.

Who is responsible?

Who	How responsible?	Why

WORKSHEET 3

Last words

Before and after.

Can a machine be responsible? Before the enquiry I thought... Now I think... because...

FOR THE TEACHER

Assessment checklist

Use during the session. One sheet covers up to eight students; copy as needed.

Student	Asks a philosophical question	Gives reasons and examples	Listens and builds on others

Suggested codes: W = working towards · E = expected · G = greater depth

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Who Is to Blame When a Machine Gets It Wrong? is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents P4C Technology and Humanity programme (middle school, level: intermediate). Every activity in the programme follows the same format: a practical challenge, a clear session plan, facilitator notes and ready-to-print worksheets, so that teachers, club leaders and parents can run it without extra preparation.

Full 15-, 20- and 32-week programmes are available from EduStore at edutrend.org.

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