


# HOW SHOULD WE THINK ABOUT THINKING MACHINES?



## The Ethics of Artificial Intelligence

From the automatons of ancient Greece to R2-D2, humans have long imagined the possibility of creating robotic life. Now, as artificial intelligence continues to advance, it sometimes feels like a truly thinking machine is only a matter of time. How should we ethically think about artificial intelligence? At what point would it be necessary to presume that an artificial being has genuine desires, fears, hopes, and intentionality? If a machine can truly think—or at least convincingly imitate thought—what is our ethical responsibility toward it? Is an artificial sentient being morally equivalent to an inanimate object, an animal, a human, or something else altogether? Does it have rights and responsibilities? Should we treat a machine as a moral person?

Further, as AI spills into our daily lives through self-driving cars, social media algorithms, and medical technology, we are faced with deep ethical problems—from privacy and surveillance

to bias and discrimination. Who is ultimately responsible in such situations? How do we create artificial intelligence that doesn't simply replicate our existing biases? Questions abound!

In this essay, students are tasked with delving into the deep ethical questions raised by artificial intelligence. Submissions should touch on both the big philosophical questions of ethical personhood—could there be artificial personhood, how might we know if machines possess it, what rights would an artificial sentient being have, etc.—as well as at least one practical example of ethical concerns regarding artificial intelligence in the everyday world. Additionally, all essays should engage in ethical thinking by drawing on ethical frameworks, principles, or other ideas from the history and tradition of ethical reflection.

### **SUBMIT YOUR ESSAY!**

Open to all students enrolled in 11th or 12th grade classes

#### **PRIZES**

1st place: \$1,200 cash  
2nd place: \$600 cash  
3rd place: \$300 cash

#### **DEADLINE**

**January 15, 2023**

For the full essay prompt and contest rules, visit

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